

amateurs or greenhorns. But are the pockets of ship owners to be considered before the safety of human life?"

I believe I have said enough to draw the attention of the Government to this very important question. People cannot travel over those waters without running the risk of being burned or drowned. Not a single vessel which was on the Georgian Bay line three years ago, except one, is now in existence, and that is a very sad state of matters. I beg to move the Resolution.

Mr. McLELAN. The papers in connection with this important subject will be brought down at an early day as possible. I regret very much I was unable to hear all the remarks of the hon. gentleman. I know it is a question in which he has taken a very deep interest; it is a question, too, in which the people have a great interest, an interest that is increasing in proportion as the traffic on our western waters increases; and the attention of the Government, and more particularly to the Department over which I have the honor to preside, has been drawn to the importance of the subject, and to the disasters which have occurred on those waters and which have been attended with such serious loss of life. Our attention has been directed mainly to the point which the hon. member, so far as I could gather, has brought up: how far we can make the vessels more seaworthy, how far we can improve their management, and how far we can improve the loading of the vessels upon those waters. The attention of the Government and of my Department has been turned to those various points, and it is proposed that we should ask the House for some legislation which we think necessary in order, if possible, to make the vessels more seaworthy, that life may be more secure on board of them. The hon. gentleman has referred to the inspection of hulls, and I understood him to say that we had no inspectors. There were two engaged in Ontario during last summer, but one unfortunately was off duty for some weeks owing to severe illness. It is probable that the legislation which will be asked for will require some different qualifications on the part of the inspectors from what was required by the legislation of last Session, and therefore we do not provide the complement of inspectors for that district until we should see whether the House would grant such additional legislation as we believe is required. But two have been employed during the past season since the Act came into operation. The hon. gentleman has referred to the fact that several shoals have been discovered on Georgian Bay. The attention of the Department also has been called to this matter, and we have been in communication with the Admiralty, to learn on what terms we can have an officer, or if they can furnish an officer, to take charge of the survey of those western waters, and place on their charts all the shoals and rocks that may be found there not already laid down on the charts. As the hon. gentleman says, it is not advisable to have this done in a haphazard manner, but to set down clearly the particular shoals which may exist. We do not suppose that, on any information which we may be able to send them, they would lay down on their charts any rocks and shoals that are there to be found, and, therefore, we have asked them whether they can furnish us with a man properly qualified to take charge of such a survey, in order that any shoals, which may not be already down on the charts and which may be discovered to exist on a resurvey, may be placed on the Admiralty chart, thus obtaining the authority of the Admiralty. I may say, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that the papers in question will be brought down to the House at an early day as possible.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I move that the House do now adjourn. I do not see the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. DAWSON.

in the House just now, and I will consequently make the explanations with regard to Ministerial changes to-morrow.

Motion agreed to; and (at 4:15 o'clock p.m.) the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

WEDNESDAY, 14th February, 1883.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

PRAYERS.

EVIDENCE IN CRIMINAL CASES.

Mr. ROBERTSON (Hamilton), in introducing Bill (No. 4) to amend the Law of Evidence in Criminal Cases, said: The object of the Bill is to enable persons who profess doubts as to the existence of a Supreme Being, to give evidence. In Ontario the law has been amended so as to permit such persons to give evidence in civil cases, upon making a solemn affirmation as provided in the law. I think it is an anomalous state of affairs that we can accept such evidence in civil cases but not in criminal cases. The provision I propose is now contained in the law of England, and I do not see any reason why it should not be part of the law of Canada.

Bill read the first time.

FRAUD IN RELATION TO PUBLIC CONTRACTS.

Mr. CASGRAIN, in introducing Bill (No. 5) for the better prevention of fraud in relation to contracts involving the expenditure of public moneys, said: I shall say only one word in relation to this matter. The object of the Bill is to try to prevent bribery of contractors, or Government employés, in connection with public contracts. I brought this Bill before this House in the two previous Sessions, but I have not had the opportunity of having it carried through. I may say, for the information of the hon. Minister of Public Works, that I have been able to procure, this year, from the Parliament of Great Britain, a copy of the Bill which the hon. gentleman said he wanted to see before consenting to the passage of this measure, and I shall have much pleasure in placing it at his disposal. As this is a matter which ought not to be taken up by a private member, but is a matter of public importance, I hope the Government, this year, will regard it in a favorable light, and help me through with it instead of impeding it.

Bill read the first time.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

The following Bills were introduced, and read the first time:—

Bill (No. 6) to provide that persons charged with misdemeanors shall be competent as witnesses.—(Mr. Cameron, Huron.)

Bill (No. 7) to amend the Criminal Law, and to extend the provisions of the Act respecting offences against the person.—(Mr. Cameron, Huron.)

MINISTERIAL EXPLANATIONS.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD, on moving the adjournment, said: I have been asked for explanations of changes in the *personnel* of the Cabinet. It is not usual, in England, to give explanations, unless there has been a change in the whole Administration. The present Administration went to the country. We were here last Session and are here now.