

However, I do not say that this system could be got rid of unless we are satisfied that the roads which are under the control of the Montreal Turnpike Trust would be kept in as good order as they are at the present time. I am not prepared to say that the Montreal Turnpike Trust has not kept these roads in good order. Far from that, it is a well known fact that the system of toll-gates of the Montreal Turnpike Trust has done a good deal in the way of improving the roads on the island of Montreal, and that fact has had much to do with the prosperity of the farmers around Montreal. I am not going to enter into that question. I wish simply to say that the town of Westmount wants to secure the full control of its roads, and in order to obtain that end, it asks to purchase a certain amount of the debentures held by the government. The object of such a purchase is to enable the town to set up in compensation a claim which would be equal to the trust's claim resulting from the above commutation. The town of Westmount has asked the trust to pay to it the capital of the commutation. The trust has refused to accept that offer, alleging want of authority to alienate the whole or part of the roads under its control. A statute was passed by the legislature of Quebec authorizing the town of Westmount to pay the capital to the trust. In spite of that statute, the Turnpike Trust refuses still to accept the capital of the commutation. The town of Westmount now desires to buy an amount of the debentures equal to the amount of the commutation which has been made with the Turnpike Trust. Some correspondence has been exchanged between the town of Westmount and the Finance Minister, I understand, and I ask that a copy of that correspondence be laid on the table of the House. I think the town of Westmount is fairly entitled to better its situation, and to have a chance of securing control of the road that belongs to the Turnpike Trust.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance). Of course, there can be no objection to the motion of my hon. friend from Hochelaga (Mr. Rivet). The correspondence will be brought down. My recollection is that the town of Westmount asked us to fix a price on a portion of the securities of the Montreal Turnpike Trust. In our judgment, it was not good policy to fix a price for a portion of the securities; but we were quite open to receive any proposal for dealing with the whole question from the provincial authorities, the municipalities, or any one else concerned in the administration of the roads. Therefore it was not deemed expedient to name a price to this municipality for a portion of the debentures. However, the correspondence will be brought down promptly.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). This motion affords another instance of the ne-

Mr. RIVET.

cessity of the government interfering with regard to the road system on the island of Montreal. The situation of Westmount is a very peculiar one. It has commuted a considerable portion of what was formerly a road and is now an important street in that municipality for a certain sum paid to the Montreal Turnpike trustees. It pays every year a certain sum which is supposed to represent a proportion of the amount of the bonds which are now in the hands of the Dominion government. That is supposed to be the interest due every year to the Dominion government as the proprietor of those bonds. That interest, however, is not paid over to the Dominion government. It is kept and used for the administration of the road actually controlled by the trustees of the Montreal Turnpike Trust. The town is obliged, moreover, under its legal agreement to keep that piece of road in perfect order under the direction of the trustees, and it has no absolute control over it. It has to execute works upon that street—lay water pipes, gas pipes, sidewalks and pavements; and it can do nothing at all because the street is not its property, not having been transferred to it under a title which would admit of its dealing with it as it deals with other streets in the municipality. As I have stated again and again in this House, these debentures or bonds are worth absolutely nothing, because they cannot be realized upon. The only recourse the holder of them, the Dominion government, would have, would be to take possession of the road and have a receiver appointed to collect the tolls. These tolls might pay a portion of the interest, but, on the other hand, the road would be absolutely neglected, and that state of affairs would not continue for more than a month or two. So that on the market these bonds are worth practically nothing. The town of Westmount has asked the Minister of Finance to fix a value upon the portion of bonds upon the piece of road which it holds under a commutation deed from the trustees, and it is ready to pay the amount of that valuation in order to obtain possession of the road at once, and deal with it as it does with the rest of the streets of the town. The Minister of Finance has refused to accede to that request. At first the Minister of Finance asked the town of Westmount to place a value on the bonds. The town did so, and since then, so far as I am aware, nothing has been done. The town offered more than the actual value of the bonds, but the offer has been refused by the department. I do not think that is fair. I think that the offer of the town to pay the market value of the bonds is a fair offer, and should be accepted by the department. I would like to add that the situation of the town of Westmount is very much the same as that of several other municipalities. There is a similar arrangement with the town of Verdun in my constituency. In