

the letters are returned to the writers after considerable delay. It appears to me, that the public service would not be injured if the hon. gentleman would provide that letters here, as in England, in such cases, should be delivered, subject to the double postage, or whatever postage the department might see fit to put upon them.

Mr. HAGGART. The matter has been very fully considered in the department. All letters which are insufficiently prepaid are forwarded, and a double rate of postage collected when they arrive at their destination. The objection to the system proposed by my hon. friend from Halifax is this: if you allow a letter to be forwarded which has no postage stamp at all, you revert to the old system of sending letters without postage stamps at all, and impose upon the party receiving them, perhaps a double postage. The proposition is that, when a letter is insufficiently stamped, it shall be forwarded to its destination, and a double penalty attached.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). That is not the old law.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Does the Postmaster General propose to make any change in regard to registration stamps?

Mr. HAGGART. Yes.

Mr. LANDERKIN. It has been announced that the present stamp was to be discontinued, and the ordinary two cent stamp substituted. The present system often causes considerable inconvenience.

Mr. HAGGART. That change has been already made, that is, departmentally made. An order has been given by the department to the post offices, that where a two cent stamp is attached for registration, the letter will not require the registration stamp. The intention of the department is to increase the registration fees, and to make them similar to the fees in Great Britain and the United States, and at the same time to provide more security for the transmission of registered letters than at present, and also to compel the registration of all letters which include valuables.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). The proposition to increase the postage on drop letters is a very serious one, and the hon. gentleman should inform the House, before the Bill proceeds very far, of the grounds on which the Government are asking such an important increase.

Mr. HAGGART. As this is a money Bill, it must, of course, be introduced by resolution, and when it is before the House I shall be able to explain the reasons.

Mr. McMULLEN. There is one feature of the Bill which is decidedly objectionable, and that is the increased cost of forwarding registered letters. It is well known that a very large proportion of our people send small remittances, such, for example, as remittances to mutual insurance companies, by registered letter. The registered letter is growing in favor in Canada and is being largely adopted, especially for small amounts, and it is a pity that the present arrangement should be disturbed. The proposed increase would press on a class who are not well able to bear an additional drain for increased postage. It is unfortunate the present arrangement should be disturbed, when it has given satisfaction.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Another matter I should like to bring before the notice of the Postmaster General is the possibility of reducing the rates charged for money orders. At present the rate is too high, and great convenience would be caused to the public if it were reduced.

Mr. CASEY. What is the increase in the charge on registered letters?

Mr. JONES (Halifax).

Mr. HAGGART. There is no amount fixed in the Bill; it is proposed to give power to the Governor in Council to increase the amount.

Bill read the first time.

FIRST READINGS.

Bill (No. 94) respecting Benevolent Societies.—(Mr. Dickinson.)

Bill (No. 95) relating to the Supreme Court.—(Mr. Weldon, St. John.)

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. GAUTHIER (Translation) asked, Whether the Government have received an engineer's report on the works connected with the railway of the Great Northern Railway Company, comprising that part thereof extending from the Villages of New Glasgow and Ste. Sophie, in the County of Terrebonne, through the Parish of St. Lin, in the County of L'Assomption; if so, what is the conclusion of the said report? have the Government made any payments, in view of the said works, and what is the amount of such payments, if any?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN (Translation). In answer to the first question of the hon. member, my answer is: Yes, in 1885. To the second question, enquiring as to what the conclusion of the report is: it implies slight works, and the road is completed so as to allow running on it at a rate of twelve miles an hour. To the third question: \$25,088 has been paid.

SAWDUST DEPOSITS IN THE OTTAWA RIVER.

Mr. TROW (for Mr. EDWARDS) asked, When the report of the engineer who made an examination of the Ottawa River between Ottawa and Grenville, as to the effect of putting sawdust and mill refuse in the river, will be brought down?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. The report of the engineer acting on behalf of the lumber merchants was received by the department on Tuesday last. The report of the engineer who had been sent by my department the year previous, was not made and received by the chief engineer until that officer, the first assistant engineer, had been called before the committee of the Senate and examined there. He gave all his information to them, and the whole matter was published and delivered to the public. Copies of the plan were furnished to the engineer, Mr. Fleming, who acted for the merchants lately and who conducted the examination on their behalf.

CUSTOMS APPRAISERS.

Mr. LANGELIER (Montmorency) asked, Whether the positions as appraisers held by the late Louis Bilodeau and by Honoré Plamondon have been filled, and if so, who are the persons appointed? Have the persons appointed appraisers in place of the said Louis Bilodeau and Honoré Plamondon salaries commensurate with the importance of their duties?

Mr. BOWELL. Appraisers have been appointed since the death of the late Louis Bilodeau and Honoré Plamondon, but they were not specially named as filling the vacancies caused by such deaths. The appraising staff now comprise three officers in place of two when Mr. Bilodeau and Mr. Plamondon were serving. The salaries of the present appraising staff at the port of Quebec are considered to be commensurate with the services rendered.