

MILITIA ARMS & ACCOUTREMENTS.

Hon. PROV. SEC. laid on the table copies of correspondence relative to the issue of swords and accoutrements to the militia. He stated that the government had been obliged to advance some £2,000 to pay for these articles.—As long ago as August, 1862, the Lieutenant-Governor, as Commander-in-chief, had a communication with the Imperial authorities, upon the subject of furnishing arms and accoutrements for the organization of the militia in the province. The intention obviously of the Government and of the Lieut. Governor was to induce the British Government to deposit those articles, to be obtained and paid for as required by the militia officers. The Government obtained from the War Department the quantity requested by the Lieutenant Governor. Correspondence went on, from time to time, until finally the Imperial authorities refused to issue these swords and accoutrements as required, and called upon the Provincial Government for the payment of the entire amount. Under the circumstances, it became a matter of discussion, as would be seen by reference to the papers just presented; but the Government could not help discharging the liability incurred.

In answer to Mr. Archibald, the PROV. SEC. also stated that he supposed the sum in question would be an advance upon the militia fund, and that he regretted that there would be a considerable loss on account of the swords, &c. In consequence of the misunderstanding between Lord Mulgrave and the Imperial Government, the issue was discontinued at the time when they could have been sold—when the officers were providing themselves with such articles from other sources. The proportion that had been sold was very small, and the only mode in which the rest could be disposed of would be by reducing the price.

The papers were referred to the Militia Committee.

CROWN LANDS RETURNS.

Mr. MILLER asked the Leader of the Government if the answer of the Crown Lands Department to the question he put the other day, included all the undecided cases in that office.

Hon. PROV. SEC. replied that he had transmitted the question to the department, and presumed that the answer contained everything that was required.

Mr. MILLER said that he wished to have not only a return of the dispatch, but of the undecided cases before the department. He understood—though he could not say his authority was very reliable—that several hundred cases were pending before the department for decision.

On reference to the enquiry put by Mr. Miller it was proved that it did not include the "undecided claims." Mr. Miller therefore wrote the question in a form that would enable him to obtain the information he required.

RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Mr. MCLELAN requested the government to lay on the table copies of proposals made to them for the construction of railways to the borders of New Brunswick and Annapolis.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Hon. PROV. SEC. laid on the table a report from the Postmaster General, concerning the abstraction of five pounds from a letter. Referred to P. O. committee.

On motion of Mr. Blanchard, the house went into committee, and passed the bill to incorporate the Acadia Coal Mining Company; the bill to incorporate the Stone Cutters' and Mason's Association; and the bill to incorporate the Royal Sussex Lodge of Free Masons.

In reference to the bill for the incorporation of the Waverly Gold Mining Company, Mr. Archibald thought some explanation should be given of the reason why the shares were so exceedingly trivial in amount—only one dollar each. He thought that this fact might lead persons to suspect the integrity of the bill; and referred to the Oak Island affair as an instance of how persons were deluded into doubtful speculations.

Hon. Mr. SHANNON said that he brought in the bill at the request of the present Mayor of Halifax, who, as everybody knew, was not a likely person to be concerned in the introduction of a bogus company. He did not think that because the shares were small doubts of the good faith of the bill could be fairly entertained.

Hon. PROV. SEC. said that he could not allow the impression to go abroad that our gold mining enterprises are at all to be compared with the Oak Island affair. It had now been satisfactorily proved that gold mining in Nova Scotia is not only a perfectly legitimate and sound enterprise but that if prosecuted energetically and prudently it guarantees to those engaged in it large pecuniary returns. He believed that it had been equally apparent that gold mining here requires the organization of capital and stock if it is to be made profitable—that it is not an enterprise safe for private individuals to engage in. He could not, however, see anything objectionable in the present bill, and he was sure that the hon. member for Colchester would be the last person who would be disposed to shut out a bill which was calculated to enable poor men to invest what they were able in gold mining operations.

Mr. TOBIN said that in no respect were the principles observed in similar bills deviated from in the one before the house. He did not see any difference whether the shares were small or great, and stated his opinion, based on his experience in relation to similar enterprises, that most persons would take a large amount of shares,—some a thousand, some a hundred, and so on—and hardly any one so small an amount as a dollar. He also observed that it would be seen that \$25000 of the capital would have to be paid up.

Mr. ARCHIBALD said that the idea he wished to convey was, that when the shares were large, parties would naturally take more pains to ascertain the real character of the enterprise. A person having shares of one thousand pounds in a company would consider more intently the scope and feasibility of the undertaking than if he had only a thousand pence invested. On the other hand, when shares were so very small, parties might be likely to take little trouble to enquire into the matter. He did not say that what he remarked applied to the present bill, for he knew nothing whatever about it; but what he wished was, to guard carefully against passing any act that might be the instrument of injury to the public. He thought it would, however, be advisable if the bill were allowed to lie over for the present, that some explanation might be given of its character and object.