

by the Government. He had spoken on the subject of jurisdiction last year when the copyright bill was passed; the issue proved he was right. He thought he was equally correct in the present instance as to the principle he laid down. He approved, however, of the general principle of the measure, inasmuch as it would secure settlers in their rights; but he trusted the House would not go beyond its legitimate jurisdiction and infringe on the privileges of the Legislature of Manitoba.

Hon. Mr. AIKINS explained that some of the provisions in the bill were simply introduced to show what legislation might have to be passed in Manitoba. A despatch had been received from the Government of that Province with respect to the necessity of some legislation to settle disputed claims. Of course we had no right to impose pains and penalties, [as stated in the 8th clause], under the provisions of the British North America Act, but it was introduced here that hon. gentlemen from Manitoba might see the legislation required to carry out the measure. It was never intended to interfere in any way whatever with the rights of the Province. As to the right of the Dominion Government to deal with questions affecting lands, that was clear and indisputable. When the country was transferred to Canada we reserved to ourselves all the lands, and certainly it was within our province to say what disposition should be made of those lands. The whole object of the bill was to obtain the fullest information in order to issue patents. As to the 18th clause it could be struck out in Committee, and so might the 23rd. All that they meant was to indicate necessary local legislation.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST had very serious doubts as to the propriety of legislation, which seemed to dictate to the Legislature of Manitoba, though he agreed as to the desirability of securing titles and preventing disputes. While admitting the principle of the bill he did not think we had any colorable pretext to lay down the mode in which lands shall be held.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL—If those people who now hold land wish to obtain patents, there must be some means to obtain the necessary information as to the mode in which they shall issue.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST.—The right belongs properly to the local government.

Hon. Mr. WARK referred to the 15th clause, and said that the time there mentioned,—one month, between the decision

of the Commissioners and the issue of the Patents,—was too short, inasmuch as many of the settlers who were nomadic by habit, might be absent on the plains, and some person might step in and obtain a patent for their lands before they returned.

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND thought under all the circumstances the time was long enough, for such persons would generally have some one on their lands to look after them and watch their interests. The sooner the land claims could be settled, the better for all the parties concerned. He alluded to the claims of the class who had obtained grants from the Earl of Selkirk, and thought they were not protected in the bill. He also referred to the defective character of the Hudson's Bay Company's registry which has been legalized by the legislature. He was aware himself from seeing the register that the names of certain persons to whom lands had been granted by the Earl of Selkirk were not given in it at all. It was simply a transcript from a scrap book. He believed the first survey was made in 1818, and so far as he could learn the registry was not made until 1834. Therefore he considered there is some danger that these grants will not be amply covered in the bill. He understood, however, the Hon. Secretary of State would do all he could in the matter.

Hon. Mr. AIKINS said that he had followed the wording of the despatch the Government had received from the Government of Manitoba. The bill, he added, would be so amended as to cover all cases.

Hon. Mr. GIRARD said it was certainly very desirable that all titles should be quieted and disputes of every kind prevented from arising hereafter. He was quite convinced that the Government was desirous of doing all that was right and just in such matters. He had his doubt as to the point raised with respect to jurisdiction, but still he approved heartily of the principle of the measure. He hoped it would be so arranged that the judgment of the Commissioners would clear the property entirely of all encumbrance. The provisions of the bill could be carried out at a very small expense, and on the whole would be considered a decided boon to the people of the new Province.

The bill was then read a second time. The House then adjourned.