

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, 29th March, 1898.

The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at Three o'clock.

PRAYERS.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORSHIP OF THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask the hon. leader of the House if the statement is well founded that the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) is to be the Governor of the North-west Territories?

The **PRIME MINISTER** (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). If it were well founded, it would be made official. As it is not made official, it is not well founded so far.

DRUMMOND COUNTY RAILWAY.

Mr. FOSTER. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Railways (Mr. Blair) as to an item which has been made public for the information of the people generally through some evidence, if I remember well, taken before a committee. It is to the effect that an entirely new arrangement has been made between the Government and the Grand Trunk and Drummond County railways respectively by which the terms which were submitted last year have been very materially altered. It is rather odd if this has been done, that nothing has been laid on the Table of the House and that we first get the information through the public press. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman whether the statement is true, and if so, whether he will lay on the Table for the information of the representatives of the people, the amended arrangement.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS** (Mr. Blair). I can assure the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) that no evidence has been received by a committee examining into the Drummond County matter which tends to show that an entirely new arrangement has been made between the Government and either of these companies. The investigation which has been there conducted led to a request from the committee that the temporary agreement which had been entered into should be laid on the table of the committee and put in evidence. I saw no particular objection to that course being pursued. All the papers that they asked for I thought might be very properly tendered to them. I apprehend that that fact would not be a proper basis upon which to ground a charge that the House had been slighted. If the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) now desires that the temporary arrangement which was entered into and

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

any modifications that have been made in the previous understanding with these companies be laid on the Table, I would have no objection to producing those papers. They are really now in everybody's possession, and there is no reason for not producing them here if the hon. gentleman desires.

Mr. FOSTER. It would be advantageous as conveying information to the House, and is what ought to be done.

TESLIN LAKE SLEIGH ROAD.

Mr. FOSTER. May I ask the First Minister if the statement made in another place by a member of the Cabinet that the Government had determined to build a wagon road from a port in British Columbia over the Teslin route for soldiers, militia or the mounted police, is true?

The **PRIME MINISTER** (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Mr. Speaker, I stated some time ago in this House that the Government intended to ask for an appropriation to survey a route from Observatory Inlet to Glenora. What would be the policy of the Government in case of a certain event which may take place in another House, and which we expect to take place. I am not in a position to say. The matter would have to be considered de novo. I am not aware that such a statement was made as referred to by my hon. friend.

Mr. FOSTER. No arrangement has been made for building a wagon road?

The **PRIME MINISTER.** No.

OPENING OF THE CANALS.

Mr. QUINN. I desire to ask the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair) whether a date has been fixed for the opening of the Welland and St. Lawrence canals to Montreal. I understand that the Corn Exchange and the Board of Trade of Montreal have made representations to the Department of Railways and Canals that it would be to the advantage of the country generally if these canals were opened at an earlier date than usual. Information has been received that ships are already laden ready to come through as soon as it is known that the river and canals are open for navigation and that these vessels can get return cargoes. My object in rising is, as much as anything else, to impress upon the Minister the necessity of an early opening of the canals. I have here a letter from the Corn Exchange of Montreal, intimating that they are very anxious to have the canals opened about the 15th of April if at all possible. I would ask the hon. Minister if a decision has been arrived at as to the day the canals will be opened?

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS** (Mr. Blair). I have been in receipt of the usual anxious inquiries from the merchants and transportation companies as to the date the canals will be opened.