

SUITS AGAINST THE CROWN.

The House went into Committee of the Whole, Hon. Mr. Beason in the chair, on the bill relating to suits against the Crown by petition of right.

HON. MR. DICKEY objected to the 7th clause, which took away trial by jury. It appeared to him that the parties had an inherent right, where facts were to be tried, of having the benefit of a jury.

HON. MR. MILLER said this bill was intended to provide for cases where the subject had a claim against the Crown. When issues were left to a jury, in cases where the Crown was the defendant, the Crown seldom got justice done to it. It was almost the same with regard to large corporations—they seldom got fair play as between an individual and themselves, where a matter of fact was referred to a jury. In nine cases out of ten, where the Government had a strong case, they were afraid to refer their claim to the decision of a jury, because they felt that they would not get fair play from a jury, and therefore they were very often denied the resort to any tribunal for a trial of this kind. He confessed that after considerable experience as a lawyer, his former veneration for the jury system had been considerably lessened. In many cases, occurring within his experience, of the trial of civil issues, he would have been glad to see the decision of them taken from the jury and given to an intelligent, educated and impartial judge.

HON. MR. DICKEY remarked that his opinion differed from that of his hon. friend in regard to the system of trial by jury. The result of a long experience at the bar had been rather to confirm his veneration for that system than otherwise. He could see no reason why now, for the first time, the subject should be deprived of the right of an appeal to a jury in a claim against the Crown. Still, if the Government insisted on retaining that clause, he would not press his objections.

The seventh clause was then adopted.

Subsequent clauses were amended in unimportant particulars.

The bill was reported with certain

amendments, which were concurred in, and it was then read a third time and passed.

CONTRACTS FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

The House went into Committee of the Whole on the General Railway Acts Amendment Bill.—Hon. Mr. Miller in the chair.

HON. MR. DICKEY said he had an amendment to move with the view of making the bill more perfect. Its effect would be to require that the purchase of all articles over \$1,000 should be by tender and contract. Because in connection with a Government railway in Nova Scotia a scandal had been created arising from the fact that large sums of money had been placed in the hands of one particular firm without any tender or contract. He wished by the amendment to prevent the possibility of a repetition of such a scandal.

HON. MR. SCOTT said he was scarcely prepared to accept the amendment. The policy of the Government was to obtain supplies by tender whenever they could, but cases might arise where it would greatly embarrass the Government to be tied up in this way.

HON. MR. DICKEY moved, seconded by Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL, to add to the bill a clause to the effect that in all cases where merchandize, commodities or supplies of any kind are required for the use and purposes of any Government railway to a greater amount than \$1,000 they shall be purchased only by tender and contract.

The amendment was put, and lost by 12 to 28.

The bill was read a third time and passed.

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.

HON. MR. SCOTT moved the second reading of the North-West Territories Bill. He explained that its purpose was to consolidate the laws respecting the North-West, and embraced all the country known under the name West of Manitoba. It would give Government authority to appoint a Lieutenant-Governor with a Council of nine, for the better government of that Territory. The seat of authority would be at Fort Pelly. A bill had been passed in 1869 making arrangements for administering the affairs of the North-