

friend has in the city of Belleville, and his knowledge of the manner in which this work has been conducted in the past, has necessitated the action which has been taken at the instance of the mayor and corporation, and every man in the city of Belleville who desires to see that harbor improved.

Mr. BURDETT. I am not disputing with the Minister of Customs as to the principle of the Bill. I quite agree that the city ought to keep its engagements with the Government and provide the money that they agreed to provide to improve the harbor. I see the name of the Minister of Marine is on the back of this Bill, but the Minister of Customs will remember that the name of the hon. member for West Hastings (Mr. Corby) is upon the back of the first Bill that was introduced relating to the same matter. I see no objection to the principle of the Bill at all. In future it will be well to understand that the Government has control over it, so that there will be no more bickerings in the city as there have been in the past.

Bill reported, and read the third time and passed.

WESTERN COUNTIES RAILWAY.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON moved second reading of Bill (No. 127) respecting the Western Counties Railway.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). I mentioned the other day to the Minister of Justice, in connection with this Bill, the remarks which had been made very generally respecting the advertisement regarding the contract. The advertisement came out on the 19th March, and tenders were called for; notice was given that the specifications could be seen on the 28th of March, and that tenders would be received on the 8th of April, allowing eleven days. It did appear to those who had looked into the matter that eleven days was a very short time to allow competitors to examine plans and specifications for a work involving an expenditure of half a million dollars; and it did look upon the face of it, as if there was some intention on the part of the Government, or some predetermination of the part of the department, to give that work to some parties who had the favor of the Administration. It was not considered by those who were competent to speak upon the subject, that the time was sufficient for the competitors or contractors to come here, and examine the plans and specifications and put in their tenders. With regard to the Bill, of course, it is all right.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I did not know until the hon. gentleman mentioned it the other day, that the time had been as short as he said. I will make enquiries and be able to explain before the third reading of the Bill. There has been no predetermination, and I am not aware that any Minister has been aware that so short a period was allowed. The hon. gentleman remembers the explanation I gave when the Bill was introduced. We confirmed in 1887 the agreement with this company, which authorised the Minister of Railways to enter upon the work and spend the \$500,000 which was provided for in the agreement for the completion of the railway between Annapolis and Digby. In order to remove any doubts it has been considered desirable that there should be a parliamentary authority, irrespective of the confirmation of the agreement for the execution of this work, and to make applicable the Expropriation Act, the Railways Act, and other enactments bearing upon the subject. It may be necessary, in order to accomplish some slight diversions, to expropriate some small pieces of land.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, and House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Has this contract been awarded to which the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Jones)

referred? I suppose the First Minister has charge of that business at present.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Has the contract been awarded?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I do not know.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Because there is no doubt that so short a time as 11 days would make the tendering a farce.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We will ascertain about that.

Bill reported, and read the third time and passed.

BRITISH COLUMBIA—CONVEYANCE OF LANDS.

Mr. DEWDNEY moved second reading of Bill (No. 128) to provide for the conveyance of certain lands in British Columbia.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, and House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Will the Minister explain the reason why the Government are re-conveying these lands to the Province of British Columbia?

Mr. DEWDNEY. As I explained the other day, this is a small portion of land which it is proposed to re-convey to British Columbia, on account of a misunderstanding that arose at the time the railway belt was conveyed to the Dominion. British Columbia was entitled to the pre-emptions and land grants made at that time, and this portion about which some misunderstanding arose was in what are known as the Sumas lands. An arrangement had been made with Mr. Derby to reclaim a certain section of land there for which he was to receive 45,000 acres. He failed in his contract, and this was at a time subsequent to the arrangement with respect to the railway belt. It was supposed, when the settlement Bill was passed, an arrangement was made by Sir Alexander Campbell, who was sent over as a Commissioner to arrange this matter with the British Columbia Government, that this land had been included in the pre-emption lands for which the British Columbia Government transferred to us 3,000,000 acres in the Peace River country. It was subsequently found upon enquiry that these 45,000 acres in the Sumas district belonged to British Columbia. In the meantime we have been dealing with them as had the British Columbia Government. There were 200,000 acres reserved, out of which these 45,000 acres were to be selected, and by arrangement between the two Governments entries were allowed to be taken by the British Columbia Government and sales made, and the money was held subject to final arrangement. It was subsequently found that British Columbia had been dealing with more than 45,000 acres. When this was ascertained, the Government stopped it, and awaited the arrival of Mr. Robson last summer. When he arrived it was determined to allow the British Columbia Government to retain the amount of the land up to 45,000 acres which they had dealt with, and this Act is for the purpose of enabling them to issue patents, which they thought they had a right to do when they were dealing with it.

Bill reported, and read the third time and passed.

STEAMBOAT INSPECTION ACT.

Mr. TUPPER moved second reading of Bill (No. 130) further to amend the Steamboat Inspection Act, chapter 78 of the Revised Statutes.