

of Mines. He said the House would be gratified to learn that the result of the entire year's operations in the gold mines had been such as to confirm the impression that a judicious application of capital and skill would obtain abundant remuneration. The average amount of return per man for the men engaged in these mines had been during the year larger than that returned by any other such mines in the world, a fact which would tend to increase the confidence in the value and permanence of our mines.

The Commissioner states that the yield per man has steadily increased every year since gold mining commenced in this country, until we find that, for the year just closed, it amounts to the sum of \$664.80. This is equivalent to \$2.13 per day for every man engaged in and about mining. In 1864, the average was about \$1.39; and in 1863, \$0.95.

"Everything in connection with this matter indicates a large increase and wider extension of profitable gold mining operations in future years. As explorations are extended, it becomes more obvious that the possibility of carrying on such operations is not confined to the isolated localities which constitute the heretofore proclaimed Gold Districts."

Hon. Prov. Secretary also said that the results of coal mining had been still more satisfactory, as the following extract shew there are now thirty collieries in operation in Nova Scotia. Some of them are, it is true, only just barely opened; and have, as yet, made but small returns; but, with one or two exceptions, works are being vigorously prosecuted in all of them, and with good prospects of a great and profitable extension of them at an early day. The total quantity of Round and Slack Coal sold from the mines during the year ending 30th September last was 652,854 tons. The returns for the year just past show an increase of not less than thirty per cent. upon those of the one last preceding."

Crown Lands.—Hon. Provincial Secretary also laid on the table a Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. He said that this document was quite commensurate with the general progress of the Province, and with that of any other department of the public service. The receipts of the Crown Land Department for last year were \$44,302.61, being \$11,779.59 over the previous year. The surplus arising from the net proceeds amounted to \$11,168.40.

Hon. Mr. Shannon presented a petition for an act of incorporation from the Halifax Co-operative Society, and a bill in accordance therewith.

Some discussion arose on the combinations of workmen, in which Hon. Mr. Macfarlane, Hon. Mr. Shannon, Mr. Miller, Mr. S. Campbell, Mr. Tobin, Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Archibald, Hon. Atty. Genl. and the Hon. Pro. Secretary took part.

The Windsor and Annapolis Railway.—The second reading of the Windsor and Annapolis Railway Bill, was then moved by the Hon. Prov. Sec. In doing so, the hon. gentleman stated that it would not be necessary to occupy any length of time as the Bill involved no new principal but was based on the legislation of last session. He was quite satisfied that gentlemen, whether favorable or unfavorable to the measure could not now hesitate to support a bill which was simply designed to give effect to the past legislation of the House. The only alteration was, as he had previously explained in respect to the bridge across the Avon. The government undertook by the contract to pay a specified sum for the building of the bridge, 40,000L. currency to the contractors, payments to be made as the work proceeded, and the balance, if any, when the same would be fully completed and the Railway opened for traffic. The Company were bound to build in addition to the Railway bridge, one for the accommodation of the general public. He thought the House ought to be gratified with the issue of the legislation of the last session. If ever there was a time in the history of the country when it was desirable that a large amount of foreign capital should be expended among us, and for which the province should not be placed under any indebtedness, it was the present. In view of the circumstances connected with our trade, it was most encouraging to find such enterprises in progress; over a million of pounds would be required, under the contracts made in virtue of the legislation of the House, to be expended in the province during the next four years. Such a fact would certainly be a matter for congratulation to all classes of our people.

Mr. Archibald said that whatever might be the opinion of gentlemen on that side of the house in respect to the propriety of the present measures, no one could deny that any contract made in pursuance with previous legislation was binding upon the Legislature. If, however, the government had receded from that legislation—had exceeded their authority, it was open to the house to bring them to account. There was no question that the legislation of the house had devolved upon the government a most onerous responsibility, when it allowed them to make contracts involving the expenditure of large sums of money. That duty they were expected to perform in a manner consonant with the best interests of the country. It was gratifying, undoubtedly, that, in the present condition of the money market, capitalists should be found willing to expend large amounts of money in the construction of public works in this province, but at the same time it was necessary to take care that they should make this expenditure so as to be of permanent benefit to the country. He had looked carefully over the papers before him, and was surprised to find that there was not a single word in the contract nor in the bill, stipulating the character of the railway that was to be built. The only clause that referred to the construction of the line was that which

required "the rails to be of good quality," and that "the breadth of roadway, and depth of ballast, and general description of the road" should be "of such quality as to ensure permanency and economy of maintenance." He did not pretend to know much about railways, but he was quite certain nevertheless that some guarantee should have been required by the government as to the manner in which the road would be constructed. He had hoped, too, that the government would have had the power to send their Chief Engineer to look over the character of the work as it progressed; knowing how necessary it was to have an efficient officer of this kind, he had asked the government to lay the credentials of Mr. McNab on the table. But on looking over the papers, he did not find any provision made for the supervision of the chief Engineer. With the amount of subvention and that given for the construction of the Avon Bridge, the Province was called upon to pay \$91,260 for the period of twenty years. What was there to prevent this Company completing the Railway so as to entitle themselves to this amount, and then give it up, at the period stipulated. He did not pretend to say that these gentlemen were incompetent to perform the work, but was only desirous of protecting the interests of the province in every way that was practicable.

The Prov. Sec. replied that if the hon. gentleman would turn back to the discussion of the previous session, when the act on which the bill was based was passed he would find his objections to a large extent removed. All the stipulations, and provisions that the Legislature considered necessary when passing the act of last session were actually incorporated in the contract itself; the very first clause of the agreement would show this. The Government were not going to build the railway for themselves. The road was to be constructed by the contractors so as to be their own property; and every person who knew anything of railway maintenance was aware that no Company could afford to keep up a railway for 20 years unless it was suitably constructed. The period for which the railway had to be maintained was obviously sufficient guarantee that the work of construction would be efficiently performed. The motive that would impel the contractors was the most potent, that can exist—that is self-interest. He would state that the parties in question purposed to lay down a heavier rail than had been stipulated for—in order to make the line as efficient as possible they had ordered rails of 56 lbs. the yard, instead of 42 lbs. as per contract. They did this because they felt that the best mode to get an adequate return for their capital was to construct the line as thoroughly as possible. It had been the impression in the house last winter, that the amount of remuneration offered by the Province was entirely inadequate; it must therefore be a matter of congratulation that we had been able with such slight inducements to obtain the construction of the work.

Mr. Archibald said that in the contracts made with reference to the Trunk line, it was provided that the work should be of a particular character. Hon. Prov. Sec. observed that it was not considered necessary to have any such stipulation for a line for the western counties where the traffic would be of a light description; the reverse was done with respect to the Trunk line. A larger amount of traffic might be expected to go over it.

Hon. Atty. Gen. said that he had listened with a great deal of attention to the remarks of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Archibald), and he must say that they were by no means worthy of one of such high legal attainments. Turning to the acts passed for the building of railways in this province, it would be found that the lines were to be a continuation of the provincial railway, and that the very preamble showed that the proposed line must be of a certain character—as good as the one in existence. The hon. gentleman had objected that the Chief Engineer could not exercise any supervision over the line that was to be built, but what was the fact? Looking at the contract it would be seen that the location of the road was made subject to the approval of the Governor in Council. The location of lines of railway, in other words, was made subject to the approval of the Governor in Council—subject to the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. Before the Chief Engineer would consent to the location of the road he would have to have a clear understanding as to the grades and curves. How could any Company, in face of such an agreement, build a road of the character that had been hinted they might? But what more did they read in the contract?—"The rails to be of good quality, and to be either 42 pounds weight per yard, on the T pattern, to be laid on longitudinal rectangular bearings, properly fastened with spikes, and fished at the joints, or with sleepers and an arched longitudinal stringer, with a proportionally smaller pattern saddle-rail, as introduced on the Great Western Railway in England. The breadth of roadway, depth of ballast, and general description of road to be of such quality as to ensure permanency and economy of maintenance." Could anything be more satisfactory than this? The location was made subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, and the road was to be of such a description as would ensure "permanency and economy of maintenance." Experience had proved that economy in construction was extravagance in working. One of the great considerations that now entered into the minds of contractors and railway companies was to give a road sufficient weight and permanency, in order to produce results that would serve the interests of all concerned. If we had a road built to Annapolis that afforded permanency and economy of management, then the country had all that was necessary. But more than this, the Railway Commissioner was permitted at all times to visit these

works, and report on their character and condition; he was to see that the intentions of the agreement were carried out. Therefore it would be seen that the Government had all the checks on the company that were necessary. We had the local interests of the country to develop, and therefore it was the branch line to Annapolis had been projected. In fact, we were to be benefited by two lines of railway instead of one. Such a state of things could not be otherwise than advantageous to the people of this country. It would be able to afford such great facilities to passengers by steamers at this port, to go on to Canada and the States by land, what more could we want? Was it not most desirable to make the capital of this Province the terminus for travel across the Atlantic? In whatever light he looked at the question, he saw that the people of Nova Scotia had abundant reason for satisfaction at the aspect of our railway undertakings.

Mr. Churchill said that when the act passed last session, hardly a man in the House could have believed that the remuneration was sufficient to induce capitalists to embark in this undertaking. He was quite content to have the contract taken under circumstances so much more favorable than they had reason to anticipate. He had no doubt that the company would give satisfaction to the Province, and that in any case it was in the power of the government to see that the country's interests were not overlooked.

Mr. Miller said that on the previous occasions on which the policy embraced in the bill had been before the Legislature, he had given it a constant and unwavering opposition. He might considerably annoy the Government by moving amendments, but he felt that with the majority they had at their back, no practical or useful result could accrue; and his only course was to submit to what had been done as the deliberate act of the House. The three members for Yarmouth had not come up, and they might be reasonably supposed to be opposed to all railways. Four representatives of Cape Breton—one from each county—were also absent. In view of the absence of so many gentlemen who might be expected to oppose the bill, it was idle to offer any opposition. He would add that he had never opposed this measure from sectional motives—from an hostility to the western counties. He did not believe, that the benefits expected from this road would accrue, whilst it decidedly did not confer any advantage whatever on the more remote sections of the Province. He trusted that the sanguine anticipations of gentlemen would be realized, and that the grants for such necessary services as roads and bridges and education would not have to be cut down in the future to very small amounts, in consequence of the policy that the Government and the House are pursuing.

Mr. McLellan thought that the government should hardly ask the House to pass such an act without having some security as to the character of the work that is to be built. The Province was giving the Company something like £30,000 as a bonus to build the road, and considering the character of the country over which the line would pass—72 miles of it being of no higher grade than 20 feet in the mile, and the other portion nearly a dead level—it was not impossible that it could be constructed for this amount.

Mr. Archibald repeated his belief that the character of the road should have been defined. The whole argument of the Attorney General had gone to show that the gentleman in question were acting in good faith. He felt, that the government had not exercised that amount of discretion that should have been expected of them. Mr. Locke said, that as the contract had been entered into by the Government, it was useless to raise any argument against the terms. It was only left for gentlemen to put what faith they could in the Government. Although the act was passed last session, he believed that the Government had been too hasty; they should have waited and seen what would be the consequences of the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty, before incurring any heavy liabilities.

Hon. Attorney General said that he was glad to see that the hon. member had been forced to yield to circumstances. Now it was well known that hints had been frequently thrown out that the Government did not intend to build the railway at all; and their integrity and good faith were at stake. They were therefore bound as soon as the Legislature gave them power, to redeem the pledges they had given for the construction of the work. He had given a good deal of consideration to the subject of the reciprocity treaty, and had come to the conclusion that the loss to the revenue would not be as great as some seemed to fear it would be. Looking at the character of the exports of the country—at the development of our resources—at the vitality exhibited in all branches of trade—at the prospect for new channels for commerce being opened up—he saw no cause for any apprehension whatever.

Mr. Locke asked if the Government were prepared to say that the country could for the next two years bear half a million of dollars interest on the railways, and still provide sufficiently for the other public services in which the people felt so deep an interest. He had attempted last session to get a small sum of 30 or 40,000 to connect Shelburne with Annapolis, but to no purpose.

Hon. Attorney General replied that the Government had given the subject their full consideration, and had come to the opinion that the province was well able to undertake the responsibility imposed upon it.

After a few remarks from the Provincial Secretary, the bill passed its second reading. The House then adjourned until the next day at 3 o'clock.

TUESDAY, Feb. 27.

Mr. Colin Campbell presented a petition for a breakwater: also one for the repair of a wharf.

Mr. Miller a petition asking aid to open and render fit for the accommodation of shipping, the harbor of Fourche.

Mr. Blanchard, a petition asking remuneration in protecting river fisheries. Also a petition from Broad Cove, signed by 226 electors, on the subject of Confederation.

Hon. Provincial Secretary, by command of His Excellency, laid on the table copies of correspondence relating to signal stations; also correspondence relating to the Governor's Private Secretary; also correspondence relating to the Paris Universal Exhibition; also, correspondence relating to the assassination of President Lincoln.

Education.—Mr. S. Campbell enquired of the Government whether it was their intention to devolve the labor and responsibility of considering the operation of the present school act on that committee, or whether the Government proposed to take charge of the matter themselves?

Hon. Prov. Secy. said it had become a matter of serious consideration with the Government as to what course they should adopt on this subject, and after mature deliberation it had been decided that it would not be the most judicious course to submit any measure desirable for the further alteration of the existing law as a Government measure. The Government, as members were aware, had already assumed the responsibility of dealing with the question, and it became necessary for them to enquire how far on any such question they would receive the support of gentlemen usually sustaining them, and in bringing forward the measure of last session they stated that it contained two fundamental principles on which they would take their stand before the Legislature. Those principles were, first, the establishment of free schools, and, second, the assessment by counties of the amount required to supplement the amount granted by the Legislature. The Government, on that occasion, informed the House that while they asked support on these two principles, they considered all other matters as open to such amendments as the majority of members would endorse. When that measure came to be discussed, while the government were sustained on those principles, the bill was very largely modified in other and important details, as, for instance, the proposal to give the sections the power of voluntary assessment was so altered as to substitute a provision for obtaining aid by means of subscription. He need not say that in connection with the subject of Education, the Government had encountered a great deal of difficulty and embarrassment, although not more than might be anticipated from so great a change as that made. They had taken pains to satisfy themselves of the working of the present Act, and he believed he would be able to shew the House from the report of the Superintendent of Education that under that Act a great improvement had taken place in the common school education of the Province, not only by a large increase in the number of children attending school, but also in relation to school accommodation. There could be no doubt that one of the difficulties experienced, and he referred to it with regret, was, that any measure brought forward as a government measure, would invite a good deal of hostile criticism on the part of the opponents of the Administration. He did not in this remark make special reference to the present Opposition, for he was aware that he had received vigorous and determined aid from some gentlemen opposite, and in every county the most enthusiastic supporters of the new law were to be found among their opponents, but merely had reference to the fact that any measure so brought forward invited a great deal of hostility. Looking at that feature of the case, and anxious to separate the question, as far as possible, from political considerations, in order that it might commend itself to the body of the people, the Government believed they would be consulting the best interests of the country in leaving any alterations to be suggested without a reference to party feelings. He believed that a great change and improvement had been effected,—that the difficulties to be encountered would steadily fade away, leaving the general education of the country in a progressive state. The Government believed that the act might be materially improved, but that it would be better to leave the matter open in the way proposed. He did not intend to shrink, for a single moment, from taking his share of any responsibility arising from the introduction of amendments.

Mr. Locke enquired whether the Government were not prepared to bring down any measure, or whether they intended merely to rely on the suggestions of members?

Hon. Provincial Secretary replied that the Government, having obtained the adoption of the leading principles which they held, it would be a violation of the pledge given to the House if they were to press, by Government influence, any changes considered necessary.

Hon. Attorney General laid on the table copies of correspondence relating to the erection of a small light on St. George's Island, in Halifax harbor. Also an application made to the Government by the Canada Company, and a report thereon from the Superintendent of Lighthouses.

Mr. Tobin referred to the fact that the island was under the control of the military authorities and suggested that applications be made in that quarter.

Hon. Atty. Gen. answered that the work could not be done without the concurrence of the military authorities, but he had been informed that no difficulty would be made on their part. A very inexpensive light would be sufficient,—the maintenance being the principal consideration.