

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, February 24, 1905.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

### FIRST READINGS.

Bill (No. 74) respecting the Medicine Hat and Northern Alberta Railway Company.—Mr. P. Talbot by Mr. Parmelee.

Bill (No. 76) respecting the Red Deer Valley and Coal Company.—Mr. Campbell.

Bill (No. 77) respecting the Canadian Agency.—Mr. Bickerdike by Mr. Campbell.

Bill (No. 78) respecting the Macleod, Cardstone and Montana Railway Company.—Mr. Turriff by Mr. Campbell.

### BATTLEFORD AND LAKE LENORE RAILWAY COMPANY.

Mr. PARMELEE moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 75) respecting the Battleford and Lake Lenore Railway Company.

Mr. HENDERSON. I would like the gentleman to explain that Bill. I do not know if it is a new Bill or an extension. I have a suspicion that it is extending a very bad Bill.

Mr. PARMELEE. I think it simply asks the construction.

Mr. HENDERSON. I think we are entitled to the explanation.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

### FIRST READINGS.

Bill (No. 79) respecting the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway Company.—Mr. Zimmerman—by Mr. A. Johnston.

Bill (No. 80) to incorporate the Woodstock and Lake Huron Railway Company.—Mr. A. H. Clarke.

Bill (No. 81) respecting the Ottawa River Railway Company, and to change its name to the Central Trunk Railway Company.—Mr. Piché.

### PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTHWEST.

Mr. FOSTER. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask the First Minister as to the cause of the delay in printing of the Autonomy Bill.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I think there has been no delay so far. I am just as anxious as my hon. friend is to have the Bill printed immediately and to take it up as soon as possible. I expect to have it at the latest on Tuesday.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I ought to say that I am responsible for some of the delay that has occurred. In consequence of an error

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK.

in the description of the boundaries of the provinces, I had to get that corrected, which I did as soon as the Bill was in the hands of the Clerk of the House, and I returned it to him yesterday afternoon.

### MANITOBA ELECTION RETURNS.

Mr. FOSTER. Has the First Minister had an opportunity to look into the question which I put to him yesterday as to the Manitoba election returns?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I speak subject to correction, but I believe I am right, when I say that all these returns are in the hands of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, who is an officer of this House, and it seems to me that the procedure would be to have a motion made for his attendance here. I have been waiting for my hon. friend the leader of the opposition to return in order that I might confer with him on that point. I can see no objection to that.

### CONTRACTS FOR GOVERNMENT WORKS.

Hon. CHARLES FITZPATRICK (Minister of Justice) moved second reading of Bill (No. 51) respecting contracts for government works.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and House went into committee thereon.

On section 1—tenders to be invited; exceptions; contracts to be awarded by the Governor in Council—

Mr. FITZPATRICK. The first clause practically re-enacts the law as we have it now; that is to say, it provides that the minister shall invite tenders for all works of which the estimated cost exceeds \$5,000, the exceptions being those works which are of immediate and urgent necessity and those of which the estimated cost does not exceed \$5,000. The new feature is the second paragraph, which provides that all contracts let by tender are to be let, not by the minister directly, but by the minister under the control and with the approval of the Governor in Council. Having looked into the law, I found it necessary to make this change. As a matter of fact, contracts for works costing less than \$5,000 have been let without tender, but there has been no legislative sanction for that. I am making this change so as to provide for the full approval of council to every contract that is made.

Mr. HAGGART. As the laws stands, I understand that all contracts must be let by tender.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. The law as contained in 31 Victoria, chapter 12, section 20, re-enacted in the Revised Statutes as chapter 36, section 13 provides that all contracts shall be let by tender except works of im-