

Debate on the Crow's Nest Pass Railway.

RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN.

The Debate Upon the Tender System.

Mr. Gamey's Civil Servant Bill Defeated
—Two Divisions—The Government
Sustained by 23 and 13.

Legislative Chamber, March 24.

At the Legislature to-day Hon. Mr. Ross introduced an important bill providing for the establishment of Technical Schools, and for the changing of any High School now established into a Technical School by resolution of the High School Board. Two divisions were reached during the day, in both of which the Government was sustained by substantial majorities. In the afternoon Col. Matheson's motion favoring the system of purchase by tender was rejected by 53 to 30, and in the evening the second reading of Mr. Gamey's bill making participation in election contests by officials an offence punishable by imprisonment was rejected by 50

to 37. Mr. Haycock's motion deprecating any aid by the Dominion Parliament to the C. P. R. for the construction of the Crow's Nest Railway gave rise to an animated discussion, in which Mr. Pattullo, the Attorney-General, Mr. Whitney and Mr. Conmee participated. In the end the resolution was withdrawn. A similar fate was meted to Mr. McNichol's motion advocating a considerable extension of the powers of the Division Court. In the committees there were some animated discussions. The Toronto Railway Company and the Metropolitan Railway Company had a lively encounter over the right of the latter to enter the city by using the Yonge street tracks. The resistance offered by the Toronto company was successful. The Institute of Chartered Accountants petitioned the Government to make any necessary appointments of municipal auditors from the membership of the institute.

THE TENDER SYSTEM.

Col. Matheson moved: That this House is of the opinion that the tender system of purchasing supplies for the public institutions of the Province, and for the stationery required for the public use, should be adopted in lieu of the system at present carried on.

There was, he said, no question that the tender system was the best mode of purchasing supplies. The answer would be made that it had been followed as far as possible, but it was not. The system is growing up of buying large amounts of goods without tenders. In the Hamilton Asylum, for instance, out of \$80,000 of purchases without tenders. This expenditure is a great aid in the return of members for that constituency. Mr. Matheson claimed that many of the amounts set forth in the accounts were so large as to indicate that the supplies in question should be bought by tender. This would obviate the possibility of charging any of the officials with corruption or profit-making. He did not wish to be understood as urging that everything should be bought by tender, as it was necessary for those in charge to use a good deal of discretion in the purchase of certain necessaries. Still he did not think these large sums should be purchased as they have been.

Mr. Garrow said he agreed with Col. Matheson that all possible supplies should be purchased by tender. It was admitted that much must be bought under the supervision of the officers in charge. It came therefore to be a matter of what is to be bought in this way. He himself had never been able to find that any articles were being purchased by the officials that might preferably be purchased by tender. It was not fair to hint at the acceptance of commissions by officials when no cases of the kind had ever been brought forward. The fact was that anything with a definite market standing is now purchased by tender. Such goods as butter and meat should not be bought by tender, as evil had resulted and will result from such a policy. The officials must be trusted in these matters. If they are found not trustworthy they should be brought before the Public Accounts Committee and examined as to any discreditable conduct.

Mr. St. John could not agree with the last speaker in believing that all articles on which tenders could be called for were so treated. He was informed that in the Dominion penitentiaries all supplies were bought by tender by the Dominion Government.

Hon. Mr. Hardy—The present Government?

Mr. St. John—No, the contracts were so made by the late Government, and the present Government will not alter the system unless they decide to fall into the improper plan adopted by this Government.

He thought sal soda, for instance, might be bought by tender.

THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

Mr. Davis, in replying to Col. Matheson, referred first to the last clause of the resolution which referred apparently to the stationery department of the Government. He found on inquiry that all the large lines there used were purchased practically by competition in the open market. The records and invoices showed that the very lowest wholesale prices were paid for them. A very large number of articles were