

MONDAY, April 6.

House met at half-past 2 o'clock and several bills were forwarded.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MONDAY, April 6.

Mr. Ryder moved that a change in the road appropriation for the county of Yarmouth for the year 1856 be made. Passed.

An act to amend chapter forty-four of the acts of 1856, relating to the Volunteer Artillery Company, was read.

Mr. Tobin moved that it be deferred for three months. A deputation from the City Council had requested that this bill be deferred. He in compliance with their request had made the motion.

Mr. Young thought the bill should pass, and some encouragement be given to these young men, especially as they had been led to some expense in getting uniforms, etc.

Mr. Marshall thought it would be a small matter to put them on the same footing as the other companies in the province.

Mr. Young thought the house should pass a law to exempt them.

Mr. Tobin said the Council had strongly pressed him to resist the passage of the bill.

On motion the bill was read a third time, and ordered to be sent to the Council for concurrence.

An act relating to the repair of the Cornwallis bridge was read a third time.

Hon. Financial Secretary thought the time for which this money was sought to be borrowed was too long.

Dr. Webster remarked upon the great importance of this bridge to the people of Cornwallis, and the great necessity for immediately repairing the damages,—he believed the members were quite prepared to allow the road money to go for that purpose.

Mr. Munro, chairman of committee on petition of commissioners for deepening the East river at Pictou, reported in favor of granting the sum of £400 for finishing the work.

Mr. Howe did not object to this grant or any other, but he thought this a large sum, perhaps it would be as well to postpone such grants until the next session.

Mr. Tobin moved that the resolution in relation to the Newfoundland Fisheries be taken up.

Mr. Ryder seconded the resolution.

Mr. Young understood, in consequence of the remonstrance of Newfoundland, the convention was at an end.

Hon. Sol. General—That has not been officially announced.

Mr. Howe—If the information given by the member for Inverness be correct, I see no reason now for passing this resolution.

Hon. Atty. General thought it better to place the sense of the house on the question upon the journals. He felt disposed to take a broader view of the subject than that contained in the resolution. He would put the interference of the house on this question as of general right, rather than of interest. The general principle was of such consequence and should be expressed, particularly when any territorial interests were immediately concerned—and to the effect that such should be negotiated away without the colony interested having been previously consulted. That would apply to all the provinces, although the question under consideration might touch only one colony chiefly. It was important that the resolution should pass with a unanimous concurrence.

Hon. Financial Secretary—This was a question upon which he felt as deeply, as he had done when our own fisheries were taken away. He thought in comparison with this, the surrender of the mines and minerals was as nothing, for these were given to Englishmen, but the fisheries have been surrendered to foreigners.

The resolution passed unanimously.

The house went into committee on bills, and took up the Statute Labor Law.

Mr. Morrison thought the assessment for Statute Labor should be increased rather than diminished.

Mr. Chambers advocated assessment according to property, so as to put the burden on the rich and not on the poor; he had no objection to any modifications in detail.

Hon. Financial Secretary did not believe that there was a place in the province which did not require all the statute labor which could be performed.

Mr. Archibald thought it sound policy that property should pay the taxes,—his objection was against the details of the measure.

Mr. Tobin moved that the bill be referred back to the committee to amend the details, which was agreed to.

The house resumed.

Hon. Mr. Howe suggested to the government the propriety of making arrangements for connecting PARSBORO', HANTSPOON, and HORTON, with Windsor, by steam, as soon as the railroad was finished to that place, which would be in the course of the summer. Additional piers would be required for that purpose.

TUESDAY, April 7.

Several bills were read a second time.

The Hon. Attorney General moved the third reading of the bill for the postponement of the ensuing Easter Term at Halifax until the fourth Tuesday of April.

Hon. Attorney General by command of the Lieut. Governor, laid on the table of the House certain correspondence between the Imperial and Provincial Governments, and also certain correspondence which took place between parties in England relating to the Mines and Minerals.

Mr. Young was happy to say that the main difficulty in the way of settling this vexed question was removed, and that the House had now only to deal with the Mining Association. He

would enquire if the Government had determined on the course they intended to pursue on this subject.

Hon. Attorney General said he would be able to answer that question in the course of a day or two.

Hon. Attorney General moved the second reading of the bill authorising assessment for railway damages.

Mr. Chambers thought the bill should be printed and thoroughly understood.

After discussion it was ordered that one hundred copies of the bill should be printed.

The second reading of the following bill was moved—

A bill to carry the act of 1854 so far as relates to the city of Halifax for their proportion of the railroad liabilities.

Mr. Esso thought the pledge of the city was dependent on the railroad being carried to Pictou and Windsor. He enquired if the house were in earnest.

Mr. Wade assured him that they were perfectly serious.

Hon. Prov. Secretary presumed that whatever the obligations of the city were, they were legal.

Mr. Young was not quite so sure of that. He argued that the obligations of the city of Halifax were rather of an equitable than a legal nature.

It rested with the house to render it legal which at present was merely equitable; unless the government is prepared to say that they will carry it to Windsor and Pictou, the obligation in my view is not binding, that is if they can get the money. The government have an official return in their possession to the effect that the work can be completed to Windsor and Pictou for one million and fifty thousand pounds. If so they should carry on the work. He did not think the bill should be passed until the government had made up its mind as to what it was about to do.

Hon. Financial Secretary—the city is bound to come in and perform some portion of the agreement they had made. It was to him a new doctrine that after a work had been so commenced—if from disaster or depreciation in Provincial bonds, or other causes, the work could not be carried out as originally contemplated—that the city of Halifax should be entirely released from a voluntary burthen imposed upon themselves and adopted by their constitutional representatives in the House. If mistaken he should like to be corrected—if not, his argument was incontrovertible.

Mr. Esso—All we ask is, that the work should be carried out in good faith, in compliance with the terms of the act.

Dr. Brown could see nothing in the act to establish the views propounded by the member for Inverness, to the effect that the obligations of Halifax were only conditional, upon the prosecution of the work to certain points.

Hon. Joseph Howe read the law on the subject, and said—Upon the faith of this Statute the people of Halifax became partners and shared the risk of failure, as they were to share the benefit if it succeeded. I believe the Attorney General can call on the Mayor for 10 per cent under that law—that is £10,000 for every £100,000 expended up to the present time, without any further Legislation. It was his opinion that Truro should be reached without delay; when that was reached there might be some difficulty—at all events all that could be expected from the government in 1857 would be to finish the road to Truro.

Hon. Attorney General—All that was required to render Halifax liable under the act was first that the works should be commenced and then should be prosecuted towards the points mentioned in the act. As the work was commenced, the liability of the City of Halifax commenced also. The point to be determined was whether we were prepared to allow the most solemn obligations to be violated upon the most frivolous pretences. He thought there could be no question as to the propriety of carrying the road to Truro. When there, it would be a question for the Government and the Legislature to determine as to the advisability of further extension, and the direction it should take. He was opposed to the practice of giving rash pledges. He had refused to give any to his constituents when running his election; but he was sorry that others had not been so scrupulous. He would ask the member for Inverness (who had repeatedly said that £1,000,000 was the utmost the country could bear), what he would think of the man who had promised the people of Annapolis a railroad in 4 years.

With regard to the manner of keeping the Railroad accounts, he confessed that he, as well as many others, was completely puzzled to understand the system pursued.

Mr. Howe—In regard to the charges made against him of intruding into Annapolis at the recent elections, said he was merely paying back a debt which he owed the Attorney General of long standing—when he (the Attorney General) had done the same thing to him when running his election for Halifax.

WEDNESDAY, April 8.

The Provincial Secretary by command laid on the table reports in connection with land damages.

Also correspondence with the New Brunswick government relative to the repair of the bridge over the Misquash River.

Hon. Financial Secretary read a letter from the War Department in connection with certain expenses relative to the celebration of the 9th of June.

Hon. Financial Secretary asked leave to introduce the ordinary bill to authorize a Provincial Loan to the amount of £10,000—read a first time.

Hon. Attorney General—In moving a resolution on the subject of the Mines and Minerals called the attention of the House to the way in

which the question stood at the close of the last session, and read some of the despatches which had been laid on the table the day previous. He explained that during the last summer certain correspondence had taken place between the parties interested in England—which he read to the House. He also stated that proposals of compromise had been made by the Mining Association to the representatives of the Duke of York—the result of which would probably be the arrangement of this question in a manner satisfactory to the Province.

Both the Colonial Secretary and the Association had suggested the idea of a delegation from Nova Scotia empowered to negotiate an adjustment. The first thing to be done was to ascertain immediately the views of the Association in reference to a settlement. He would move a resolution empowering the government to commission two gentlemen who would represent the views of both parties on this question, who would be authorized to arrange the matter to the best advantage—the consent of both being necessary before a final decision was made.

Mr. Young explained his views as to the rights of the representatives of the Duke of York. If the rights were concentrated in the Association the matter would be simplified—what he had always considered a fair compromise was to propose to the Association to retain the mines they have already worked, and to hand over all the unopened mines to the Province on condition of being exempted from the payment of one half the royalty.

Hon. Attorney General asked leave to introduce a bill to reduce the Railroad Board from six Commissioners to a Chairman and two Commissioners. Read a first time.

He also moved a resolution to authorize the government to make such changes in the Board of Works and the Excise Departments as they might deem necessary.

In answer to Mr. Howe the Attorney General stated that it was not contemplated to increase the expenses of the departments mentioned.

Hon. Financial Secretary—As to the changes in the Excise Department, the late government would probably have done the same thing as was now contemplated. It was evident from the way which the revenue in Halifax had been collected, that some change was necessary.

Mr. Young was not aware of any remissness in the collection of the revenue.

Mr. Tobin had heard the same complaint. He was much surprised and thought the matter should be looked to.

Hon. Attorney General had always thought the present system of the Excise department wrong, and he had no doubt at the proper time he would convince the house of the propriety of the proposed change.

Mr. Tobin presented the address to the Crown on the subject of the Newfoundland Fisheries, which had been prepared by the Committee.

THURSDAY, April 9.

Mr. Henry—chairman of the Committee on the subject of fire engines, reported a general bill to enable the Sessions of any County to assess the districts for fire engines.

Mr. Archibald—as chairman of the Committee on the subject of assessments reported a general bill on that subject.

The hon. Provincial Secretary by command laid on the table the report from the Secretary of the Normal School at Truro, for 1856; and certain correspondence between the Lieut. Governor and the Railway Board.

He stated that it was the desire of the Government to place every information on this important subject before the people—whatever might have been once the difference of opinion on the question of railroads the policy had now been adopted, and it was the duty of the Government for the time being to prosecute these works with all despatch, consistently with the public interests.

The first document which was read, was a letter from the Prov'l. Secretary's office to the Railway Board containing a number of queries with regard to the present state of the Railway Works.

The hon. gentleman read the answers to these several queries. He stated that it would be found from these papers that the average cost of the road per mile would be £9,000 currency, or in round numbers the cost to Windsor and Pictou will be one million and a quarter. The hon. gentleman commented at some length on the documents; and suggested that they should be printed for the information of the House.

Hon. Mr. Howe—thought it would have been better if the papers had been first read and printed; before members of Government commented upon them. He was quite prepared at any time to answer any criticisms that could be offered upon the management of the Railway Board.

As to the charge that there were not sufficient rails for the contractors, he would say that all that had been imported had been carried up by the contractors to different parts of the line—there may be more at one point than another—at all events he was ignorant of any want of rails. He was quite prepared to make any explanations when the papers were printed.

Hon. Provincial Secretary disclaimed all idea of discourtesy to the late Chairman of the Railway Board, all he wished was to throw out some hints on points that required explanation.

Mr. Young said—As he understood the report of the Railway Board, it was stated that the road to Windsor and Pictou, could be made for £1,070,000 currency. The Provincial Secretary had raised the amount to £1,250,000 by adding the salaries of the officers, and the expense of stations, &c. He believed these items were included in the estimates of the Railway Board, and therefore the statements of the Provincial Secretary were incorrect.

Hon. Financial Secretary, by command, laid on the table a number of returns of the imports and exports of Nova Scotia in the year 1856. With reference to 1857, it might be supposed

that the increase of the ad valorem duties would largely increase the revenue, from calculations he had made he found that after paying the interest of the railway debt, there would only be left £43,500 to meet the road grant and other contingencies; so that there would only be about £1000 surplus revenue, supposing that the trade of the province remained in its present state. Members would therefore see the necessity of economy when the committee of supply opened.

Hon. Mr. Howe agreed in the necessity of exercising economy.

Mr. Morrison enquired of the Attorney General what action he intended to take on the subject of the petition from Yarmouth, praying the passage of a prohibitory liquor law.

Hon. Attorney General said the question should not have been asked from him, more especially by the member from Londonderry. He was not aware that there was such a petition before the house. It was quite competent for the hon. member to take any action he pleased on the matter.

Mr. Morrison—In that case, I shall take charge of the subject myself.

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