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# THE CARLETON SENTINEL.



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By James S. S  
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## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

[From the Head Quarters Extra.]

FREDERICTON, N. B., Feb. 17, 1854.

Mr. Needham had moved the amendment, and did not repent of it, because it ought to be moved. He did not want to make a long speech, and therefore he would neither go into all the ramifications of the question, nor recapitulate what had been said by other Hon. Members; he would be brief, and at the same time explicit. When the question of Municipal Corporations was first agitated in this Province, it was simply to give the people the power to elect their own Magistrates; but when the Government introduced the bill that was now law, they declared that it was to allow the people the privilege of managing their own local affairs. He had opposed the bill, from the very first,—he had denounced it as a mockery, a delusion, and a snare; and he now repeated it. Two Counties, however, had been incorporated under the law,—he meant Carleton and Victoria; and here he would diverge a little and state what he had to say about the proceedings in the last-named County, and the conduct relating thereto. He looked upon Victoria as an incorporated County, for although the Government had withheld the Charter, they had no right whatever to do so. The law did not only say that when the Sheriff certifies the preliminary proceedings have all taken place according to law, and that two-thirds of the rate payers attending the meeting and polling had voted to be incorporated—when the Sheriff certified this, the law did not say the Lieutenant Governor in Council may issue a Charter under the broad seal of the Province, but that he may and shall do so; it was made imperative upon him to act upon the Sheriff's certificate and to pay no attention whatever to any other evidence; and if any riots had taken place, or any improper occurred in any shape, it was not the Government to notice it, but there was a legal tribunal where the parties aggrieved could obtain redress, and by which the Charter could be suspended if the Court decided that the proceedings had been interrupted so as to prevent a free expression of opinion by the persons qualified to vote. It was a pretty thing, truly, for the Government to interpose its authority, and arrest the proceedings, upon the report of a petition subsequent to the Sheriff's certificate. They had no right whatever to interfere as it was purely a matter for legal tribunals to settle. No person would accuse the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. Rice) of doing anything wrong in reference to this matter intentionally; but when he sent the Government an account of the proceedings, the Government had the Sheriff's certificate before them, and could not withhold the Charter without setting the law at defiance,—their own law, too, which they had taken so much care to rear, and nursed with such assiduity in 1851! If a riot took place, was a question that came entirely within the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court. The Hon. Member for the County (Mr. Rice) had stated that he had tried to vote and could not, and that Colonel Coombes had been beaten and driven back. Now he would ask the Hon. Member what caused the riot? Did not this same "old and respectable" Col. Coombes, give the lie direct to Paul Bardsley, and didn't that give rise to the riot? The Hon. Member knew enough of the Beardsleys,—or at all events he (Mr. N.) did—to be aware that they will not put up with the lie, and if he was correctly informed, Colonel Coombes gave Paul Beardsley the lie and immediately received a blow in the face, and this was the commencement of the riot. As to the complaint that

the Yankees living on the other side of the river came over and interfered,—why, every person that knows anything about Victoria knew very well that the Yankees were fine fellows whenever they were on the right side,—when they were wanted to sign a petition for instance—but they were very naughty fellows when they happened to be on the wrong side! (Laughter.) He would say no more in reference to the County of Victoria at present, only that the County was to all intents and purposes a Municipality, and he could put the people of that County up to a plan to obtain a Charter and no thanks to the Government. Much had been said about the working of the Municipal Corporations in the County of Carleton, and Hon. Members had coupled the establishment of the institution with increased taxation, but he had been recently informed by the Warden of Carleton, that since the County had been incorporated the greatest economy had been practiced, which had enabled them to pay off the County debt, and to have a balance on hand. That did not look like increased taxation. Reference had been made to the state of the roads and bridges in Canada, and particularly in the County of Gaspe; but that County, like all the rest of Canada, was incorporated when the Legislative Union took place, and the reason why the money had been withheld from roads and bridges since that period, was that it was required to carry on extensive public works,—works that were causing Canada to flourish in a manner almost unparalleled. He would not take up the time of the Committee by going deeper into the subject, and showing the great benefit arising from Municipal institutions,—he had expressed his opinion upon the subject every year since he had been a Member of that House. He wished to extend it to every County, town and parish,—he believed in making the law imperative, and not follow the example of the Government, who came down with the Act in their hands saying to the people of the several Counties "Here is an excellent thing, won't you be kind enough to accept of it?" (Laughter.) If it was good—if the Government were sincere in their expressions in the preamble to the Bill, quoted to-day by the Hon. and learned Member for Northumberland—let them make it the law of the land at once. This was the opinion he held in the year 1851, and he was still in the same opinion in 1854; if he had the power he would make the law imperative, and would risk his popularity upon it; but the Government are content to praise the system, but will not take any responsibility upon their shoulders. He must now crave the indulgence of the Committee while he went into personal matters, as he had been charged with what he was not inclined to submit to passively. The Hon. Member of the Government from Reg-tigouche (Hon. Mr. Montgomery) had stated yesterday that he (Mr. N.) flew out of the chair to offer amendment in the most undignified, extraordinary, and unprecedented manner. His leaving the chair and taking part in the debate was not unprecedented, as the Hon. Member had stated; it had been done the very day before the charge was made; and since this Committee had been sitting no less than three Hon. Members had occupied the chair, all of whom had done the same thing. But the moment he had done it the Hon. Member had attacked him in the manner he had described, saying he had flown away! Now he would inform the Hon. Member—who seemed big with authority because he happened to be a Member of the Government,—that so far from caring for his opinion, or asking his leave, he would fly where he liked, and when he liked, and perch on whom he liked; and it would take a sharper pair of scissors than he ever possessed to divide

wings; (laughter.) He had left the chair—of which he was in possession temporarily, during the absence of Mr. Hatheway, who was chairman of the Committee,—he had left it because he considered it right to do so, having been entrusted with the amendment the Law Commission wished to be moved as a substitute for the chapter, and whatever the Hon. Member thought of it was all moonshine to him. But he had a most serious charge to repel—one made by the Hon. Attorney General.

(See Reporter's Note at the foot of this column.)

When he was with the Law Commission he was acting as their Secretary, and wrote whatever they told him to write—he would write the Alcoran if they told him to, because he was under their orders, and doing, that he expected to get paid for. But when he was in this House he was W. H. Needham, M. P. P., and stood on an equal footing with other Hon. Members, and here, as the thought occurred to him, he could not help making an observation or two on an expression that had fallen from the Hon. Member for Charlotte (Mr. Porter) the other day; that Hon. Gentleman had said if the proprietors of the press did not take care, and conduct themselves properly, the Legislature would reimpose the postage on newspapers. He was not much surprised at hearing the Hon. Member thus express himself, but he (Mr. N.) entertained an opinion highly favorable to the press,—he considered it the fourth estate, and necessary in every country to good government, and he believed that any evils resulting from a press improperly conducted would in time work their own cure. As to Municipal Corporations, it was not an American, but an English institution; and it was one that a British Minister had recommended this Colony to adopt, as one calculated to add to our prosperity. As to the amendment, he moved it as a Member of the House, and was willing to assume the responsibility of his Act; but he had at the time stated that it was to carry out the suggestions of the Law Commission contained in the margin, and that the manuscript was placed in his hands by the leading member of that Commission, the Hon. Solicitor General. Some Hon. Members had argued in favor of proceeding with the laws, as codified, without making any alterations, but that would be useless, for if they were neither to discuss or amend anything, they might as well do what the Hon. Member for York (Mr. McPeerson) had recommended,—swallow the book at once. He had remarked, however, that Hon. Members kept crying out don't discuss that, and don't amend this, but when anything came up they wished to see altered, they forgot all their cautions to others, and discussed the chapter to its full extent, and shoved in their amendments without compunction. (Cries of "That's true!") He would now show how he had acted while working as Secretary to the Law Commission, in reference to his duty in this House. When the Commission was sitting he of course had no vote in their decision; sometimes, however, they asked his opinion, and sometimes his opinion prevailed and at other times it did not. When his advice was not taken, he felt crusty, and said to himself, "you may do as you like here, but I will do as I like by and bye, when the matter comes under the consideration of

the House." But when their Report was completed and he saw what immense labor they had formed, and the great benefits their labor confer upon the people, he then determined to hold his peace, and let the codified laws pass without finding fault. He was bound in justice to say that the condensing and codifying of all Acts into one small volume, retaining the spirit and spirit of the old laws, was a work unparalleled in the history of the world. For his own part he had devoted all his energies to the subject the last two years; he claimed no praise for doing, as he had not worked purely out of patriotic motives,—he was not such a fool as that—he had worked for pay, and expected to be well paid too; and if the House did not give him enough he would tell them of it, and he would tell somebody else about it,—the people. He would not apologise to the House for having taken up much of its time, but having acted as Secretary to the Commission he considered those explanations required of him. And now all he had to say was, that he felt a great deal better after having delivered himself. (Laughter.)

Hon. Mr. Montgomery said the Hon. Member who had just sat down had questioned the truth of what had been said about the operation of Municipal institutions in Canada, but he would reiterate what he had stated about Gaspe; the road and bridges there were in a ruinous state, the people got no assistance from Government, and would not tax themselves to keep the roads in repair. As to what he had said about an Hon. Member leaving the chair to speak on the resolution before the Committee, or to move an amendment, he had not confined his remarks to the Hon. Member, but intended them for all who had done the same thing. He considered it undignified and unparliamentary.

Hon. Attorney General would now close the debate, and he should endeavor to do so without blowing off much steam, as his Hon. colleague termed it. The Hon. and learned Member for St. John (Mr. Needham) having delivered himself, had left the House, which would prevent him from saying all he intended to say in reply to his bombastic speech, but this he would say, that if abundant presumption and abominable egotism, regardless of the premises, constituted talent, they had not far to go to find one who shone as a light of the first magnitude. He had not stated, nor had he hinted, that the Hon. Member had endeavored to pass of his own production as a recommendation of the Law Commission; he never seen the amendment until the Hon. Member left the chair and moved it. He had spoken to the leading Member of the Commission this morning about it, and told him that he should have made acquainted with, and not been taken by surprise, as he had been. But he had made insinuations in reference to the Hon. Member who was Secretary to the Commission; he was not in the habit of making insinuations; he would not follow anything to say he spoke out. He would follow the Hon. Member all through his rejoinder, but he would explain what he had been charged with as having endeavored to get money in his own pocket by altering the chapter on Mining Leases. The Hon. Member or Queen's (Mr. Earle) had moved an address to His Excellency praying that all mining leases not actually worked might be escheated. This the Government could not consent to, as it would lead to a great deal of trouble and expense, some of the licensees residing out of the Province. But as it was thought the Government should have a discretionary power in the matter, he had moved an

NOTE.—A part of Mr. Needham's speech is here omitted. He had understood the Hon. Attorney General to censure him for having moved the amendment—his own production, and ascribing the authorship to the Law Commission. The reporter did not thus understand the Hon. Attorney General, and that gentleman himself promptly denied the charge; with which denial Mr. Needham has since expressed himself satisfied. It would, therefore, be worse than useless to publish Mr. Needham's defence of his speech, and they were the