

Communications.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS.

FREDERICTON, March 6, 1852.

Dear Pierce,—The Railway Resolutions have passed the House—majority 26 to 11. The northern members voted against them, as did Harding of St. John. The Atty. General of course voted with the Government. The Government endeavoured to make it appear that the Opposition was influenced solely by local feelings and narrow sectional views, and I was sorry to find the Attorney General urging this upon the House, and also contending that the present scheme had been adopted by the Government as the most advantageous to the whole Province. He might have considered it necessary to support the measure, but surely this did not require him to offer an insult to the northern opponents, or to accuse them of narrow-minded prejudice. If our interests must be sacrificed, our feelings might have been spared. He must have known that the northern counties asked nothing more than fair play, and were satisfied to abide the decision of disinterested Commissioners. I am inclined to hope, however, that he was betrayed into some expressions used, by his eagerness to support the Government, and from the position he held in the lower house, he felt bound either to renounce the scheme and quit the Government, or to remain with them and fight it out. His character is to go the whole figure when he starts, and he can't help it. The argument of local feeling was turned against him by Mr. J. M. Johnson, who urged that had the Government wished an expression from the House, unbiassed by sectional prejudices, and simply to determine the expediency of accepting the British offer, they would best attain this by leaving the route to be defined by British Commissioners. But if their object was to get two millions into their hands, and thus strengthen themselves in office, then had they acted wisely by affirming the route to be through those Counties which could give a majority of votes. They had thus enlisted local feelings, by which alone they could hope to carry a scheme dictated by Canada—equally unjust to New Brunswick in route and amount. It was urged by the Government that this was the only line now left for consideration—that Canada and Nova Scotia would not agree to any other. The absurdity of this position is manifest. Those Provinces wanted the line more than we; they could only get it by passing through New Brunswick, and we therefore had the power to dictate, not they. Again, it is quite clear that Nova Scotia would have been with us in the northern line, and we should thus have stood two to one. Again, had the northern route been adopted, St. John would command her present trade from the western Counties by the river, and obtained a part of the trade from the eastern Counties, where she now has none; while by the other route the St. John is made to flow into the St. Lawrence, and New Brunswick trade will be lost to the City of Saint John. Canada will supply the upper country on this river, and yet retain her present trade with the North Shore. Again, an artificial highway passing through our Province parallel to the natural highway, and not far from it, cannot take more than a share of the traffic, while the eastern route would command the whole of it. The Railroad by the valley of the St. John has but one outlet in this Province, and that in the same direction; while the North Shore line would not only be thus unrivalled, but must be fed by 13 or fourteen harbours, and their rivers running at right angles to the road. In a national point of view, there can be no comparison. The one chosen will neither meet the intentions of Great Britain as a military road, nor open a country for immigration, while the one rejected does both.

It is not the least remarkable feature in this matter, that we have allowed Canada to gull us, by retaining in their final offer a condition that money must be obtained on the same terms to build from Quebec to Montreal, a million and a half more, while our Government have consented to abandon the condition that we should obtain the means of building to the American frontier. Thus the influence of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is made use of to assist a Canadian loan, while we might have commanded the influence of the other Provinces to obtain what we can never get unaided by them.

To-day the House has been in committee on the Railway Bills, copies of which I send you, and a Despatch from the Colonial Secretary, dated 20th February last, was laid before the House (of this I also send you a copy. This Despatch is in reply to a letter from Mr. Hincks, when in Halifax, but we are in ignorance of the arguments used by him. One thing is certain

—he could not give Earl Grey any information respecting the northern route thro' this or his own Province, because in the final proposition, the Canadian delegates admit that they are ignorant respecting Eastern Canada, and we know they have never visited Eastern New Brunswick. The Government sought to make much of this Despatch, but it militates more for than against the north shore prospects. Earl Grey affirms the conviction that the north shore line would be most advisable; repeats the language in Mr Hawes's letter, that the line must pass *wholly through British territory*, and merely consents to hear evidence on the part of the Provincial Governments to remove his present convictions, and make out a new case. We will yet get justice elsewhere, though denied where we had the best right to expect it. Our line is surveyed and reported upon favorably—the other surveyed and condemned; and unless a re-survey can "remove mountains," we are all safe.

Should the present Railway Bills pass, our House must be more reckless than ever yet considered (and that is needless). I cannot believe the people's representatives will consent to barter away the liberties of their constituents, and place the whole Province, its interests, hopes and freedom, in the hands of *nine* men who do now, or who may again form the Government.

"The Bill to make provision for the construction of the line," defines no route from the Canadian frontier to St. John, leaving the line to range any where between the American frontier and the Eastern counties. The York, Carleton, and other members have already taken fright at this, and people must be convinced that Mr Wilkinson's boast that a line could be found, is thus contradicted by the Government, for if Mr W. knew this, he could have said where. Nova Scotia is left to build where she pleases, even in our Province, and she will of course take the line to Pugwash harbour, and avoid Shediac. Thus the trade of the Gulf Shore and P. E. Island will meet the line at Pugwash, 100 miles from Halifax, and over 150 from St. John, and Nova Scotia will then command what of right belongs to St. John. The Bill requires us to pay five-twelfths of the cost, not to build five-twelfths of the distance. Thus we shall have to pay for crossing the Cobequid mountains, and overcoming Canadian difficulties. Again, while we were promised that there should be no sinking fund for ten years, our whole revenues will be pledged; our present tariff must remain unaltered till the principal and interest be paid up, and our Government ask the gift of five miles on each side of the road, for what purpose nobody knows, unless it be given to Great Britain, or the capitalists, as a bonus for delaying the sinking fund, or in order to make the Government a company on the conditions proposed by Mr Archibald's condemned offer.

The Loan Bill is equally absurd and arbitrary. It does not confine the Government to any terms, but allows them to take the money on any conditions, and compels the Legislature to ratify their doings by subsequent laws. If you read the Bills, you will find many more grave objections; indeed, should they pass in their present shape, the people of New Brunswick will be at the mercy of the Executive for all time to come, and the Legislature—elective franchise—in short, civil and political freedom—may be talked of as things that were; in history alone will they be found.

By the bye, should these Bills pass, what becomes of the Liquor Traffic Bill. The tariff cannot be altered, and the revenue must never be less than in 1851, and how can the £20,000 collected on ardent spirits be made up? The House will continue the consideration of these Bills on Monday, and the Resolutions caused nothing but delay; they were an entering wedge—a mere feeler. The Government learned that the House would bear much from their masters, and have laid it on thick by the Bills.

The line was to be the valley of the St. John; this the Bills say nothing of; the Bills give ten miles broad of our country, which the Resolutions hinted not of. In short, the passing of the Resolutions had nothing further to do with the question, than simply to test how far the Assembly could be moulded to the hands of the Government. They may have missed their mark, though Mr Chandler and other members of Government are constantly in the lobby of the House, to explain away those objections which may be openly urged on the floor, and which they dare not attempt as openly to answer.

I assure you that no idea can be formed of the political arena, by reading the Journals or Debates. 'Tis the 'still small voice' (not of conscience, but) of interest, which brings conviction where reason never reached; and it is only from a full understanding of the extent to which such means are successfully applied, that any idea can be form-

ed of the arbitrary, overwhelming, and destructive powers which the Government must obtain, and will as certainly wield, should the Railway Bills pass. There never was such a dangerous power in the hands of the Russian autocrat. He might be deterred by fear, or removed by the assassin; but our Government will be out of the people's reach, and beyond their influence. Death may remove the men, but will leave the many-headed hydra scatheless. Government Officials—Government School Superintendents—Government Railway Commissioners—Government hangers-on, and Government office-seekers will over-run the country; Government money will alone be in circulation, and Provincial Revenue will only be known as the Government fund. May Providence aid the people, should their representatives forsake them in this their hour of trial and danger.

FIDES.

Mr Pierce,

Without asking for, or affording an opportunity for explanation, a Requisition has been hastily got up, numerously and respectfully signed, calling upon the Honorable the Attorney General, to resign his seat as one of the Representatives of this County; and this document has been published and circulated, accompanied by isolated paragraphs from his published speeches. I deem it but fair that the repeated declarations made by the Attorney General, to the Freeholders of the County of his political creed, should at this time be brought to their recollection, that they may see the distinction he so clearly maintains between his duty on local and general measures. With this view I will thank you to insert the accompanying extracts from Mr Street's published speeches, in the next Gleaner.

Yours,

A SUBSCRIBER.

Chatham, 12th March 1852.

Extract from Mr Street's Speech at the close of the Election, in December 1834:

Gentlemen, it may be proper here to state to you my views, founded on the best authorities, in regard to how a far a member of the county is to be governed by the voice of his constituents. In all matters of local nature, confined to the county which he represents, I think the member should be governed by the voice and wishes of his constituents, although contrary to his own judgment and opinion; but in all matters of a like nature, where there is a difference of opinion amongst his constituents, and they are pretty equally divided, then I think the member should exercise his own judgment, and decide accordingly; but if there be a large majority, either on one side or the other, the Member—unless under very peculiar circumstances—in my opinion, should be governed by the majority; but in all matters connected with the Province at large, the Member has a right, and is in duty bound, to decide according to his own judgment, although contrary to the opinion of his constituents."

At the close of the Election in July 1850, Mr Street said:—

"Gentlemen, I have refused to make pledges, because I think pledges to be inconsistent with the duties of a high-minded British Legislator. Gentlemen, you send me as your Representative, not as your Delegate. In all matters of a local nature, in which the constituency agree, I conceive I am bound to carry out their views, although contrary to my own; but in all matters of a national or provincial character, I must be left free to exercise my own judgment, which will always be with a due regard to the best interests of the country at large. Gentlemen, if your representative be worthy of your confidence, your interests are safe in being thus placed; if he is not, pledges will not bind him, and you may and will be betrayed. An honest, independent legislator, unfettered by any other pledge than that of doing his duty, will be ten times more conscientious and zealous in discharging that duty, than if he were fettered and tied down as a mere Delegate. Upon such independent and constitutional principles have you returned me upon the present occasion. I have made no clap-trap promises; experience has shown me the folly of that. I feel proud in being thus returned, because I feel proud in representing a constituency, a majority of whom are possessed of such high-minded constitutional views."

At the close of the Election in February 1851, after his appointment as Attorney General, the Gleaner gives what Mr Street stated thus:

"In closing his remarks, Mr Street said, as far as our memory serves us, and if we are in error we shall cheerfully correct them—that he considered it his duty to explain to them his views on various subjects connected with Colonial Government. He wished it to be understood, that on matters of a local nature, he considered it his duty to adopt the views of his constituents; but on all subjects affecting the Province, he must be left entirely free to act, as his judgment might see fit. He assured them, that every measure brought under the consideration of the Government and the Legislature, affecting the well-being of his Constituents and the Province, should receive from him the most serious attention."

PATRIOTISM! PRINCIPLE! HONOR!

"When I forget Northumberland, may God forget me." * * * "My heart thrills with delight when I enter the confines of this noble County."

Such were the sentiments of the Honorable John Ambrose Street, *Her Majesty's Attorney General and Leader of the Government*, on a recent occasion, when seeking the suffrages of the people of Northumberland, and subsequent events have shown the value of them. Such professions served his purpose at that time. He gained his end—a re-election for the County! This was the result of circumstances, and not a matter of choice with the people. He boasted of his *principle*! his *honor*! and the great interest he had ever taken and would continue to take in the prosperity of the County. How do these professions accord with his present course in reference to the Railway? Is this a display of his *principle* and his *honor*? Is this the way he evinces his anxiety for the interests of the North? How humiliating to his *friends*—what a triumph for his *enemies*!

In vain have we sought in his exposition a justification of his conduct, or grounds for his defence. His speech proves nothing, and contains no argument to warrant the sacrifice of the interests of this County, but tends to confirm the truth of Mr Cutler's remark, that "there was treachery at the bottom—foul, dark treachery, and that the interests of the North were sacrificed." That such has been the case, no one who has watched the movement of Railway negotiations for the last nine months can doubt. What has occurred since the Toronto Convention to change the views of our Government? They say they had then agreed upon the Northern route, and forsooth, because the money for the Portland line could not be raised at 3½ per cent, our route must be abandoned! our interests sacrificed. He says—"no other course was open—it was either the Southern railroad or none." I deny that such was the only alternative. Our Government could have done in reference to the Portland line, as the Canadian Government are doing in reference to the line from Montreal to Quebec—they could have made this scheme matter of negotiation with the Home Government, or at the worst could have raised the money on the Provincial credit.

If the Attorney General had taken this stand, and was resolved to carry out the decision of the Convention in favor of the Northern route—in defence of Northern interests, as he was in duty bound to do—if he declared to his colleagues in the Government (of which he makes the empty boast of being the Leader) that they must either adhere to the policy of the Toronto Convention, or else as *Leader*, he would call upon His Excellency to reconstruct his Council, and appeal to the people. Such a resolution on his part would have saved our interests and his character, and must have been successful, for of all the Executive members in the popular branch of the Legislature, at present there, the Attorney General is, perhaps, the only one that could have been again re-elected on such appeal; and they knew too well their fate (what would now be his own!) to have risked a dissolution, and therefore there was nothing for them but submission and a Northern Railway!

Where, then, was all the boasted "*Patriotism! Honor!*" and deep interest in the welfare of Northumberland? I fear it was something like Bob Acre's courage—it had oozed out of his fingers' ends—when it involved the loss of office, and prospect of promotion; or perhaps it may never have had any existence a mere "clap-trap," a term of which I fear the frequent use by His Honor is founded on his own experience.

Is it therefore to be wondered at, that an indignant constituency, seeing their interests abandoned, should desire to relieve the Attorney General of the trouble of misrepresenting them? or that the requisition for him to resign should have been so respectfully and numerously signed, in so short a period? His warmest friends at the recent elections are now most active against him; and the very men whose influence and efforts placed him where he is, and enabled him to secure the office of which he so often boasts, fear that its emoluments have been too much for *principle*! We shall see.

But will his honor comply with the wishes of his constituents, and resign his seat, having lost their confidence? Such ought to be the course of a man of real *principle* and *honor* and he has frequently told us that he possesses both these. I trust for his own sake, and that of the County, that he does; but I must confess I have my doubts. We hope no subterfuge or excuse will be sought for by him to evade the just demands of an injured people, and that the loss of £600 per annum will not outweigh his honor.

Men of Northumberland! mark his decision and conduct on this question, and let it be the test with you of the sincerity of his professions for the last nineteen years, for it is the first time his principles have been really tried—and acts speak louder than words.

THE PEOPLE.

Miramichi, 12th March, 1851.

Mr Editor,

The constitutional rights of the people were never yet, and never can be violated with impunity. In political ignorance they may be unknown; by a tortuous and dishonest policy they may be betrayed; but let the former be once dispelled by political light, and the latter will sooner or later be overthrown. A Representative, supported by physical force or ledger influence may violate his pledges and even defy his constituency.—Let these false supports be removed and his day of reckoning is not far distant.

Our Representative, the Attorney General, is in this position. He has violated the pledges made, and time and again reiterated to his