

The Church Union Bill Was Carried by Two to One Vote

Contentious Measure was Put Through the Committee Stage Yesterday After a Brief Discussion—Opposition Leader Was Against the Bill—Warm Discussion over the Bill to Create New Constituencies in York and Charlotte.

Yesterday was a genuine field day in Legislative Assembly and from the standpoint of the man in the gallery was the most entertaining so far experienced during the present session. The two most contentious bills, that relating to church union, and the bill having to do with electoral districts, were put through the Committee stage and precipitated the first divisions of the session. The church union bill came up late in the afternoon and the House showed how it stood on this important question by promptly bowing out an amendment by Mr. Flewelling of Charlotte, the object of which was to shelve the bill until such time as the bill before the Federal parliament had become law. By defeating Mr. Flewelling's amendment, the House practically expressed its intention of passing the bill as presented and that it was it did in the end. The House practically stood two to one in favor of the bill.

The bill fixing the boundaries of electoral districts was agreed to with an amendment creating rural and urban constituencies in the counties of York and Carleton. Leader Richards and several of his followers strongly opposed the measure and trotted out the gerrymander argument, but it got them nowhere. The bill passed the committee stage by a vote of 27 to 14. Several progressive members voted with the Opposition but Leader Fawcett and Mr. Tracey upheld the position of the Government.

The business of the House is now pretty well advanced and it seems certain that prorogation will take place some time on Thursday.

Assembly Chamber, April 15, 1924.

The House met at three o'clock.

MR. POSTER presented the report of the Committee on Contingencies.

MR. PICKETT gave notice of enquiry as to the report of E. J. Ryan on the case of Inspector Jennings of Victoria County.

MR. RICHARDS rose to a question of privilege and read from the St. John Telegraph-Journal an article on the St. John bridge case in which he was represented as having urged the government to carry an appeal to the Privy Council. It was true that he had appeared before the Government in company with a delegation when the bridge matter had been discussed, but had not urged an appeal of the case. There were no reporters at the meeting so the party who gave out the information was responsible for the error. What he (Richards) had said was that the case had been before two courts and that the question of an appeal should be considered very carefully by the Hon. Attorney General. So far as he (Richards) community was concerned no great concern over the matter was apparent.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that the hon. member had stated the case fairly and he could assure him that the information in the Press did not emanate from the government.

MR. RICHARDS said that that was quite apparent to him.

HON. MR. VENIOT introduced a bill to amend the Motor Vehicle Law, which on the ground of urgency was read a second time. He explained that no permits to operate a car would in future be issued to boys under eighteen years of age, until they were able to satisfy the Minister of Public Works that they possessed the qualifications. Under the amendment no permits would be issued to persons under sixteen years of age.

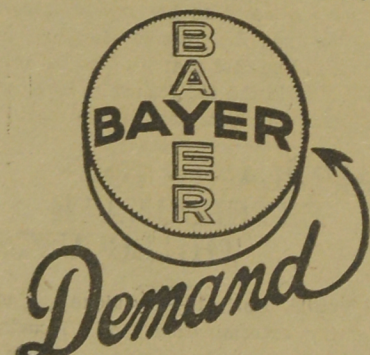
Queen Hotel Lease.

HON. MR. VENIOT introduced a bill to confirm a lease of the Queen Hotel property in the city of Fredericton to Terence V. Monahan. He explained that the lease to A. B. Pugsley had been cancelled, and one had been granted to Mr. Monahan for a period of ten years. On the ground of urgency the bill was read a second time.

HON. MR. BYRNE introduced a bill to amend the Judicature Act 1909 which on the ground of urgency was read a second time. He explained that under the amendment it was proposed to give a Sheriff of one county authority to serve a process or execution in an adjoining county, in case the Sheriff of that county was from any cause unable to act.

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HON. MR. BYRNE introduced a bill to vest certain lands in Agricultural Society No. 62 of Roserville.

The House then went into committee with Mr. Hayes in the Chair and took up further consideration of supply.

Mr. McKenna's Speech.

MR. MCKENNA, on the item of aid to Exhibitions said that not having spoken on the budget there were a few matters he would like to discuss and would endeavor to do so in a broad and non-partisan manner. A great deal had been heard with reference to Maritime rights and there seemed to be a great deal of controversy and difference of opinion as to the meaning of the term. Some claimed that Maritime rights were all a myth; that the fathers of Confederation had not promised to do certain things for the Maritime provinces and that it was a matter of understanding rather than of contract. To his mind the question was, did the people of the Maritime provinces believe in themselves? How could they expect the rest of Canada to believe in them when they did not believe in themselves. It seemed to him to be a case of looking afar for green fields and actually ignoring those near at hand. Maritime Province people seemed to prefer to purchase goods from the United States or Upper provinces rather than give their patronage to men living among them. That sort of thing would never boom the Maritime Provinces, and he wished to point out that the time had arrived when there should be a change. They had approximately one million people in the Maritime Provinces, who used two million suits a year, two million pairs of boots, and probably four million outfits of underwear. The goods could be purchased in the Maritime Provinces but the people preferred to send outside for them. He thought the average family had about \$1,000 to spend each year, which with \$200 deducted for rent left \$800 to be expended on food, clothing and household necessities. Probably \$400 of each thousand was expended at home. Why was more of it not spent in the Maritime Provinces? It was not done simply because the people of those provinces did not believe in themselves.

Too Much Talk

In regard to the proceedings of the House he thought there was altogether too much local discussion. While hon. members were sent there by their different constituencies, they should not forget that they represented the province as a whole, and should take a share of the responsibility for every county. A person going into a candy store and enquiring for chocolates would find that the bulk of the stock came from Toronto, the United States or England, but he wished to say that there were no finer chocolates in the Dominion than those manufactured at St. John, St. Stephen and Halifax. Why do not the people buy those chocolates and keep their money in the Maritime provinces? He had lately made an enquiry in regard to some biscuits which had come under his notice and had been told that they had come from Hamilton. Jos. Marven of Moncton, the Rankines of St. John, and the Hamiltons of Pictou, turned out biscuits quite the equal of anything brought in from Ontario. Why do not Maritime people patronize them and keep their money at home. The same thing could be said in regard to clothing, yet money was sent out of the provinces which should be expended on industries which provided employment for the people. Take the winter port of St. John as an example, and he would say that he did not believe that fifty percent of the people of that city appreciated its importance. He had been in St. John and had noted the great activity in connection with winter port trade and was sure that thousands of dollars must be paid out weekly in wages. An industry which provided employment for so many people must be of great benefit to the farmers and other interests of New Brunswick. He was interested in the newspaper business, and until quite recently the publishing house with which he was connected paid out \$120,000 a year to the Laurentide Paper Company of Quebec. Now that money all went to a paper mill located at Bathurst, and remained in the province. It represented money picked up here and there from the sale of newspapers and was expended in providing employment for men in the woods and in camps and also those engaged in

stream driving. The money went to Bathurst and eventually was distributed again over the province. He had no hesitation in saying that the winter port was one of the biggest things from a business standpoint possessed by the Maritime provinces. Last year the city of Portland had sent a delegation to the West to advocate the shipment of Canadian goods through foreign ports, and he regretted that its mission had been attended with success. He thought every county in the province should be interested in the port of St. John. Personally he was interested in it, because he lived in the neighboring county of Kings which shipped hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of milk to St. John and Moncton. The loss of winter port business was a loss which everyone would feel. He hoped that the government and city of St. John would follow the example of Portland and send a delegation to the West and urge the use of Canadian ports, not only for export trade, but for imports under the British preference. By providing facilities for handling shipments at the lowest possible cost of St. John was helping the farming interests. Times might not have been as brisk during the last winter but for the large quantity of potatoes shipped from the port of St. John. Prior to last year the port had been ill-equipped with potato warehouses, and in consequence many cars had to be kept on the tracks for days. The federal authorities should be prevailed upon to provide still better facilities so that port costs can be reduced, as it must be remembered that port charges are a material agency in keeping business out of any port.

Keep The Boys Home.

Much had been said concerning the necessity of keeping the boys from leaving the province, and he thought he had suggested means by which they might be kept at home. An hon. member for Charlotte (Flewelling) said that the issuing of permits to fishing parties going into the woods should be done away with, but he could not agree with him. A glance at the figures showing the destruction caused by forest fires last year would convince hon. members that it was necessary to take every precaution. The loss occasioned by forest fires had no doubt been responsible for many young men leaving the province. In his own county he knew of many acres of productive land which had become a wilderness because of fires which had started on a windy day. They would have had fewer fires in the past had there been a policy of forest conservation and protection such as the government was carrying out today.

The C. N. R. Surplus.

Hon. members had all heard of the surplus of seventeen million dollars which the Canadian National Railways claimed to have earned last year. He would like to mention some facts in connection with that surplus. The town of Amherst had lost some of its most important industries, while the Moir Chocolate works was about all that remained in Halifax. Industries had closed down in St. John and other places, and he believed that excessive freight rates on the Canadian National Railways was one of the causes. If the closing down of industries meant success then the C. N. R. had obtained its object.

Road Improvements.

With regard to the Government's policy for improving the roads he wished to point out that the sum of fifty million dollars was annually left in the State of Maine by visiting tourists. It seemed to him that that was a good class of business for New Brunswick, and in order to get it they must have good highways. They must also have good hotels, and in that connection he was glad to note that St. John was making a start, and that the C. N. R. was going to provide a modern hotel on the North Shore.

Hydro Development.

He represented a county which had more miles of hydro transmission than any other county in the province. There had been a lot of talk made in his county in connection with the Musquash development, and an effort had been made to create the impression that there was no water. When the town of Sussex was in darkness for a short period there were some politicians who actually seemed to be pleased over it. He thought that the matter was deserving of treatment in a broader way. Now that the province had hydro every person in the province should be interested in its success. His own town of Sussex had been one of the first to avail itself of hydro development. At that time the cost of lighting was seventeen and a half cents per kilowatt and there was no power available. Today the cost of lighting was eight and a half cents and the cost of pumping water for the use of the town had been reduced by hydro. The people of his county were showing their appreciation of hydro and applications were coming in from all sections, from people anxious to avail themselves of the system. He knew of one place eight miles from a railway station where the farmers had their houses lighted by electricity and were using the power for their milking machines. Yet hon. members opposite had been declaring that hydro was a failure. In his opinion the whole trouble was due to the fact that there was too much peanut politics and that was one reason why the Maritime Provinces did not go ahead. He believed the development of Grand Falls would be a great boon to New Brunswick. He agreed with other hon. members on his side of the House that the development should be carried out on business principles. He favored the appointment of a commission composed of strong men, and would have the Hon. Premier act as chairman ex-officio without salary.

The Health Act.

Before closing he wished to say a few words about the Health Act. He had discussed that Act from every platform in Kings County and he did not think the result had affected either his health or his political standing. It was true the assessment for Health purposes in his county had been rather high, but it was due to the fact that for two years payment had been withheld for political purposes. Two years ago the municipality had declared against the domination of George B. Jones and had arranged a settlement with the Health authorities. The per capita expenditure in Kings County for the Health Act was equal to ten cents per capita. In contrast to that he would point out that the Dominion Government had last year expended \$1,685,997 in safeguarding the health of live stock, including pigs and hens. Mr. Harding, a neighbor of his hon. friend (Dickson) said that he had collected thousands of dollars as compensation for the loss of his cattle from tuberculosis. The federal government also expended annually the sum of \$175,268 in looking after insect pests of the Dominion. Surely if looking after the health of animals justified an expenditure of over one million dollars, it was worth ten cents per capita to the women of the province to have the health of their children attended to.

There had been some complaint from hon. members opposite because the price of school books had been advanced. Considering the fact that paper had risen in price from four cents per pound in 1914 to twenty-two cents in 1918, and that printers wages had advanced in proportion, it was not surprising that school books had advanced in price. The policy of providing school books at cost as originally laid down was being carried out by the present administration.

Rural Valuations.

With regard to rural assessments and valuations he had been surprised on going over the list to find that some counties sent in no returns whatever, while others mentioned only the bond issues. The county of Kings had a real estate valuation of \$4,414,000, and a personal property valuation of \$468,040. The village of Rothesay showed the largest percentage of personal valuation, and the personal property valuation of the town of Sussex was given at \$345,900. The personal assessment for the remainder of the county amounted only to \$50,000. He was citing figures merely to show that there was something wrong with the system of valuation. In some places the tax for school purposes amounted to only seventeen cents on a hundred dollars while in other places it ran up to six and seven dollars. The valuation system was very unfair and the people in back districts would never get justice until the government appointed a provincial board of valuers, composed of men who would do their duty irrespective of local conditions.

Oleomargarine.

As a representative of one of the finest dairying counties in the Maritime Provinces, he was interested in any steps being taken to prohibit the importation and manufacture of oleomargarine. At present the federal government permitted oleomargarine and the products from which it was made to enter the country free of duty, while butter going from Canada to the United States had to pay a duty of eight cents per pound. He did not think there was much reciprocity in that sort of thing. He was strongly of the opinion that the importation of oleomargarine should be prohibited.

With regard to roads of his county he had made representations to the Hon. Premier with regard to repairs that were needed and hoped to have the work done during the coming season. Some of the roads had been neglected for more than twenty years but he was hopeful of having them all looked after in the near future. In closing he wished to say that if hon. members spent as much time fighting for the Maritime Provinces as they did one another they would have a very fine community. He thought they should emulate the Western spirit when they asked for something at Ottawa. They should have a Maritime Party, which would work together, and instead of selling their provinces to outsiders sell them to themselves.

MR. SCOVL, in discussing the item for Exhibitions, said he hoped there would not be any further reductions. He had been connected with the Exhibition at St. Stephen for the past twelve years, and could testify to the great value it had been to the agricultural interests. He had noted a marked improvement in the quality of both live stock and farm produce placed on exhibition during that period.

The Committee rose and reported progress.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that at 11 a. m. Wednesday the House again would consider supply.

Church Union Bill.

The House went into committee with Hon. Mr. Foster in the chair and took up consideration of the Church Union Bill.

MR. FLEWELLING seconded by Mr. Vanderbeck moved an amendment to defer consideration of the bill until after the passage of the bill before the Dominion Parliament. He said that in moving this he wished to state his position as that of one who always had been an advocate of church union and who when he first heard of this bill had been pleased. He still held the same opinion with regard to church union but regretted that he had to say that he could not satisfy himself that the bill was a fair one. Had an attempt been made by the promoters of church union to make the terms attractive the situation would have been different. The entrance of churches under those conditions would have been voluntary and not coercive. The Legislature of Saskatchewan had taken a similar view of the measure and in Ontario the opinion had been the same. No injustice would be done any one to defer action a year. Unfair canyasses had been used by supporters of the bill in reference to the opposition to

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it. The attempt had been made to make it appear that partisan spirit had entered into the matter but he would point out that the bill would receive support from his side of the House. He intended to deal with the subject according to the dictates of his conscience. Some had suggested that pressure had been brought to bear in order to produce opposition to the bill but he would say that none had been brought to bear upon him.

MR. BENTLEY said that the amendment was along the same line as those which had been opposed before Corporations Committee. Four provinces already had passed this bill and there was also the practical certainty of the Dominion Parliament voting for it. He could not understand how his hon. friend (Flewelling) could support Church Union and yet move this amendment. He would ask all supporters of the Union to vote against it.

Amendment Voted Down.

The amendment was voted down twenty-six to fifteen. The bill was taken up section by section.

MR. YOUNG moved an amendment to the effect that provision be made for the Presbyterian Church to preserve its identity, congregations to vote themselves into the United Church, taking their church property with them, the necessary provision to be drawn up under the direction of the Attorney General acting in conjunction with council or solicitors representing the opponents of the Bill.

The amendment was lost.

MR. YOUNG moved an amendment to Section 3 to the effect that the church property should be located between the three churches concerned and the United Church under the Royal Commission mentioned in Section 9.

HON. MR. VENIOT—Will the hon. member explain the effect of the amendment?

HON. MR. ROBINSON—That is already in the bill.

MR. YOUNG said a legal point was involved which he would like the hon. leader of the opposition to explain.

Mr. Richards Opposed.

MR. RICHARDS said the crux of bill had been reached. It was necessary that he express his own views and he would take this opportunity. The intention of the amendment was that the property of the various churches should remain as it is until the congregations should vote themselves into the United Church. It was proposed that Section 8 be amended so as to give congregations the power to vote themselves into the proposed church and take their property with them. It was difficult for this Committee to deal properly with any proposed amendment. He had voted for the original motion to defer action until the Federal bill should be passed. It was the logical proceeding that the Federal bill should come first. It was the principle of the bill that the three churches would be taken into the United Church by legislation and then would be given an opportunity to vote themselves out. The right to being about such union had been challenged by those who opposed the bill, both at Fredericton and Ottawa. He would take it that the decision should be according to the judgment and conscience of every member. He had given the closest scrutiny and attention to the arguments which had been set forth for and against the bill at the hearings held in that chamber. After that he had spent several days in earnest consideration of the bill. In fact he had studied it more carefully than any measure that had come to his attention while a member of the Legislature. It was difficult to accept the principle of the bill as fair, just and reasonable. He wished to vote intelligently on the matter, and he believed every hon. member wished to do the same. While the course of action of each one might not meet with popular approval it was his right to take the guidance of his own conscience. He felt as far as his judgment and conscience went he could not be in sympathy with the general principle of the bill. In that connection he would point out that any one could support Church Union and yet not accept this bill. It was one thing to believe in Union and another thing to accept the means by which that Union was to be brought about. Action was liable to misconception, and that was why he was taking this opportunity to make his position clear. One way to bring about Union would be to unite the three churches and then give an opportunity to vote out of membership in the new church. He did not question the motives of those who were trying to bring about union, but it did not lie in any organization to say to hon. members of this Legislature that they must do so and so. Each had a right to his views and to an expression of them. Another way to bring about union would be as outlined by opponents of the bill, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church if need be, and the Congregational Churches might and should preserve the identity of each church, it being provided that congregations in each church could vote themselves into Union. This was the converse of the Principle of the bill before the Committee. In Ontario the identical bill had been up for consideration and the second principle which he had outlined had been that adopted.

HON. MR. VENIOT—That is the effect of the second resolution offered.

The Ontario Amendment.

MR. RICHARDS said that was the effect of the motion made by the hon. member for York (Young). In the Private Bills Committee of the Ontario Legislature that had been adopted. He realized that those against the Church Union Bill were charged with being obstructionists, with opposing Church Union in principle, with living in the past, and so on. Yet there was the action of the Ontario Private Bills Committee which had taken the same view. Of course it was said that New Brunswick was not bound to do what was done in Ontario. He could not satisfy himself that the principle of the bill was the correct one to adopt. It had been challenged in Ontario and it had been challenged at Ottawa. He had been of the opinion that this Legislature could not wait until the Federal Parliament had decided the matter. However the bill had got past that stage, but in consideration of the sections it could be decided which principal should be applied. It was almost impossible in this Committee to have a really valuable discussion on the bill. That discussion should be conducted in such a body as Corporations Committee where hon. members would be free and explanations could be made. If the bill could not be referred back he hoped full and sufficient opportunity for consideration of amendments would be taken. In his own case his decision was free of any influence no matter of what nature.

HON. MR. FOSTER said if it was the wish of any hon. member to speak after an opportunity of considering the amendment the section might be allowed to stand.

MR. RICHARDS said that it would be difficult to get the significance of the amendment unless other and following amendments should be considered.

HON. MR. VENIOT said it would be better for the Committee to have all the amendments.

MR. YOUNG read other amendments, the sum and substance of which was to let the separate congregations stay out of Union and vote themselves in.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that opponents of the bill must have considered the probable effect of their amendments or they would not have been prepared to move them. It would remain with the supporters of the bill to decide if they required more time in which to consider the amendments. If they felt that they were able to form a judgment at once he did not see why delay should take place.

Hon. Mr. Robinson.

HON. MR. ROBINSON said he was an adherent of one of the churches concerned in the amendment, the Methodist. That church was not asking for such an amendment, neither were the congregational. Why give it to them if they did not want it.

MR. YOUNG said it was a matter of courtesy as it placed the three churches in one position.

HON. MR. ROBINSON said the Methodists and Congregationalists did not want to be put in that position. This was the moment of decision. After twenty years of careful consideration the three bodies concerned had decided to enter into union. Certain of his Scotch and Irish friends said that they did not want to leave the name Presbyterian, but by taking the attitude they did they were practically telling the Presbyterians that they did not know how to govern themselves. As far as the Methodists were concerned he was not a very good one, but considered them as good as the Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists as good as either. It was his opinion that the bill should be accepted. The best legal minds had been engaged upon it. It would be hard on the Methodists and Congregationalists to refuse to let them carry out an agreement for Union into which they had entered.

The Attorney-General.

HON. MR. BYRNE said that one found himself in a difficult position in regard to this bill. It was his desire in casting his vote to cast it along the lines outlined by the hon. leader of the opposition, according to the dictates of conscience and in the light of the presentation of the case on the floor of the House some days before. He had considered it his first duty to ascertain if the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church as a constituted authority and speaking voice, had acted constitutionally in entering into an agreement for Union with the Methodist and Congregational (Continued on Page Three)

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