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VERBAL DUEL IN LEGISLATURE
BETWEEN DR. M. C. ATKINSON AND
WILLIAM WILSON RECALLEDNoted Combat Between Private Members Was
Staged During Session of 1892, When the House
Was in Committee—Personalities Were In-
dulged In.

"Observer" in a recent issue of the Saint John Telegraph-Journal, reproduced reports of fiery speeches delivered in the Legislature in 1892 by William Wilson, then a representative of York and Dr. M. C. Atkinson, a member for the county of Carleton. Hon. A. G. Blair was then Premier and Hon. D. L. Harrington, leader of the Opposition. Hon. A. S. White was the speaker, but the house was in committee of the whole, otherwise such plain talk on the part of the members would not have been allowed.

Dr. Atkinson passed away during Premier Blair's term of office and a few years later Mr. Wilson was created a County Circuit Judge, filling out his term and retiring on a pension.

How It Started

It appears that the feeling between Mr. Wilson and Dr. Atkinson was not very cordial. There had been an enquiry by a committee of the House under the chairmanship of Mr. Wilson into the celebrated Quinn charges and considerable ill feeling had been engendered as the opposition contended that the chairman had ruled out too many questions which they considered pertinent. During a debate in Committee of the House, Dr. Atkinson cut loose and referred to the member for York as a frousy-headed, bleary-eyed buffoon, etc.

Mr. Wilson's Rejoinder

The following day when the House was again in Committee, Mr. Wilson came back at him as follows:

"Now Mr. Chairman, I will refer for a few moments to the hon. member for Carleton. He took occasion the other night to refer to me in terms which I suppose he thought to be scathing in the extreme, and he seemed to have the support and sympathy of the hon. member of the opposition. He said I was frousy-headed, bleary-eyed, fould-mouthed member of the government party and that I voted at the bidding of the government. I could have withstood an attack on my political career, my political knowledge—upon anything—but when the hon. gentleman attacked my beauty I was quite overcome and nothing but a sense of duty to my country would have enabled me to bear up under the attack. This attack has interfered with my prospects. I had intended, in company with Hon. Thomas R. Jones, to have my picture taken so that we might together hand down to posterity our features for their admiration and delight. But the high-minded, truth-loving, whole-souled member for Carleton has blasted my prospects and that of my friend Mr. Jones. I do not however blame the hon. gentleman, upon second thought, for contempt of my beauty arises from an habitual practice of gazing upon his own beautiful features.

Like Piece of Dough

The mirror discloses to him a cranial formation in the form of a sock head without compare in the range of human experience. Its frontal and parietal bones, its occipital protuberance are of such exquisite rotundity of formation that he has nothing but contempt for those less lavishly endowed. tempt for those less lavishly endowed. as adorn no other human being since the flood. They wink and blink like the stars of heaven when heaven's eternal melodies roll, and it is a pity that they are not put to a better use than pouring out political filth for the use of the opposition. Then he sees a nasal organ that is a thing of beauty. I can compare it with nothing but a bit of dough, too small for a biscuit, too large for a tart, which I used to see my mother after she had cut out a pan of biscuit, stand in the corner of a bread board for future use. When he views that cavity which hangs by the middle that tongue of scandal, what feelings of delight assail him; and then that smile—such a smile—it lingers like an unpaid bill, it is as receptive as a baby's mouth, as infectious as small-pox—it would make a monkey laugh and send a thrill through the whiskers of a baboon. Nor is this all, Mr. Speaker. When he considers his ancestry, when he realizes that he is a cross between a baboon and a lath; that he can trace his pedigree through scoundrels for a thousand years, he is overjoyed and has nothing but contempt for ordinary human beings. But sir, in all this beauty there is danger. I would advise him to study the story of Narcissus, who, we are informed, fell in love with his own beauty, and so violent was his passion that he dwindled away and finally was changed into a flower. Such may be the fate of the hon. member for Carleton, and if such should happen, the members would adorn their center tables with the dear doctor and then they would have a "thing of beauty and joy forever."

Dr. Atkinson's Reply

Dr. Atkinson said: "No doubt the member for York, having unburdened himself of this speech, which he has evidently been incubating for several days, feels greatly relieved, and notwithstanding the grotesque figure he has drawn it will probably be admitted that I do not compare unfavorably with the honorable member. But, Sir, neither he nor I have much to do with our personal appearance. Our personal conduct is a different matter, and in that regard, whether a member of the municipality of Carleton or a representative of that county in this assembly, I do not fear comparison with the member for York. He does not hold that office now, but was dismissed by the

(Continued on page six)

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