

Legislative Proceedings.

FREDERICTON, March 23, 1848.

DEAR SIRS.—This morning, the bill to provide for the collection of duties on goods remaining in the warehouse on and after the 1st day of April next, which had been entered at the Customs and Treasury, under the duties imposed by Imperial Acts, and by the Revenue Law now in force, was brought up for a third reading, and before the question was put that it do now pass.

Mr. Ritchie rose and said, that when this bill was in Committee, he had stated that it was a difficult subject to legislate upon, and that he had some doubts if the plan adopted in the present bill was the best which could be devised to meet the case. He still entertained these doubts, but as this measure had been prepared by the Law Officers of the Crown, under the superintendence of the public officer at the head of the Treasury department, he did not feel himself at liberty to thrust his opinions on the Committee. He did not say the present bill would not meet the case; he hoped it would, and if he had been persuaded it would not, he should have felt it his duty to propose amendments. His opinion was that the better mode would have been to introduce a bill making all goods remaining in the warehouse on and after the 1st of April, which had been imported previous to the time when the Law repealing the Imperial Acts came into operation subject to the same duty, and treated as if imported on that day. The Crown Officers had adopted a different course, and all that he now wished to say was, that if the present bill did not meet the cases which might arise, that the responsibility rested on those who had prepared the measure, as he could not take the responsibility of altering a bill sent down under such circumstances.

Mr. Partelow said, that although he had brought in this bill, and although he and every hon. member on the floor of that House who gave assent to its becoming a law, was in some degree responsible for its operation, yet it was not his bill, and in taking charge of it in that House he assumed no further responsibility than any other hon. member who agreed to its passing; he hoped it would meet every case which could arise, and, coming down as it did, after having undergone the scrutiny of the proper public officers, he did not feel disposed to meddle with its details.

Mr. R. D. Wilmot had pointed out cases which might arise which he did not think this bill would meet. He hoped it would meet them, but as he had not been supported when he called the attention of the Committee to the subject, on a former day, he could not hope that his objections would have any weight now; he merely wished to say, that if such cases as he had pointed out should arise, he was persuaded that this bill would not meet them.

Mr. Woodward believed it was his hon. colleague's (Mr. R. D. Wilmot) opinion that cases might arise which no bill would meet. That was not his (Mr. W.'s) opinion; he thought every possible case could be guarded against or provided for, and he thought the present bill would do so; but if his hon. colleagues were of a contrary opinion, it was their duty to move that the bill be recommitted and the case fairly argued out before allowing that bill to pass.

After several other hon. members had given their opinions, the question that the bill do now pass and be sent to the Council for concurrence was put and carried without a dissenting voice.

On motion of Mr. Partelow, the House went into a Committee of the whole on a bill to revive, continue, and amend the Act to provide for the establishment of Boards of Health within the Province.

Mr. Partelow explained that the object of the present bill was to revive an Act passed in 1833, which authorised his Excellency the Lieut. Governor, by and with the advice of his Executive Council, to appoint Boards of Health in the different Counties throughout the Province, when there existed any necessity for doing so. The want of such a law had been felt last year; and at the present time, when the cholera was approaching Europe, and when there was a possibility of this scourge soon visiting our shores, he, for one, would not like to take the responsibility of leaving the Executive Government of this Province without the power to adopt such sanitary regulations as the emergency of such a case might demand; he had therefore prepared this bill to arm the Government with the necessary powers conferred by the Act which had expired.

Mr. Boyd objected to the passing any act which did not contain a clause restraining the expenditure of money, unless with the sanction of the Executive Government, and pointed out abuses which had occurred under the old law when it was in operation.

His honor the Speaker was also in favor of restraining the Boards from incurring expense, unless sanctioned by the Government.

A debate of some length ensued, which ended in Mr. Partelow introducing an additional section, by which it will not be competent for a Board of Health established under the authority of this Act, to expend money without the approval of his Excellency in Council. After the introduction of this second section, the bill passed, and the Committee reported as agreed to with amendments.

On motion of Mr. Partelow, the House proceeded to the order of the day. Hon. members being called to their places, the House went into a Committee of the whole in further consideration of supplies to be granted for the public service.

A number of resolutions having passed without much debate, the resolution appropriating the sum of £850 for the support of the Lazaretto on Sheldrake Island, the consideration of which was postponed yesterday on account of the thinness of the benches, was brought up for discussion, and produced as usual a very protracted debate. The circumstances connected with this establishment, and the disease which called it into existence, are so well known, and the opinions of hon. members for and against it have been so often reported, that it is unnecessary to follow the speakers through this lengthy debate.

The principal opponent of the grant was his Worship the Mayor, who regretted exceedingly that he had not been present on a previous day, when the bill to continue the Act authorising this establishment was under discussion. Although that bill had passed, he was constrained to oppose this grant; and, if he stood alone, he would record his name against it. The hon. member then took a short review of the previous proceedings which had been had with reference to this matter, characterizing the report lately made by the Commissioners appointed to examine and report on the disease, as most conclusive on two points, 1st. That the disease was neither infectious nor contagious, and that the present establishment was a failure, and did not answer the purpose for which it was intended.

Mr. End followed in an exceedingly lucid speech, in which he charged the Mayor with not speaking by book when he said the establishment had done no good—appealing to the humanity of the committee to pass the grant—and imploring them not to cast loose on society these unfortunate lepers, to perpetrate and spread this frightful disease.

The hon. Mr. Rankin, who seldom makes a speech on any subject, spoke at some length on this warmly advocating the cause of these wretched beings. Mr. Rankin stated that when the Lazaretto was first established, there were 21 inmates afflicted with the dreadful disorder, eight of whom had died; four had made their escape, and nine still remained in the hospital. He believed there were about thirteen others in various parts of the country, all of whom, or mostly all, would be induced by persuasion to come to the island. There had been three children born on the island who had been sent out to board, only one of which had been procreated there. The hon. member then went into the items of the estimates which made up the proposed grant, and urged the necessity of its being sustained.

Mr. Carman supported the grant in an excellent speech, in which he repudiated any idea of interested motives on the part of the supporters of the grant, in wishing to continue the establishment on Sheldrake Island.

A number of hon. members gave their opinions in support of the grant, among whom Mr. Street was conspicuous for the force of the arguments he advanced in favour of keeping up some establishment, where these people could be taken care of, and Mr. Hannington for the feeling manner in which he appealed to the hon. member from Queen's (Mr. Gilbert) how much money he would take in his hand to place in the scale against the chances of a member of his own family being afflicted with this disease. He contended money was no object whatever, if they could save one human being from this most loathsome disease.

On the question to sustain the resolution, there appeared—yeas 22, nays 10.

On the question to fill the blank with £800, there appeared—yeas 20, nays 12—so it was carried in the affirmative.

The chairman then reported progress, and asked leave to sit again to-morrow.

Yours, &c. SYZIGIA.

FREDERICTON, 24th March, 1848.

DEAR SIR.—On motion of Mr. Partelow the House went into a committee of the whole, on a bill relating to the Saint Andrews and Quebec Railway.

Mr. Partelow explained that this was a bill which had been prepared with great care by the Railroad committee, in conformity with suggestions made in a despatch from Earl Gray, accompanied with documents containing the remarks of an officer of the Government on the Act of the Legislature incorporating that company, and the present bill was intended to meet the suggestions thus made. There was nothing in the bill to which it was necessary to call the attention of the committee. There was no money in it at any rate; it neither gave nor took anything from the Province, he therefore supposed it would pass without opposition.

The bill was then read section by section, and passed the committee without amendment.

On motion of Mr. Partelow, the House again went into a committee of the whole on a bill to amend and extend the provisions of the Act to facilitate the construction of a Railway between St. Andrews, in the County of Charlotte and Woodstock, in the County of Carleton.

Mr. Partelow said that this was a very important bill, and deserved the serious attention of the committee, for although it did not take immediately anything from the revenue of the Province, it involved prospectively the payment of a large sum of money. By the Facility Bill, which had passed last year, the St. Andrews and Quebec Railway Company were guaranteed the payment of five per cent on £100,000, for ten years, and a free grant of twenty thousand acres of land, on either side of the road, in such blocks as the Company should select, after the completion of the road from St. Andrews to Woodstock. The present bill affords still greater facilities for obtaining the means to carry out this object; it extended the rate of interest from five to six per cent, and the time of payment from ten to twenty five years. It also provided that the company, instead of getting 20,000 acres of land, in blocks, should be entitled to receive on the payment of the expenses of survey, 40,000 acres of land, in alternate lots of 100 acres each, on either side of the Road. These were important additions to the former act, and it would be for the committee to support the recommendations of the Railway committee, or reject them, as they might think proper. The Railway Committee had had before them a number of gentlemen from Charlotte, who gave them the fullest information. This had also been in communication with the officers of the

company, and he believed if this bill passed, the work would be proceeded with at once. The hon. member from Charlotte, who was more conversant with the local state of the question, could, however, give them more information than he possessed, and he should leave it for him to make any further explanation. He was in favor of the bill, and hoped it would pass.

Mr. Boyd then rose and delivered a very lengthy speech full of statistical information, and containing his views of the advantages which this Railroad would secure to the community.

Mr. End followed at some length in favor of the measure.

A very long debate then ensued, and a great number of divisions took place with the names recorded each time. The committee first divided on the preamble of the bill, which was carried 19 to 13, then on the rate of interest, which was carried by the same vote; on the division on the extension of the time the vote stood 18 to 14; and on a further division on the quantity of land, being 40,000 acres, it was lost by a majority of one; on another division that the section of the old bill be continued giving 20,000 acres of land in blocks to be selected by the company, and the new section struck out, another division was had, which was also carried—yeas 17, nays 15. The bill was then reported, and on the question to accept the report the House divided—yeas 16, nays 16. His Honor the Speaker then said that he decided on accepting the report of the committee.

A Message from His Excellency the Lieut. Governor, accompanied by copies of several despatches relating to the Customs establishment in this Province, was brought down to the House by the Hon. Mr. Baillie and read at the Clerk's Table. One of the despatches contains the decision of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury on the future Customs establishment in Saint John, and other ports in this Province. If I mistake not, the whole expense of the future department is between two and three thousand pounds per annum.

I believe there was nothing else transpired to-day to which it is necessary to call the attention of your readers.

Yours, &c. SYZIGIA.

FREDERICTON, 25th March, 1848.

DEAR SIR.—This has been a day devoted almost exclusively to supply, and the number of resolutions passed was immense. The speeches were generally like McDonald's prayer, short but pithy, and never, perhaps, in the record of Legislative proceedings, in this Province, was an equal amount of business gone through with in one day. It would be idle to attempt to enumerate the grants passed, as neither your space nor my time would permit a recital, but to give you some idea of the matter, I may mention that the simple resolutions measured in length upwards of ten yards.

The first grant, on which any thing like regular debate occurred, was one, moved by the Hon. Mr. Baillie, to pay off the debt on the Hospital, established by Lady Colebrooke and the contributors to the Ladies benevolent Society. The grounds of the opposition to this grant were, principally, that this Hospital was a refuge for persons who otherwise would have gone to the Alms House, and that, thereby, the people of Fredericton had been saved their maintenance, and ought to pay the debt out of their own pockets.

It was contended on the other side, by the hon. mover, Mr. L. A. Wilmot, Mr. Taylor, and others, that the parish of Fredericton had nothing, whatever, to do with the matter. That the inmates of the Hospital belonged to other Parishes, and even other Counties. That the medical attendant, Dr. Toldervy, did the Hospital duty gratis. That nearly £300 had been raised by an oratoria and Bazaars. That the subscribers had already contributed handsomely; and Mr. L. A. Wilmot added, that under the circumstances, and out of respect to the objects which the benevolent Lady, the founder of the institution had in view, he was inclined to support the grant. That it was a simple question between the Treasury and his Excellency the Lieut. Governor, and that if the House did not interfere, the head of the Government would have to pay the amount, which is upwards of £100, out of his own pocket.

Mr. Partelow opposed this grant, on the ground that the names, composing the contributors to the Benevolent Society, were those of ladies and gentlemen, who could well afford to pay the amount without troubling His Excellency about the matter.

After rather a warm debate the grant was carried by a small majority.

The hon. Mr. Baillie, also, moved a grant to pay off the debt due on the infant school in this City, established under the same patronage, and supported by the same society, and an annual grant of £50 from the Legislature.

This grant, Mr. Partelow supported, and after a rather sharp discussion it was carried.

Mr. Ritchie moved a grant to S. P. A. Phillips for £36, for the Head Quarters newspaper, furnished the Legislature, containing the reports of the debates of last year, which also brought up a singular discussion. This grant was opposed by Mr. Gilbert, from Queens County, in language which I had hitherto supposed no man, pretending to the character of a gentleman, would have used. It must have been disgusting to every one who heard it, and was a tissue of inflated stuff intermixed with vulgar venom, such as I never before heard showed out on reporters, or any body else, and was received by the house with roars of derisive laughter. Dr. Thompson and Mr. Barrie opposed the grant in a manly and straight forward manner, using language

which could not be personally offensive to any one, and as widely different from the frantic raving of the *Bull of Bashan*, who preceded them, as civility and common courtesy is different from privileged scurrility and low vulgarity.

Mr. End in supporting the grant, spoke of the manner in which the proceedings of the House were reported in the Head Quarters and of the general tone of that paper in terms which must have been more gratifying to its editor than the receipt of double the amount of money under discussion could possibly do. I do not for particular reasons, wish to transcribe Mr. End's remarks, but this I will say, that without taking any credit from the other reporters he paid that individual a compliment of which the cleverest man in existence might be proud. A word of approbation from a man of Mr. End's ability in any thing connected with letters, is ample compensation for the torrent of unmeaning abuse which was heaped on reporters in general by the member from Queen's of self reporting notoriety and although the praise awarded, was much greater than could be merited by the person on whom it was bestowed, it can hardly fail to stimulate him and others to redoubled efforts in giving fair and impartial reports, and lead to a discontinuance of ungentlemanly and personal offensive language in News paper discussions.

Mr. Boyd corroborated every word which had fallen from the hon. member from Gloucester and after a few explanatory remarks from Mr. Ritchie the grant was sustained without a division.

The St. Andrews and Woodstock Railway facility bill was, on motion of Mr. Partelow, recommitted and the 20,000 acres was decided to be given to the company in alternate lots instead of blocks as was the case when the bill passed the committee on the previous day. Mr. Boyd made an excellent speech full of information on this subject, which I will send you before it makes its appearance elsewhere in print. This bill was finally passed without further amendment.

The House also went into Committee on a Bill brought in by Mr. Fisher to authorise a commutation of the Fees paid to the Judges of the Supreme Court during the lifetime of the present incumbents, and to provide for their payment into the Treasury as vacancies occur. Progress was reported on this Bill.

Mr. R. D. Wilmot from the Committee appointed to take into consideration the present depression of the Commercial interests of the Province and the state of the Currency, reported a Bill to provide for the appointment of Commissioners to issue Provincial Paper. This Bill was read a first time by its title and it being nearly dark the House adjourned.

I may add that intelligence has been received that the state of His Excellency's health is such as precludes the hope of his being able to come up to Head Quarters to pass the Revenue Bill, and that there is every probability of the House being commanded to attend His Excellency in St. John. The rumour here is that the House or at least the necessary number of members will leave the place on Wednesday evening and that the Legislature will be prorogued on Thursday in your city. This rumour has been the cause of the activity to-day, and will cause railroad legislation until Thursday comes round. I have heard that the idea of this hasty sending to the right about is unpalatable to many hon. members.

Yours, &c. SYZIGIA.

FREDERICTON, March 27, 1848.

DEAR SIR.—I have just returned from the House of Assembly, after witnessing another most fatiguing day's work, in supply, which was accomplished with a greater degree of harmony than could have possibly been anticipated. The rumour to which I alluded on Saturday, has now become certainty, and the House will leave for St. John on Wednesday afternoon, to meet the head of the Government, and to be prorogued.

Mr. L. A. Wilmot alluded to the matter in his place in the House, this morning, and read a resolution which he had intended to offer, which expressed an opinion disapproving of the House being prorogued until the business of the country was fairly completed.

Several hon. members concurred with Mr. Wilmot on this point, but after a short debate the hon. member concluded to withhold his resolution for the present. There was an immense amount of business disposed of to-day, without debate. The House sat as long as they could see to do business, and supply is nearly closed, so that every thing connected with money, will be ready by Thursday. The way the clerks in the House, and those in the Committee rooms are worked at present, is worthy of notice. They had to take a *spell* on Sunday, and I suppose they will not have an opportunity of sleeping more than an hour a night, until the House be prorogued. The reporters have had the hard work long enough—the well paid clerks have now to take their full share of the fog; and taking one day with another, they will earn their money pretty well this Session.

Yours, &c. SYZIGIA.

FREDERICTON, 28th March, 1848.

DEAR SIR.—The House of Assembly have for the last half hour been doing business by candle light, having commenced at nine in the morning and continued until a quarter to seven doing business constantly. They have adjourned only to meet again at eight o'clock, and complete the passing of the Bill for providing for the extraordinary services of the country.