

BREEZY DISCUSSION.

Members of the Legislature Paid
Their Respects to Each Other
in Vigorous Fashion.

MR. FLEMMING'S ABSENCE FROM HIS
DUTIES CRITICIZED BY PREMIER
AND ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Opposition Leader to the Rescue Called Forth
Lively Retort from the Premier.

DR. PUGSLEY SLASHES A ST. JOHN EDITOR AND IF
HE HAD TIME WOULD CALL OFFENDER BEFORE
BAR OF THE HOUSE.

In the legislature Wednesday afternoon, on the third reading of the bill to compensate Judge Steadman for his outlay in establishing the rights of riparian proprietors to the fisheries, Mr. Maxwell read a letter from J. Willard Smith of St. John, stating that Mr. Edgar Hanson was equally entitled to compensation.

Hon. Mr. Tweedie—As far as I could ascertain Judge Steadman was the only one who expended any money. Mr. Hanson, who was a clerk in the provincial secretary's office at a salary of \$900 a year, having become incapacitated for work is now receiving a superannuation allowance of \$600.

Mr. Hazen said that similar representations had been made to him with regard to Mr. Hanson, and it was also said that the late Mr. Henry Phair had an equal claim with Judge Steadman. Had the government any evidence with regard to the amount that Judge Steadman had actually paid out. The costs of the suits were paid by the government and one should not be paid without considering the claims of the others. The fact that Mr. Hanson was superannuated did not affect the matter.

Hon. Mr. Tweedie—The government had sufficient evidence before it to fix the amount that Judge Steadman had paid. This was the first he had heard of Mr. Hanson's claims. No application had been made to go about looking for claim. No application had been made to the government on behalf of Mr. Hanson or the representatives of Mr. Phair.

Mr. Murray said he was in full accord with the leader of the opposition in regard to this matter. A claim had been filed sometime ago by J. Henry Phair and Edgar Hanson, which he would proceed to read. This document which detailed all the circumstances of the case bore no date, but was addressed to the Hon. Robert Duncan Wilmet, who ceased to be governor in 1885.

Hon. Mr. Tweedie—I never saw that document.

Mr. Whitehead—I urged Judge Steadman's claim, but at the time I did not know that Mr. Hanson had a claim. If he has I will be glad to advocate it.

Mr. Copp drew the attention of the government to the salaries of the registers of deeds, some of which were receiving much less than their labours entitled them to. In Westmorland the register only received \$2,000, out of which he had to pay nearly a thousand in clerk hire. The fees of the office have increased very largely in recent years. He thought there ought to be a revision of these salaries.

Hon. Mr. Tweedie—This matter has been brought to the attention of the government, and will be dealt with at the next session of the legislature.

REPORT ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Mr. Osman presented the report of the public accounts committee.

Mr. Morrison said that as one of the committee he had not signed the report, although he agreed with a large portion of it. But he didn't think that it went far enough. What he found fault with was the absence of proper vouchers, especially with regard to the expenditure on roads. He would call attention to the accounts of the provincial hospital, which showed a deficit of some \$17,000, an increase of \$3,000 over last year. He observed that the sum of \$2,395 had been paid to the Bank of New Brunswick for interest, which would represent an over draft of about \$40,000 at 6 per cent. He thought we should not be paying this large sum for interest. The amount asked by the government for running the institution was not sufficient. He also objected to the manner in which the game protection accounts were kept. A balance of \$10,000 was shown against this account, which Mr. Flewelling said had been accumulating for years. As a matter of fact it appears that the receipts exceeded the expenditure by about \$3,000.

He also objected to the unequal manner in which the third revisor was paid. In Northumberland he got \$6, while in York County he received \$20 for performing the same duties.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley—The amount paid by the county council to its own revisors determines this.

Mr. Morrison—The vouchers of the supervisors of great roads were in many instances very unsatisfactory. The board of works is responsible for the expenditures, and it is idle for them to say they cannot get better accounts. The same thing exists in other departments of the government. There ought to be a statement of each day's work, and of the rate of wages in every account. As regards bye-roads, no less than 179 bye-road commissioners, representing an expenditure of about \$10,000, did not send any returns in at all. They treated the government with indifference.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley—Can you tell how many of this 179 were appointed by the county councils?

Mr. Morrison—Very often the government ignores the men appointed by the councils and appoint other men. Then there is the question of over draft for roads. While some counties have money to their credit, the County of Kings has an over draft of upwards of \$11,000, which is \$3,000 more than last year. I think that the head of the department should see that this system does not continue. There was a large expenditure on a bridge in Westmorland County, for which there is no proper voucher.

Mr. Legere—With regard to that expenditure, it was for an abridgement and the money was paid on account of the work on my recommendation.

Mr. Labillois—The work was also examined by the provincial engineer. We have not had a speech this session that is so much in favor of the highway act as that made by my hon. friend from Northumberland. I said last year that with 1300 to 1400 bye road commissioners half of them appointed by the municipalities, it was impossible to get full returns or vouchers for expenditures. This year 179 of these people have made no returns while of the 168 supervisors appointed by the government we have returns from 165. Now there will be about 180 officials charged with the expenditure of road money and full returns will be exacted from each of them. This year we expect to be able to clear up the business of the old road supervisors.

Mr. Flemming—I see in the report of the Board of Works accounts in the Auditor General's report that the sum of \$83,392 was expended on permanent bridges. The chief commissioner in reply to my enquiry stated the total sum at \$125,238, the balance over the \$83,000 being charged to suspense account. Now I complain that there is no detailed statement of these expenditures and that they have not been subjected to any audit. They were not inquired into by the Public Accounts committee. Now I submit that as a bad system.

Mr. Osman—No mention was made of this item before the committee and it was not enquired into.

Hon. Mr. Hill thought that the government should adopt a more thorough system for the prevention of forest fires such as they have in Maine and British Columbia.

A MAN HATES HIMSELF

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BILLS INTRODUCED AND AGREED TO.

Hon. Mr. Labillois introduced a bill to make further provision for permanent bridges. He explained that the amount required would be \$300,000 to go over a period of two or three years. On motion to read this bill a second time Mr. Hazen objected.

Hon. Mr. Jones introduced a bill to amend the Supreme Court Act, and the Table of Fees Act. He explained that it provided that every writ issued out of the Supreme Court or County Court shall be served by the sheriff or a deputy appointed by him. That the fee for travelling shall be 7½ cents per mile and on every execution returned nulla bona 50 cents. On motion to read this bill a second time Mr. Grimmer objected.

The bill in amendment to the Supreme Court Act was recommitted, Mr. Osman in the chair.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley said he proposed to strike out the references to St. John with regard to the judges appointed to try non-jury cases and to make the act general so that when the chief justice appointed a judge to sit on non-jury cases he would as far as possible appoint a judge who was a resident of the county in which the circuit was held. Another section which he proposed to add was that where a defendant who had been held to bail is rendered by them and the bail discharged he may give a bond to the sheriff conditioned on giving special bail within 20 days. The bill was agreed to.

The bill amending the Highway Act was recommitted and the section repealing the special act of the parish of St. Marys was struck out.

The following bills were agreed to with amendments as reported by the respective committees, Mr. Copp in the chair.

An act in further amendment of the laws relating to civic election in the City of St. John; an act to authorize the City of Fredericton to issue debentures to pay off its floating indebtedness; an act to further empower the City of St. John to furnish water to St. John East; an act to amend the acts incorporating and relating to the town of Woodstock; an act to incorporate the Buctouche and Rexton Railway Co.

A WARM DEBATE.

The bill, an act regarding the assessment of the property of the Street Railway Companies in the City of St. John, was taken up for consideration in committee, Hon. Mr. Pugsley moving the amendments of which he had given notice and explained at previous meetings of the committee.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley said—Before this bill passes I will take the opportunity to refer to some observations which have been made by certain newspapers reflecting upon members of this House, the action which members have seen fit to take regarding certain measures up here for consideration. Those reflections are entirely unwarranted, I appeal to every member of the House to bear me out in the statement that no attempt has been made unduly to influence any member in exercising his best judgment in respect to these matters. If such attempts should be made I am sure they would be resented. Every member of this House, I am sure, feels the responsibility resting upon him as a representative of the people and feels his duty to his constituency and to the province to use his best judgment upon all matters brought to the attention of the House and upon which we are called upon to legislate. The impression has gone abroad because of unwarranted statements made in certain portions of the press, that the members of this House have been influenced to a line of action in connection with certain St. John bills that would not have been pursued had not such influences been present. That is entirely unfounded and misleading and does an injustice to this House. The question was asked in one paper last night if the money was jingled before the members to influence them to vote a certain way upon this bill now before the committee. If it was not so late in the session and members are desirous of getting away tomorrow, if possible, I would have the editor of that paper brought before the bar of the House and compelled to answer as to why he made such imputations against the representatives of the people and against this legislature. I do not believe there is a legislature anywhere inspired with higher motives or more sincerely desirous of doing its duty.

Hon. Mr. Hill—From observation both in and about the House I state it as my belief that the statements of the St. John press that efforts were made to unduly influence members in their action on bills before the House were entirely unfounded and entirely false.

Mr. Flemming—I wish to take this the first opportunity I have had, to place myself on record as opposed to the way in which the bills from St. John have been treated by the committees. I do not think the St. John bills received the consideration due them. I believe, for instance, that St. John had a right to an exclusive franchise for lighting on the west side of the harbor; and I believe, also, that the St. John Street Railway Company should be taxed. St. John sent several bills here for enactment and every one has been so mutilated and cut up that the city will scarcely be able to recognize one of them when it goes back to them. St. John elects a council to do its business for them and when that council, after deliberation, sends to this House bills which they deem in the city's interest, I do not think it the right nor fair thing that those bills should be amended and mutilated so that they could not be recognized by the people who sent up the originals.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley—The hon. member from Carleton has been away a good deal of the time this session. I do not think that he has been in his place in the house more than a fortnight altogether, and now he comes here and tells us, who have given attention to our legislative duties day after day, that we have not treated bills fairly. Why? Because business was not suspended and these bills held over until the hon. member returned, and he pronounced upon them. Must the whole legislature wait while the hon. member is away, attending to his private business, and does he say that we have not fully considered bills, until we have heard his judgment upon them? Is that the stand the hon. gentleman takes? That is the position he is taking today. I think that he is only trying to get a little cheap notoriety because some of the papers stated that St. John was not being used fairly. My hon. friend has not consulted his leader in this matter, or he would have learned that the hon. leader of the opposition and myself stood shoulder to shoulder in regard to some of the amendments proposed so some of these St. John bills. It is my opinion and a matter of personal knowledge that the members of the house, government and opposition, have given the most faithful attention to their duties, and have attended the municipalities and corporations committees day after day and have given the fullest possible consideration to every bill that has come before them. I am proud of this house for its record in this

regard, and in no legislature anywhere can there be found members who are more faithful in the discharge of their duties, or who give more time and attention to their duties than does this house, and it is not right that a member who absents himself for a large part of the session and is presumably attending to his private business should stand up here and say that due consideration had not been given to bills. I repeat in the house what I said the other day in committee, that much of the legislation that is sent here from St. John is not in such perfect state that the house can pass it without the fullest possible consideration, and we spend days and days in trying to get such information in regard to these bills as will enable us to form an intelligent opinion upon them. The members of the common council and the members for St. John City are often lacking in information that it is very essential

the committee should have. Why, up to this moment we do not know the widths of the streets of the City of St. John, nor how certain proposed legislation would have affected the rights of the railway company with regard to those streets.

(CONTINUED ON THIRD PAGE.)

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