

THE RESTIGOUCHE ELECTION.

Evidence at Opening Session of Enquiry was not of a Startling Nature.

OPPOSITION CANDIDATE'S AGENT AT BALMORAL SWORE ELECTION WAS FAIRLY CONDUCTED.

Bottom Falls Out of Mr. Hazen's Charges.

The investigation into Mr. Hazen's charges in connection with the recent by-election in the county of Restigouche was commenced by the legislative committee on privileges, Wednesday morning. Premier Pugsley presided, and there were quite a number of spectators in attendance, including Mr. James Reid, M. P. for Restigouche, and Mr. W. A. Mott, ex-M. P. of Campbellton.

Mr. Diblee read the minutes of the last meeting and reported that he had issued subpoenas for the witnesses asked for by the committee.

The premier suggested that the witnesses should be called into the room one at a time, the others to remain outside until wanted. The newspaper reporters and only those directly interested in the matter were permitted to remain in the room.

The premier did not think it was necessary in the case. All the members of the committee, he said, were lawyers, and should have no difficulty in arriving at the facts. He did not think Mr. Currie or Mr. Reid should be called upon to retain counsel, nor was it advisable for the province to do so.

It was finally agreed that Mr. W. A. Mott should be allowed to make suggestions in regard to the examination through members of the committee.

Mr. James E. Stewart of Dalhousie, the defeated opposition candidate for Restigouche, was the first witness examined. He stated that the election was held on January 2nd, and he and Mr. Currie were the candidates. Dennis Arseneau a government sealer, was deputy returning officer for Balmoral, where witness stood on election day. He said that the poll was held in the school house and he gave the committee a description of the building. There was a screen up in the room, but no table for the marking of ballots. Witness was in and out of the school room during the day, as also was Mr. Reid. He thought about one-third of the voters went behind the screen to vote.

Others stood in front of the deputy returning officer's desk while placing their ballots in the envelope. The witness protested to the deputy returning officer against the method of voting and he replied that it was very little difference. Mr. Reid handed ballots to many voters as they entered the room, and they deposited their ballots in his presence. When the witness protested, Mr. Arseneau would tell the voters to go behind the screen. A small brown envelope, open at one end, was used in the booth. A constable was in attendance all day.

Cross examined by Premier Pugsley the witness said that he had read in the act that a table was required behind the screen. He thought that section 5 of the act dealt with the method of voting. Mr. Reid handed the ballots to many voters as they entered the room, and they deposited their ballots in his presence. When the witness protested, Mr. Arseneau would tell the voters to go behind the screen. A small brown envelope, open at one end, was used in the booth. A constable was in attendance all day.

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Mr. Reid, the witness said, was a farmer and lived at Balmoral. He said that he had worked for Mr. Stewart on election day. He was not one of those who voted, but he was not one of those who voted. He was not one of those who voted, but he was not one of those who voted. He was not one of those who voted, but he was not one of those who voted.

that the screen in the corner was about six feet high.

To Mr. Hazen, the witness said that he employed no labor in Balmoral.

To Premier Pugsley he said that some of the men in Balmoral were quite independent, but there were others who might be afraid of losing a job of work, and were subject to ledger influence. He could not swear that he knew of a single voter who had deposited the same ballot placed in his hands by Mr. Reid. Some electors had been followed by Mr. Reid towards the ballot box but the witness, though pressed on the point, could not recall their names. The witness did not offer a ballot to all the electors who came into the booth.

The witness was further questioned by Hon. Mr. Sweeney and Mr. Clarke but nothing new was extracted from him.

Mr. Joseph LaPage was next called and sworn. He said he was a voter in the Parish of Balmoral and had voted in the election of January 4th. When he entered the booth Mr. Reid offered him a ticket, but he had declined to accept. Mr. Arseneau held the envelope for the witness and he placed his ballot into it. He was not told to go behind the screen.

To the Premier Mr. LaPage said he got his ballot outside the building. He saw the screen in the polling booth, but did not want to go behind it. He did not care who knew how he voted and Mr. Arseneau held the envelope so that he could get his ballot into it with greater facility.

To Mr. Hazen he said that Mr. Arseneau retained the envelope in his hands.

To the Premier he said that Mr. Arseneau held the envelope so that witness could get the ballot into it. He did not see the ballot deposited in the box, but was sure that it had been done.

To Mr. Clarke the witness said that he did not know where Mr. Arseneau had got the envelope or what he had done with it.

To the Premier—Mr. LaPage said that at the time of the election he was working with his brothers for Mr. Reid and kept on working for him until the season's operation was finished. His brother gave him his time and he went to Mr. Reid's store and got his pay. The fact that he had voted for Mr. Stewart made no difference with Mr. Reid.

Mr. Amable LePage was the next witness examined. He said he was a farmer and lived at Balmoral. He saw Mr. Reid when he went to the poll to vote. Mr. Reid offered him a ticket, but he declined to accept it. Mr. Reid told him to go ahead. Mr. Arseneau gave him an envelope and he put his ballot into it. He was not told to go behind the screen.

To the Premier the witness said that he saw the screen in the corner and knew he could go behind it if he wanted to, but was not told to go. He did not care who knew how he voted. The witness was asked if the people of Balmoral voted, and said he could only speak for himself. He was independent and always voted as he liked. He knew Thomas Savoie as an honest man. He saw Henry Bernard and Joseph Landry on election day, and thought they were celebrating a little.

Mr. Clarke next took the witness in hand and questioned him in regard to the screen. He thought that it was there to be used by electors who did not want people to know how they voted. He was not one of those who voted, but he was not one of those who voted.

After a few further questions by the Premier the witness stood aside amidst great laughter.

Mr. Joseph Tardie said that he had voted in the Parish of Balmoral on January 2nd. Mr. Arseneau gave him a ballot, but did not tell him to go behind the screen.

To Premier Pugsley, the witness said he had worked for Mr. Stewart on election day. It was generally known that he was supporting Mr. Stewart. His ballot was folded when he put it in the envelope, and was therefore secret. He knew what the screen was for, but he did not want to use it.

Mr. Peter Poirier, the next witness was unable to talk English, and Mr. N. A. Landry was sworn as interpreter. He said that he had worked in the woods and at the time of the election was working for his brother-in-law. He had voted at the election. He saw Mr. Reid there and he gave him a ticket. Mr. Arseneau held an envelope and witness deposited his ballot in it. He was not told to go behind the screen.

To Premier Pugsley he said that he could not say whether or not Mr. Mott had selected only such witnesses who had not been told to go behind the screen. He folded his ballot and nobody could tell how he voted. He saw the screen and thought it was for the use of timid people.

At one o'clock the enquiry was adjourned until 7 o'clock Wednesday evening.

EVENING SESSION.

The investigation was continued on Wednesday evening, but, as in the morning, the evidence did not disclose anything of a startling nature. The only thing likely to develop from the investigation is a good bill of costs, which the province will have to pay.

Mr. Thomas Savoie, who was Candidate Stewart's agent at the Balmoral poll, on being sworn said that he was a farmer by occupation. He had at one time worked for Mr. Jas. Reid. Quite a number of people in the parish worked for him. The witness identified his signature to a statutory declaration, which he gave before Mr. Mott in January last. Mr. Hazen started in to examine the witness on a statement made in the affidavit, but the Premier objected to him adopting this course and Mr. Hazen did not pursue the matter further. The witness in reply to a question, stated that Mr. Reid was in the polling booth all day and met the voters as they came in and handed ballots to some of them. Some of the voters took the envelopes from the returning officer and others allowed Mr. Arseneau to hold the envelope while the ballot was placed therein. The witness heard some conversation between Mr. Stewart and Mr. Arseneau about a table, but could not remember it. He also heard Mr. Stewart say that the voters should go behind the screen. There was nothing behind the screen on which the ballots could be placed. The witness made a second declaration at the request of Mr. Arseneau, although he told him at the time that he did not want to interfere with the first declaration as evidence, but the Premier objected on the ground that the voter's testimony, and as the witness was present there was not necessity to submit declarations.

Mr. Clark said that according to the strict rules of evidence the declaration was not admissible, yet he thought that Mr. Hazen should be allowed to examine the witness on the subject of the declaration.

The committee stood 4 to 1 against Mr. Hazen's contention, and he withdrew the declaration.

To Premier Pugsley, the witness said that he was a political friend of Mr. Stewart. He had heard Mr. Arseneau read the law prior to the opening of the poll. The witness did not claim the right to mark his ballots behind the screen. There was an ample supply of ballots in the room for both candidates. He had not asked Mr. Arseneau to place a desk behind the screen. Both parties agreed to leave ballots on Mr. Arseneau's desk. A voter could, if he wanted to, take one of each and go behind the screen and deposit it in the envelope. He heard Mr. Arseneau tell some of the voters to go behind the screen, but many of them declined to do so.

The witness was next questioned in regard to the declaration he had given to Mr. Arseneau. He was told that he had said that Mr. Arseneau had acted as returning officer on a number of occasions and witness had never heard any complaints about him. When Mr. Stewart asked him to do so Mr. Arseneau invariably requested witness to go behind the screen. The envelopes used at the poll were all alike. They were a little hard to open, but the voting he declared was secret. It was about twenty feet from the desk to the screen. Some of the voters told to go behind the screen failed to do so. As far as witness could tell the election was conducted according to law. Mr. Reid and Mr. Stewart both tried to get all the voters they could. So far as he saw and according to the best of his judgement, Mr. Arseneau conducted the election in a fair and honest manner. Most of the voters Mr. Reid was thirty feet away from the returning officers desk and had his back towards it. The witness assured the premier that he thoroughly understood his questions.

Mr. Clark the witness said that he could not tell how many of those who voted were employed by Mr. Reid, but it was quite a large number. He could not say that anyone in Mr. Reid's employ had refused to take a ballot from him. The ballots of each party were printed on the same kind of paper.

To Mr. Sweeney, the witness said that he deposited his own ballot without going behind the screen. An envelope had previously been handed to him by Mr. Arseneau.

To the premier, the witness said he knew most of the voters who were for Mr. Stewart. He did not think that very many of them went behind the screen. Most of them got their ballots outside of the building.

To Mr. Hazen, the witness said he was checking the list and had no opportunity to canvass the voters. Only one voter at a time was admitted to the polling booth.

To Mr. Robinson, the witness said that Mr. Reid did not follow any voters to see how they voted.

To the Premier, the Premier said that after receiving their ballots from either Mr. Reid or Mr. Stewart, the voters were left free to vote for whom they pleased.

Mr. Henry Napoleon Bernard said that he went to the poll on January 2nd and received a ticket from Mr. Reid. He folded the ballot and placed it in an envelope which Mr. Arseneau held in his hand. The witness had worked for Mr. Stewart at the time and had bought goods from him. The witness did not go behind the screen to vote.

To the Premier, the witness said that he saw the screen, but did not go behind it. Mr. Reid did nothing to help him. The witness assured Hon. Mr. Pugsley that he voted just as he pleased and had not been influenced in any way by Mr. Reid.

Mr. Clark took the witness in hand for a short time, and tried to mix him up a bit, but without success.

To the Premier, the witness admitted that he had told Mr. Stewart on one occasion after the election he would have voted for him but was afraid of Mr. Reid. He was "full"

of satisfaction.

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He—A sore throat!

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7:00 a.m.—Woodstock and Gibson Branch Stations, daily.

WAY MAILS—East Side St. John River.

7:00 a.m.—For Keswick Ridge, Southampton, etc., Mondays and Thursdays.

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7:00 a.m.—For Springhill, Kingsclear, Prince William, etc. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

9:30 a.m.—St. John River via Steamer.—For Ormoco, Sheffield, Gagetown, etc.

9:15 a.m.—St. John, etc., C. P. Railway stations, East, Nova Scotia and P. E. Island.

10 a.m.—For St. Mary's Ferry, Gibson and Maryville.

WAY MAILS.

2 p.m.—For Nashua and St. Mary's Ferry, daily. New Brunswick, New Maryland, Hanwell, Lower St. Marys and Royal Road. Wednesdays and Saturdays.

4:15 p.m.—For Gibson, Maryville, Boiestown, Doaktown, Blackville, etc., Chatham, and I. C. Railway Stations, north and south.

4:45 p.m.—For St. Stephen, W. A. Stock, United States, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and North West West Provinces.

8:15 p.m.—For St. John, etc., Nova Scotia and P. E. Island.

4:30 p.m.—British mails via New York, Mondays and Thursdays.

MAILS RECEIVED.

9:30 a.m.—From St. John, etc., and Nova Scotia. From Hamtown, Royal Road, etc.

11:00 a.m.—From Nasonworth and New Maryland, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

12:00 noon.—From Montreal, Ottawa, Northwest Provinces, etc., and United States.

1:20 p.m.—From I. C. Railway Stations, North Shore and Quebec.

St. John River via Steamer.

5 p.m.—From Ormoco, Sheffield, Gagetown, etc.

9:05 p.m.—From Woodstock and Gibson Branch Stations, daily.

8:20 p.m.—From Nova Scotia, P. E. Island and St. John.

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7:00 p.m.—West Side River, St. John.—From Meductic, and Way Offices, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

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