

REPORT OF CONTINGENT ACCOUNT COMMITTEE

Hon. Mr. Seymour brought up the First Report of the Select Committee, charged with the duty of examining the contingent accounts of the Senate for this session, as follows:

1. That with the exception of the appointment of Clerk of the Senate, Usher of the Black Rod and Sergeant-at-Arms, which are considered to be Crown officers, all other officers of the Senate, as well as all salaries of officers, are and ought to be in the appointment of the Senate, and under the control of the Senate.

2. That no officer of the Senate shall be liable to be displaced, except by order of the Senate.

3. That the duties of Sergeant-at-Arms to the Senate, as well as those of Usher of the Black Rod, may, and should be discharged by the same individual.

4. Your Committee do not recognize the existence of any officer or servant of the Senate at the opening of the session, with the exception of Crown appointments above referred to, and they propose at an early day to report, for the consideration of the Senate, such a staff of officials, with such salaries as they may think necessary for the efficiency of this branch of the Legislature.

The honourable member proceeded to describe at some length the practice of the House of Lords in the appointment of its officers. Prayers were said in that House, but they had no Chaplain, the Lords, spiritual, discharging that duty. The honourable member then alluded to the way in which in the past in Canada, the patronage of the Legislative Council had been delegated to the Speaker, who had made new appointments and increased salaries as he deemed advisable. Exception had been taken in the House to the exercise of such power, and a long and somewhat acrimonious debate with closed doors had followed. Complaints were made by the officers of that Chamber that they were not placed on an equality with those of the Legislative Assembly, and the result was a considerable addition to the emoluments of those gentlemen. By adopting the report and vesting the appointments directly in the House itself, they would be strictly conforming to the practice of the House of Lords, and of the Legislative Council of the Maritime Provinces. He would now move the adoption of the report.

Hon. Mr. McCully seconded the motion.

Hon. Mr. Tessier thought it would be better to move the adoption by paragraphs, for differing as he did on some points with the majority of the Committee, he wished to have the opportunity of offering a few remarks.

An Hon. Member—You were the only dissentient, I believe.

Hon. Mr. Tessier—No, the Hon. Mr. Allan agreed with me. He objected particularly to the third paragraph, and his objection, as he conceived, was on a matter involving a principle. The Officers of the House, whatever might be their positions, were entitled to its protection. Now, with respect to the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, the proposition that he should also discharge the duties of Sergeant-at-Arms was, as he (Mr. Tessier) conceived, an invasion of that officer's rights. The implied understanding with him was that he should do certain things and those only, and although the duties appertaining to this officer might perhaps not be regarded as very onerous they were of a peculiar nature and light, as they were even, some of the honourable members might not be able to discharge them so gracefully. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) There was a high dignity and importance attached to the office in England, and the incumbent was regarded as a person of eminent rank. He also objected to the fourth paragraph as neither moral nor equitable. Some of the officers whom it would affect had held places in the Legislatures of Canada for upwards of thirty years, and at this time of the day to ignore their existence and claims, as the report proposed to do, was not as he conceived just. The honourable member then quoted the following passage from "Todd's Parliamentary Government in England," which he thought worthy of the serious consideration of the House:

"Whenever it is deemed advisable, in furtherance of proposed reforms or retrenchments in the public service, to dispense with the services of any particular class of public employees, it has always been customary to respect the claims of existing incumbents, by allotting to them suitable pensions or retiring allowances. It was well said by Edmund Burke, whose patient labors in the cause of national retrenchment were so eminently successful, that it was neither wise, expedient, or just, to interfere retrospectively with places or pensions; that reform ought to be prospective; that the duration of the life of a nation was not to be compared with the short duration of the