

THE HERALD

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SESSIONAL NOTES.

When the orders of the day were called on Tuesday March 29, the Leader of the Government moved the order for the third reading of the cold storage bill. The Leader of the Opposition called attention to the fact that the order referred to by the Premier was not on the order paper at all. The point was debated by the Premier, and Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Wyatt, and Mr. Cumiskey. Mr. Speaker reserved his decision on the point, and on motion Mr. Mathieson resumed the debate on his amendment to the motion for the third reading of the bill. The true theory of Government said he is that the Legislature is supreme in all matters relating to finances. With so many safeguards was this principle hedged round, that requests for the expenditure of public money had to be twice pronounced upon by the House. First by a resolution introduced after the recommendation of the Crown had been obtained. If this double permission were not required, the provisions for the public revenue, known as supply could be authorized by simply passing the supply bill, in the same manner as any ordinary act. It is well known that this is not the course followed in the matter of supply. In the first place, the assent of the Crown is expressed in the transmission of the estimates of expenditure; next a resolution is put through the House, authorizing that a supply be granted to his Majesty, then the motion to go into committee of supply is made, going rise to the budget debate. The Leader of the Opposition contended that the bill before the House should have been introduced in the same manner as the supply bill. He argued at length, and quoted numerous authorities to back up his contention. The bill was defective, he pointed out, on the grounds he had taken, and the defects in it cannot be cured. The only remedy is to commence over again.

Mr. Wyatt continued the discussion on the lines taken up by the Leader of the Opposition. He referred to the ground taken by the Leader of the Government, that the security was ample and involved no risk. There could be no certainty of this, and he was convinced there was in this case, a direct liability which would be whenever the bond holders found that any of the conditions had not been fulfilled. The authority for guaranteeing the bonds was direct and absolute. He read from Bourinot to prove his contention. The conditions of the bill, he said, were such that they created a contingent, as well as an absolute liability. Should there be a loss to the Province in consequence of this act, the Government are responsible for such loss. Unless the authority of the Crown and a resolution precede such a bill it is void and of no effect. He read from Bourinot a case proving that all propositions that may involve the expenditure of public money, should be introduced in the manner outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. From the Journals of 1897 of this House, he quoted a case relating to the matter of cold-storage. This bill was introduced by author-

ity of the crown followed by resolution. Several other quotations were made from our Provincial Journals bearing out these contentions. "Contingent or prospective" claims, says May, should be introduced in the manner argued by the Opposition.

Mr. Arsenault referred to the subterfuge put forward by the Government that New Brunswick had passed a bill in the manner followed by the Government in this case. If New Brunswick does wrong, should we do wrong also? It was clear from May and Bourinot that "prospective or contingent" liabilities should be anticipated in the way the opposition contended. Our own Journals contained a sufficient number of cases to bear out the contention of the Opposition. The amendment was defeated on strict party lines 15, to 12.

On the motion for the third reading of the bill to amend the Charlottetown incorporation act, Mr. Mathieson moved the following amendment. That section 5 of the bill be amended by striking out the words: except that there shall be no appeal from the assessment for permanent sidewalks and any judgment obtained under this section shall be final and conclusive. This amendment suffered the same fate as all others presented by the Opposition; it was lost on the same party division as usual 15 to 12.

Mr. McKinnon moved an amendment providing for voting by ballot in civic elections. This amendment was quickly killed by the Government voting solidly against, the division standing 15 to 12.

After several third readings, the House on motion of Dr. Warburton went into committee on the automobile bill. This bill was to amend the act prohibiting the running of automobiles on the public roads of this Province. Mr. Palmer moved that the Speaker take the chair. This motion was seconded by Mr. Laird and was briefly discussed by Mr. McKinnon, the Leader of the Government. Hon. Mr. Hughes, Mr. McLean, Mr. Prowse, Mr. Arsenault, Hon. Mr. Richards and others. The motion for the Speaker to take the chair was then put and carried, nemine contra decim. This was slaughtered in its infancy the bill intended to reverse the act prohibiting the running of automobiles on our public roads, and none so poor as to do it reverence.

ment's scheme has broken down. The administration of the public roads; of every department of the Government's service has been a failure. All this has taken place in face of the solemn promises of the Leader of the Government in his platform previous to the last election. Instead of collecting our claims against the Dominion Government, he now proposes to increase the taxes on the farmers. This Province, said Mr. Mathieson, is the only Province in the Dominion that imposes a direct tax on land, with the exception of British Columbia. The Government of Nova Scotia, for instance, makes large grants of public money to the municipalities which these spend on roads that are roads; not mud roads, such as we have. This money is not spent to buy votes, as is the road money of this Province. Whenever the rights of this Province and the rights of Canada come in conflict, the Leader of the Government may always be counted on to favor Canada against his Province. Ever since the present Government came into power we have been promised great things in the way of increased receipts from Ottawa; but little or nothing has been done. All these promises have been simply for election purposes. The Leader of the Government has arrived at such a position in this matter that he has abandoned all hope; suppressed all effort, and occupies a suppliant attitude and stands ready to accept from the Federal authorities whatever they wish to give. Had he a spark of patriotism; were he a British statesman, worthy of the name, he would resign the functions of Government and allow some one else to take up the work. In face of the Premier's failure to secure our claims from Ottawa, the Leader of the Opposition enumerated the large grants the new Provinces have been constantly receiving from the Federal Government. He condemned in emphatic terms, the principle of any one holding a brief or receiving emolument from the Dominion Government being allowed to control the destinies of any Province. In face of the reiterated demand for cheaper schoolbooks, the Government appointed a commission, solely for the purposes of delay, and all the people have got is an increase of our debt to the tune of \$4,000 for the Commission, and no one knows how much more we shall be called upon to pay them. The report of the Commission has not yet been printed. The Government in this matter, have simply followed their usual course. There is no hope in the situation outlined by the Leader of the Government.

Hon. Mr. Hughes commenced by saying that he would not go into ancient history and immediately went into a calculation regarding the financial operations of the Conservatives 25 or 30 years ago, including that venerable chestnut the \$200,000. Our farmers, he said, have very little taxes imposed upon them, and the tax on the farmers must be readjusted.

Mr. McKinnon considered that Mr. Hughes's feat of covering in 15 or 20 minutes the ground for the last thirty years in connection with the public affairs of our Province was such a colossal achievement that no ordinary mortal could very easily follow him. Mr. Hughes had had a great deal to say about our public buildings; but he forgot to tell about the \$1,022,000, this Government had collected in taxes. This

was very much more than the Government's expenditure on Public Works. The Premier, said Mr. McKinnon, had not boasted very much in his budget speech. Former Premier's had considered it their duty to attempt to make revenue and expenditure meet; but our present Premier scorns to undertake anything of this kind. The Premier says that all the money necessary has been spent on the public roads; but the reports of C. B. Clay, W. W. Lavers and other supervisors, from which Mr. McKinnon read, show that the roads are in very bad condition. Our delegates to the Ottawa conference in 1906 had utterly failed to exert themselves in our behalf, and did not secure for us one half as much as they might have. In view of all these failures of the Government, the taxes on our farmers have to be readjusted, so as to bring in almost as much more as heretofore. Mr. McKinnon here moved the adjournment of the debate and the House adjourned till the following day.

After routine on Wednesday, Mr. McKinnon resumed the debate on the budget. It was his opinion the exhibitions held twenty-five or thirty years ago were of more value to the country than those of recent years. Hon. Mr. Hughes, he said, boasted about our public buildings; but he forgot to state that in several cases they had cost two or three times the prices intimated in the contracts. Glaring instances of this manner of expenditure were found in the Prince of Wales College; Vernon River Bridge and Cardigan Bridge, and the Summerside Jail and Court House. Regarding the Premier's declaration in his budget speech, that many farmers had undervalued their properties, Mr. McKinnon said this was in effect declaring these farmers to be "delinquents and perjurers." The Premier immediately jumped to his feet and denied having used these words and asked Mr. McKinnon to withdraw them. When Mr. McKinnon declined to withdraw, Mr. Speaker appealed to for a ruling. He ruled that the words should be withdrawn. Mr. Mathieson, Leader of the Opposition appealed from the Speaker's ruling, and when the yeas and nays were counted there was a tie 12 to 12. The Speaker's casting vote defeated the motion for appeal. Mr. McKinnon formally withdrew the words; but insisted that the effect of the Premier's statements in this connection could be none other than that involved in the words in question. Mr. McKinnon referred to the admission by the Government of a Provincial debt of \$863,000, and to the Premier's statement in the budget that this year's deficit would be over \$38,000. In the face of all this the Leader of the Government confessed that there was no hope of receiving anything on account of our claims from Ottawa. The only remedy the Premier had was to increase the taxation of the farmers. In the matter of the boring operation at Earncliffe, Mr. McKinnon pointed out that they had been a failure inasmuch as the operator had not gone to the depth he had contracted for. In this connection he read from a report of a speech of Mr. D. P. Irving condemning in the strongest terms the manner in which this matter had been managed by the Dominion authorities. The Premier, too, had pledged himself to see the test completed; but nothing had been done. The whole business was a farce. Mr. McKinnon's whole speech was a strong arraignment of the Government for their general mismanagement of our Provincial affairs.

At the conclusion of Mr. McLean's speech, the House resolved itself into committee of supply. Dr. Warburton in the chair.

In supply, the Leader of the Opposition showed that for the last five years the expenditure for the administration of justice had steadily increased. It had gone from the lowest under \$15,000 to the highest, now \$28,000. Ten Inspectors under the Prohibition Act are provided for in the estimates under consideration. Mr. Mathieson, referring to the matter of Stipendiary Magistrates, pointed out that Stipendiary Wright at Summerside had not only his salary increased, but is given a free office in the Court House for the practice of his profession, together with free heat and free light. This looked very much like a snap for lawyer Wright. Reading over the prosecutions under the Prohibition Act, Mr. Mathieson found a number of cases where convictions had been secured; but immediately after on the record was written "not enforced by request." What was the meaning of that, he asked. By whose request was the enforcement withheld?

Mr. McKinnon was surprised to learn that a third prosecutor was to be appointed for King's County. He did not know of any request for the appointment of a third inspector. He pointed out that numerous requests had been made to the Government for the removal of a useless inspector; but this had not been done. The request for a third appointment had been made only quite recently, and was immediately acceded to.

During the evening sitting the Leader of the Government said that he had nothing to do with those cases wherein prosecutions were "withheld by request." In one case he had telephoned to hold the matter over for a brief space. He denied that he had given directions beyond that. The third prosecutor was to be appointed at the request of the King's County Temperance Alliance. They did not ask for the dismissal of another prosecutor. Mr. Mathieson said the explanation of the Premier would have to be accepted; but the Government and its Leader must be responsible. All he could say was that the Attorney General was very badly served by his officers. Mr. Mathieson wanted to know from the Commissioner of Agriculture what successes had attended the enforcing the noxious weed act. The commissioner answered that some success had attended the operations of the act. Mr. Mathieson here said he had regretted he had misled the committee by attributing the enforcement of this act to the department of agriculture. As a matter of fact its enforcement had been com-

mitted to the Commissioner of Public Works. It appeared now that the Government know so little about how the act is getting along, that they do not seem to be aware as to what department its enforcement belongs. On the matter of education, Mr. John A. McDonald called attention to the fact the school at Cardigan Bridge has not been inspected for two years. He considered this a great injustice. Mr. M. Kennedy called attention to the fact that the School Inspector for Queen's County has been sick for almost a year and most of the schools in the county had not been inspected. The matter of printing and stationery in the education department elicited a good deal of criticism by Mr. Wyatt, Mr. A. J. McDonald and the Leader of the Opposition. In ten years or so the expenditure on this item has increased from \$600 to \$1,809 estimated this year. It was leaks of this kind, Mr. Mathieson pointed out, that contributed to our wretched financial condition. The Leader of the Opposition went on to show how the whole educational system was deteriorating. He enumerated the many branches of study which have gone down within the last five years, among these is especially nature studies. The teachers salaries have decreased, while the standing and efficiency of the schools had deteriorated at every point. He condemned without stint the practice by which teachers holding only third class licenses receive second class pay. This, he said, was a most flagrant injustice. He read from returns tabled in the House, in which was a letter from the Superintendent of Education to the Premier wherein it was shown that seven third class teachers were paid second class salaries. Had our educational system come to this, said Mr. Mathieson, that the law has to be broken in order to keep teachers in our schools? This scheme of paying second class licenses to third class teachers was practiced during election times.

He rubbed it into Mr. Palmer regarding his fashion of changing his mind. Eight years ago he made a speech; eight days ago he made another speech. Both speeches were on the same subject and both were diametrically opposed to each other. He was right eight years ago, but he was wrong eight days ago. He thought it was a pity the Government had not tried to get school books at a low price, somewhere else than from Ontario. These books are published by T. Eaton & Company, and the introduction of the books into this Province would give T. Eaton another advantage over the merchants of this Province. He enumerated the prices at which school books and other school supplies could have been secured in New Brunswick and other places. More than half the schools in the Province have an average of less than twenty. In some schools there were only five scholars. He wondered whether or not Mr. Laird, who confessed himself satisfied with everything the Government has done, had read these facts from the reports of school inspectors. In several schools the average was less than six, and in one there was but one solitary pupil. He pointed out that the work of the Inspector is of the utmost importance. Most of the teachers are young and inexperienced, and require encouragement and advice. A good Inspector in such cases can render much assistance. Referring to the French schools inspectorate, he said it was a shame and disgrace that only \$300 was put in the estimates for any year for this office. A man qualified to fill this position must be proficient in two languages; he has to travel all over the Province and pay his own fare. He compared with this the \$350 paid the Commissioner of Public Works for travelling expenses, while his travelling cost him nothing. At the same time the Commissioner does not require to be as good a scholar as the French Inspector; does not require to know French.

After the Premier had undertaken to defend the Government on the conduct of the department of education, Mr. Mathieson reiterated his charges against the Government in the matter of giving second class pay to third class teachers. More than that, he declared he had the best authority for stating that, at least two of those so favored, had received the increase as political rewards. The Premier in his temper said, "The statement is untrue." Mr. Mathieson demanded that these offensive words be taken down by the chairman. This was done and immediately the committee rose and the offensive words were reported to the Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition asked Mr. Speaker to ask the Premier to withdraw the words, but Mr. Speaker ruled against him. Thereupon Mr. Mathieson appealed from the Speaker's ruling. The appeal being put was declared lost, the vote standing 14 to 12. Thus twice in one day did the Speaker rule on points of a kindred nature; but his rulings were in direct opposition one to the other. It makes a good deal of difference whose ox is gored.

After routine proceedings on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Mathieson asked the Premier about the vacancy in the Cardigan district and Hon. Mr. Hazard said that a writ had issued on March 7th; that the election would be held on August 19th, and that the writ was returnable on Sept. 7th.

Premier Hazard introduced a resolution, on which to found a bill for the purpose of readjusting the land tax. The Leader of the Opposition said it was some satisfaction to observe that the Premier had in this case followed the proper constitutional manner, preceding the bill by a resolution and the consent of the Crown. The necessity of a readjustment of the valuation of our farm land for purposes of taxation, was strong evidence that all the law made by the Premier regarding the statement of Mr. McKinnon that some farmers had evidently made false declarations about the value of their property, was all moonshine. The introduction of a

(Continued on third page.)

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