

No better choice in some respects could have been made of a Commissioner than Mr. Justice Willis, and no worse in some others. He was an English Barrister of the Equity Bar, who had been sent to Canada as a Judge of the Kings Bench in the Autumn of 1827, the intention being ultimately to establish a Court of Chancery in the Province, in which case Willis would have been made Chancellor of it. To appoint an Equity Judge fresh from England as a Commissioner in such a case as Randal's, would appear to have been excellent, but unfortunately Willis was a man totally devoid of prudence, judgment or tact. He had been in Canada only a short time when he and Attorney General Robinson quarrelled and as Robinson was high in favour with the Government, Willis immediately incurred the dislike and disapproval of the Tory Party. Shortly after the House rose he had a most unseemly row with the Attorney General when he undertook in open Court to lecture this personage on how to conduct the affairs of his office, and in July of the same year, after a disgraceful scene between him and Judge Sherwood, he was dismissed by the Executive Council and returned to England. Judge Willis, naturally, was always in high favour with the Reformers.

The Bill was reported to the House on the day before adjournment when a mass of legislation was being rushed through. It had its first and second reading without a vote in the afternoon. The House sat until eight in the evening, adjourned for an hour, and gave the Bill its third reading at nine o'clock. A vote was taken on this reading and the Bill carried by a majority of two. Hon. John Beverley Robinson voted against it. Beardsley, the Chairman of the Committee, voted for it, but the other members of the Committee were not present. Randall did not vote. The Bill was immediately sent to the Upper House where it was defeated.

The discussion in the Assembly and the taking of evidence by the Committee had, however, served the purpose. The Solicitor General Boulton was painted, in the ensuing election as a villainous lawyer, who, by threats and duress had obtained a promissory note from a penniless client and then after deserting him had secretly and deceitfully under color of law seized a valuable estate and procured one brother-in-law (the Sheriff)