

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Special Committee Reports on Causes Sending Some Boys to the Reformatory.

Another Kettle River Valley Project Debated—Privileges of the Law Society.

WEDNESDAY, April 20.

The house was in session from 2 o'clock in the afternoon until five minutes after 6 in the evening, and it was only by a very narrow margin of votes that an adjournment was then obtained. The speaker of the opposition protested against the way the business of the house was being prolonged and said that not only opposition members but supporters of the government were growing sick of it. He argued that night sessions should be held in order to close up the session as soon as possible.

The most part of the afternoon was spent in committee, and the business was principally of a routine nature. The speaker took the chair at 2 o'clock and prayers were offered by Rev. Percival Jennings.

A report of the select committee appointed to inspect the provincial jail and reformatory was submitted by Mr. Higgins as follows:

"Mr. Speaker—your special committee of inspection on provincial jail and reformatory met at the jail this day. Present: The Hon. Mr. W. H. Higgins, Mr. Muter, Messrs. Kidd and Stoddart. Mr. Helmecken, Q.C., being unavoidably absent, Mr. Higgins was appointed chairman, and Mr. Muter secretary. The prison buildings were duly inspected, and the cells, rooms and yards found to be clean and well kept. Credit on the warden and his officers. The prisoners seemed to be usefully employed, some in whitewashing the various cells and passages, one picking oakum (a cripple), two cooking. The sick are duly cared for. The food was of good quality and sufficient in quantity. A number of prisoners were engaged planting potatoes under two guards, and the warden reported that eight prisoners were being employed at Government House.

"The matron attended to the women's cells, where are two prisoners, who seemed to be well cared for. The parlour being clean, tidy and in good order.

"The warden, Mr. John, then accompanied us to where the boys were confined under the charge of Mr. Hansen, who explained the mode of education and employment of the boys, and that there are six. We found the building and cells clean and in good order. Lessons are given by Mr. Hansen, and by the doctor's (the Hon. J. S. at present) orders four hours per day are devoted to recreation.

"The committee while satisfied that so far as the buildings permit the boys are comfortably lodged, are of opinion that a better result would be reached if the boys were placed in the public mind as being in the jail, for although they do not come in touch with the adult prisoners, the feeling or thought of being associated with them in the public mind is bad, and might have a prejudicial effect on the career of the boys.

"The committee are of opinion that if at all possible to be arranged, the boys would be much better where they could be taught, farm work, including rough carpentry, etc., in the public mind, where they have only bare or white-washed high walls to look upon.

"The committee are of opinion that in the meantime, that a shed be erected in the yard, where the inmates could exercise in wet weather, and that it should be fitted with bars and necessary for athletic exercises.

"The prison buildings would be the better for a coat of paint and the porters at the reformatory portion require repairs to the brick work.

"The roofs of the buildings should, when practicable, be covered with slates so as to limit the danger from fire, as it would be a difficult if not an impossible task to overcome any fire breaking out on the roof from the want of water.

"The committee desire especially to bring to your notice the danger at present existing of youths who are engaged as messenger boys by the telegraphic and other companies from the temptations from the want of oversight which evidently exists during the time they are employed in their work, they being often employed delivering messages to houses where they are brought in contact with scenes which are bound to contaminate them, as an age who they are peculiarly susceptible to evil influences.

"The committee would respectfully suggest that it should be made unlawful to employ anyone not of full age to deliver messages to such houses, especially after daylight.

"The committee are especially desirous to emphasize this question of the contamination of youths who are employed as messengers, and would urge on the government the necessity of rigid supervision of the messenger service, it appearing that three of the five boys now confined in the reformatory had been sent there by the messenger company in this city.

"The committee would also respectfully urge before the government the advisability of having the warders and guards placed in uniform.

"The warden reported that he considered the religious instruction and services imparted in the jail chapel had proved of considerable benefit in many cases."

Mr. Sword was granted permission to introduce a bill intitled "The Industrial Communities Act," which was read a first time.

Mr. Semlin moved, seconded by the member for Westminster City, that a notice on this house be granted for a return showing the number of voters on the lists of the various electoral districts and the number of applications to be placed on any of said lists to date. Carried.

The mover said he would like to hear from the government how soon the return would be brought down as they would likely have to discuss the redistribution bill to-morrow.

The Hon. Col. Bannockburn sent for the return and it was brought down soon after as follows, being complete up till the 8th instant:

Names	Appl.
Comox	42
Esquimalt	42
Nanaimo	227
Nanaimo North	227
Nanaimo South	227
Victoria North	144
Victoria South	144
Cariboo	97
Cassiar	97
Kootenay	97
Kootenay East	97
St. Francois	720
Revelstoke	1361
Kootenay West	1414

On List, April 22.

Comox 42

Esquimalt 42

Nanaimo 227

Nanaimo North 227

Nanaimo South 227

Victoria North 144

Victoria South 144

Cariboo 97

Cassiar 97

Kootenay 97

Kootenay East 97

St. Francois 720

Revelstoke 1361

Kootenay West 1414

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