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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, March 28.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: I am at a loss to know how the Government could have had this measure in view ever since they introduced the "fifteen years' purchase bill." If they had it in view why was there not a word said about it in His Excellency's speech at the opening of the session? It surely would have been alluded to if it was in contemplation to introduce it at the present session. His honor who has just spoken wishes to take all the credit of it to the Government, but I can assure him that the first I heard about it was from the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly, and why should he not take hold of it and endeavor to carry out his own pet scheme?

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know that this bill should receive any obstruction merely because there is a little difference of opinion as to how it originated; but I cannot exactly sit silent and hear the statements which have been made, while I have some knowledge as to how it was introduced. There were gentlemen in this branch of the Legislature who expressed very great disappointment that this bill was not introduced last session, and one in particular did so. I myself stated that the principal reason why the Government did not feel justified in introducing it was, that they had then just passed a measure calling for an issue of £18,000, to pay off the debentures due for the purchase of the Worrell Estate. At the same time the good policy of passing such a measure was admitted. Now, when the Legislature had met this session, I believe the matter was again mooted within the Government; and I do not hesitate to say that, as far as I recollect, the Government were not unanimous as to the principles on which the bill should be framed. I believe there was some intimation got out that the measure was going to fail to the ground; then the Leader of the Opposition came out with his proposition; at least I have been told that such was the case. The Government resumed the consideration of the measure when some of their supporters, and I as one of them, pressed this measure upon them. After this it was brought forward. I was glad to hear that there was so much unanimity in supporting this measure, and even if what his honor from Bay Fortune has stated were the case, yet if all were unanimous as to the good policy of the measure, we should vie with each other in giving it our cordial support. Therefore I hope there will be no difference of opinion among us respecting the merits of the bill simply because there is a little difference as to whom the credit is due of having originated it. I hope these considerations will be sunk in the prospect of its being a benefit to the tenantry.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I do not think it is his honor's intention to oppose the bill; he merely wishes to convey to the public the idea that it was introduced at the instigation of the Leader of the Opposition. Now, I remember that one of your honors, who is a supporter of the Government, made a long speech here last session, and found great fault with the Government for not introducing it then. And I remember being at a *caucus* meeting last session when the subject was discussed, and the great objection to introducing it then was the large amount of debentures which were due for the purchase of the Worrell Estate, and which had to be redeemed. I am not going to condemn the purchase of the Worrell Estate. It was the first estate bought by the Government, and was, to some extent, an experiment. If we have lost a little by it we must put up with it. But this measure was mooted when it was decided to bring in the "fifteen years' purchase bill," and it was never lost sight of. The greatest difficulty was that the Government did not wish to have more on hand than they could meet. They wanted to see whether the debentures for the payment of the Worrell Estate would meet with a ready sale, as they did not wish to embarass the Government. They now find that they have, and therefore they are prepared to enter into this measure. It may have been mentioned in the House of Assembly by the Leader of the Opposition, but the Government had it in view fifteen or eighteen months ago. This measure is not exactly based on the "fifteen years' purchase bill" for it extends to all the tenants on the Island. I am glad to see that we are so unanimous in carrying some measure for the relief of the tenants. If we had been so many years ago it would have been better for us.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: If this bill become law I believe it will be the means of enabling many of the tenants to obtain free farms, and as long as that is effected I care very little who gets the credit of it. I hope we will pass it in the same spirit as the House of Assembly did, and then both branches of the Legislature will deserve the thanks of the country. I believe there is no opposition to the principle of the bill, and I do not know that we can improve the details of it. Allusion has been made as to how the bill originated. I can remember when the supporters of the Government were called to town in reference to the delegation to England that this bill was spoken of. It was intended to bring in a bill to authorize the Government to advance a part of the purchase money to the tenants, and many of the supporters of the Government thought it would have been brought in last year, but the reason why it was not has already been explained. The price under the "fifteen years' purchase bill" was considered high, but they were the only terms the proprietors would consent to. The Legislature could not obtain any greater concessions. I think it is our duty to support this bill.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: This is one of the most happy bills I ever knew. The only contention is which party is to have the credit of it. I will not differ much with your honors on that point, but at the same time I wish to have our proper position, and I think I am borne out in my statement by his honor the Attorney General. I think the Government were defeated in bringing in the bill when they intended to. As it now stands, I think both parties will have a share of the credit.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: His honor who has just spoken wishes to have his proper position, and so do I. Any one to look at the debates of this House for last session will see that his honor on my right (Mr. Beer) made a long speech on the subject of this bill, and brought forward an array of figures to show the feasibility of this measure, and I said that I concurred with him. And in reference to why it was not alluded to in His Excellency's speech, I can say without any infringement of my obligation that it was not on account of the bill not being contemplated. It was not opposition to the principle, but the details of the bill. Some wanted to advance two thirds of the purchase money to the tenants, while others were not willing to do so, and his honor knows that it is better not to allude to a measure in the speech than afterwards to fail in carrying it through the Legislature. I hope if one side will father it, the other side will join in rocking the cradle, and between the two we will make a handsome boy of it yet.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: I think his honor from Bay Fortune (Mr. Dingwell) is aware that the "fifteen years' purchase bill" had a suspending clause, and it would be premature to pass this bill till we knew whether the other would become law. As to which party will have the credit of introducing it, I think it will concern the country very little. They will not care who has the credit of it so long as they have the benefit, neither do I think we need care. It is my opinion that it will be a great benefit to the country, though I think his honor to whom I before alluded said that very few would receive any benefit from it.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: I would be sorry to think his honor desired to put me in a false position, but I was speaking of the "fifteen years' purchase bill."

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: Well, I suppose I misunderstood his honor, and I have no desire to place him in a false position. It is my opinion that it will be a benefit to a large portion of the tenantry; and I know the Government had it in view last session, and also this session.

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON: I do not think that ever such an important measure passed through the Legislature with so little opposition. It passed unanimously through the House of Assembly, and I hope it will do the same here.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I believe there is not a tenant among your honors, and very few in the House of Assembly; therefore the bill is not passed because the members of the Legislature had any personal interest in it. Freeholders had some interest in the "land purchase bill," for it would enable them to procure free land at a reasonable rate if they required it, but it is not so with this bill.

Hon. Mr. LORD: The only difference is about who is to get the credit of this bill. One of your honors said it would have been premature to have introduced it last session. His honor the Attorney General, it appears, had it in his mind's eye two years ago, and he advocated it when he was in the Government. Then another member of the Government said, or insinuated, and I almost thought he went too far, that he had been instrumental in getting it brought in. Then his honor from Bay Fortune (Mr. Dingwell) shows that it had been first mooted in the House of Assembly by the Leader of the Opposition. We wish to see who is to carry off the laurels. But I believe it will not be worth a rap to the poor man, and the rich man can take care of himself. It is the poor man that we want to benefit by bills of this kind. I believe, as I said before, it will be like a chip in porridge neither good nor harm.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: His honor says it will be no benefit to the poor man, but I know a proprietor who has offered his land at ten shillings an acre, and the tenants, though they consider it a reasonable price, are not able to purchase. Will this bill, by authorizing the Government to advance one half the price to the tenants, be no benefit to them?

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is utterly impossible for the Legislature of this Country, or of any other Country, to put the "poor man" on an equality with the rich man. No Legislature can do it. It is out of the question to suppose that we can introduce a measure which will be an equal benefit to the poorest class and the well-off farmers. I would not have risen again, for it is not my practice to speak often on any subject, but I cannot avoid doing so when his honor on my left (Mr. Lord) has risen so often to complain of the want of legislation for the "poor man." I think the time has arrived when he should devise something for the benefit of the "poor man." I would like him to come out with his famous scheme, which he has kept bottled up so long, and I would listen to him with great pleasure if he would bring in some measure to give the "poor man" a free farm. Even though the session is drawing to a close, yet I would not mind prolonging it two or three days more, for I confess that I have always had a curiosity to see his honor come forward with some measure to serve the "poor man," but I have always been disappointed. It is not too late yet, and I would be very glad to see him draw out of his pocket an amendment to the present bill.

Hon. Mr. LORD: I am very much obliged to his honor the Attorney General for this nice bit of catechising; but I think his honor will compare well with me in that respect. Can he put his hand on any law in the statute book to show that he has brought in any measure to benefit the poor men of this Colony? If he can do so, I will be glad to know that he is a faithful legislator, but I have yet to learn that he can do so. I think his honor and myself stand about on the same footing as regards bringing in measures to benefit the poor man; but I know that if ever so good a measure were introduced by me, certain gentlemen would be the first to oppose it, if it interfered with the rights or privileges of the proprietors.

Hon. ATTY. GEN.: I beg leave to disclaim being put upon the same footing with his honor. It is very true that one bill cannot be brought in by every member; but if his honor will turn up the records I think he will find that I have had to do with almost every bill that has been brought in affording any practical benefit to the tenantry since I had a seat in the Legislature. The "one-fifth bill" was brought in by myself when I was at the head of the Government, and when, I believe, I had sufficient influence to crush it, if I desired to do so. Any land bill which has been passed by the present party has had my support, and I question if the present bill would have gone so easily through the Legislature if it were not for myself. His honor is too apt to follow the example of my maligners in the newspapers, who take up a cry against me to serve a purpose; but if he will revert to facts—if he will examine the history of the measures which have resulted in any practical good—he will find my name in support of more of them than his. I have no desire to publish my good deeds, but when I am thus assailed I must defend myself.

Hon. Mr. BEER: It has been said that the "poor man" will not derive any benefit from this bill, but I think the poorer classes will derive great benefit from it. They may not receive much benefit from it in the first place, and I believe there is no man in the Legislature who can devise a measure which will be an immediate benefit to them, but ultimately they will receive great assistance from it, for the well-to-do farmers will purchase their farms, and then the proprietors will sell the remainder of their estates to the Government. There is no member in the Legislature who has more strenuously advocated this measure than myself, and I am confident that it will be a great benefit to the tenants generally.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: It is a fact worth noticing that at the time the Despatch arrived announcing the confirmation of the fifteen years' purchase bill by Her Majesty a large number of writs were in process of preparation, and nearly finished for back rents, both before and since 1858, in the expectation that the bill I have named would not become law, but they had then to be thrown aside as waste paper. That saved the people from having those writs served upon them.

The House was then resumed and progress reported.

Adjourned till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

THURSDAY, March 30.

Hon. Mr. McLaren, by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, laid before the House the Report of the Visitor of Schools for the Eastern Section of the Island for the past year. Also, the quarterly reports of the Visitor of Schools for the Western Section of the Island for the year 1864-5.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. Beer, a Bill to amend the Act to incorporate the Union Bank was read the third time and passed.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. McDonald, a Bill relating to Wills, Legacies, and Executors, and for the settlement and distribution of the estates of intestates, was read a third time and passed.

A Bill to incorporate the Minister and Trustees of the Presbyterian Congregation of Woodville and Little Sands, Lots 62 and 64, and a Bill in addition to, and further amendment of, the Land Purchase Act, were severally read a second time, committed, and reported agreed to without any amendment.

USURY BILL.

A Bill to repeal the Laws now in force establishing and regulating the rate of interest and to make some provisions on the same subject, was then read a second time and committed to a Committee of the whole House—Hon. Mr. Beer in the Chair.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: This Bill was before us last session, and was not agreed to, and it is now for your honors to say whether your minds have changed, and whether you are prepared to support it.

Hon. Mr. McLAREN: I think there is a very strong objection to repealing the usury laws at the present time. It is well known to your honors that under the "Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill," and the tenant loan Bill, which has just been passed, it will be necessary for the tenants to borrow some money to pay for their farms. This Bill would allow the money lenders to ask any rate of interest they may think proper, and I would, therefore, leave the usury laws as they are at present. I move that the President take the Chair.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: Before that motion is put, I would remark that the principle which that Bill is intended to carry out, is recognised in the old Country, and I believe in almost all other countries. I do not see why persons should be restricted in hiring money any more than in dealing in any other article of commerce. I have known cases wherein the present Usury Laws have operated very injuriously; and one case in particular came under my knowledge of a person who had a good piece of land, and came to town to borrow some money upon it. The gentleman to whom he applied said he had money to lend, but he could not charge more than six per cent. under a mortgage, while on some other securities he could charge a higher rate, and if he could get some person to join him in a note, he would let him have it at eight per cent.; but the person was not acquainted in town, so he had to return home and give twenty per cent. to a person in his own neighborhood, and I believe he gave a mortgage, too, though, of course, the mortgage would not be legal. Now, I believe that if this Bill had been in force, he would have got money at eight per cent. Therefore, I am disposed to support the Bill, and allow persons to borrow money at whatever rate they choose to pay for it. I do not know any sound reason why a person should be restricted in lending money any more than in dealing in other commodities. I, therefore, move an amendment that the clause read be agreed to.

Hon. Attorney General seconded the amendment.

The question on the amendment was put and lost, and the original motion, that the President take the chair, was agreed to. So the committee rose without reporting and the Bill was lost.

Hon. Mr. Goff obtained leave of absence for the remainder of the session.

Adjourned till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

FRIDAY, March 31.

A Bill in addition to, and further amendment of, the Land Purchase Act, a Bill to assist leaseholders in the purchase of the fee-simple of their farms, a Bill to incorporate the Minister and Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of the Congregation of Woodville and Little Sands, Lots 62 and 64, and a Bill for raising a revenue, were severally read the third time and passed.

On motion of the Hon. Attorney General, a Bill for the appointment of Clerks to the Justices of the Peace, and to regulate proceedings had before them, was read a second time, committed, and reported agreed to without any amendment.

A message was brought from the House of Assembly by the Hon. Solicitor General, with a Bill to amend the law and for the better advancement of Justice. Also, a Bill to amend the Act for the regulation of the inspection of pickled fish.

MILITIA LAWS.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. McLaren, a Bill to amend the militia laws was read a second time and committed.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: I am satisfied to call out the militia to show their loyalty to their Sovereign, but I would not like to see the people called away from their proper avocations at an unreasonable time.

Hon. Mr. LORD: I am willing to go back to the old law, for I think the time has arrived when the Companies should be put in working order; but I would not like to see them called out and kept as they are in Nova Scotia, running about the fields for four or five days without any arms in their hands. I might mention other places, too, where time is wasted in the same way, and I think it is an injury to the people and tends to demoralize them.

House resumed and progress reported.

FISH INSPECTION BILL.

Hon. Mr. Beer moved that a Bill in addition to the Act to regulate the inspection of pickled fish be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: In seconding that motion, I would merely observe that I understand that the reason that Bill was introduced in amendment of the Bill which we passed a few days ago is, that a number of American fishermen intend to land their fish here and send them home in the steamers, and under the Bill which we have passed this session, their fish would be liable to inspection. They do not wish to be detained here for that purpose, and this Bill is for the purpose of allowing such fish caught in foreign bottoms to be exported without inspection.

Bill read and committed—Hon. Mr. Beer in the Chair.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: If those Americans come here and hire vessels or boats belonging to the Island to fish for them, their fish would come under the inspection Act, but I think they should be allowed the privilege of exporting them without inspection. I know those Americans are in the habit of buying fish from the inhabitants, and if they are subject to inspection, it may be an injury to those who catch fish round the coast in boats. They will not purchase fish if they are liable to inspection.

Hon. Mr. LORD: If you do that, you will interfere with the Act which we have already passed this session.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: I take the same view of it as his honor the President. If foreigners are liable to have the fish which they purchase inspected, the price of the inspection will come off the fishermen.

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON: I would not only allow all fish caught by foreigners to be exported without inspection, but also those which foreigners might purchase here.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: To do so, might be a disadvantage to our own capitalists who have embarked in the business. Suppose two persons are engaged in the business, side by side, the one a Foreigner, the other a British subject, and suppose the Foreigner is allowed to export his fish without inspection, and the British subject is not, would not the former have an advantage over the latter?

Hon. the PRESIDENT: Suppose two vessels came into the Harbor with fish, the one an American, the other a British vessel, and suppose they were both going to send their fish to Boston by the steamer, the American would have his cargo discharged and perhaps be out on the fishing ground and half loaded again while the other was having his fish inspected.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: I would afford every encouragement to those American fishermen to make this Island their depot, for I believe it would be a great benefit to the people, and with that view, I would have no objection to this Act, though it does away, in a great measure, with the benefits which parties engaged in the fisheries in this Island would derive from the Act which we passed a few days ago. But if we adopt the suggestion of his honor the President, I am afraid we would be giving foreigners an advantage over British subjects who might be engaged in the business, and I would rather repeal the other Act altogether than do that.

House resumed—Bill reported agreed to without any amendment.

Adjourned till four o'clock, p. m.

AFTERNOON.

Hon. Mr. McLaren, by command of His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor, laid before the House the School Visitor's Report for the Western Section of the Island for the past year.

Hon Mr. DINGWELL: It is very late to be presenting the School Visitor's Report. It is expected that the Legislature will be prorogued on Monday next, and here is the School Visitor's Report only coming in on Friday afternoon. I believe the Report is correct in saying that there is a general dissatisfaction in the country with regard to the present School Act, and I regret that the Legislature has not taken it up this session in order to remedy the evil complained of. Large sums of money are spent in useless Delegations, while the poor school masters are scrimped in their salaries. I suppose the Act cannot be amended this session, but I hope it will be taken up at as early a day as possible.

Hon. Mr. BEER: I did hope that the Government would amend the School Act this session, and pay the full amount of the teachers' salary from the treasury. I think the state of the finances would justify them in doing so. There is great difficulty, I know, in collecting a portion of the teachers' salary from the districts, and the masters often suffer. I would willingly have supported a Bill this session to pay the whole salary from the public funds, and I hope another session will not be allowed to pass without something of that kind being done. Several petitions have been presented, suggesting an additional half-penny an acre tax upon land, to enable that to be done. I do not like additional taxation, but still, I think the Government would be justified in granting the prayer of those petitions. There is a considerable balance of revenue over expenditure during the last two years, and even if the balance were on the other side, I would not object to it.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: These Reports may contain something of importance, and I think they should be printed in the Appendix to the Journals. It is such a late period in the session that members of the House cannot make themselves acquainted with the valuable information they may contain. The great complaint two or three years ago was, that one visitor could not perform the work and make out his report in time to be presented to the Legislature at an early part of the session, but now we find that the reports are not presented one day earlier, though there are two visitors to do the work which was formerly done by one. I agree with what his honor who has just spoken has said with regard to the payment of the teachers, and I regret that the Government did not introduce a measure this session to relieve the people of the burden of making up a part of their salary. I have been anxious to be at the examination of the schools at Georgetown and around that neighborhood, but owing to some cause, I never yet heard of a school being visited till the visitor had left. I am not, therefore, in a position to speak about those schools with the precision which I would otherwise do.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: I was not in at the commencement of this discussion, but just caught his honor's remark about his anxiety to be present at the examination of the schools. I do not think it would be good policy for the School Visitor, whoever he may be, to give intimation when he intended to visit a school. The best way to find out the true state of the schools, is for the Visitor to take them by surprise—just to pop in when he is not expected. If he should give intimation when he intended to visit a school, preparation would be made for him, and thus one of the principle objects of his visit might be frustrated.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: It has been said that there is dissatisfaction with the present School Act, but I never heard any in the part of the country where I reside. When the Bill was passed, the people were satisfied with it. They saw that the former School Act was running the Colony in debt, and, therefore, they were willing to pay a portion of the teachers' salary themselves. I think many would be dissatisfied with increased taxation. I would like to see free education established, if it could be done, without any additional taxes; but though the revenue is increasing, I do not think we are yet in a position to pay the whole of the teachers' salaries from the public funds.

Hon. Mr. McDonald moved, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Dingwell, that the Reports be printed in the Appendix to the Journals, which was agreed to.

On motion of the Hon. Atty. Gen., a Bill for the better advancement of justice was read a second time, committed and reported agreed to.

Adjourned till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

SATURDAY, April 1.

A Bill to authorize the appointment of Clerks to Justices of the Peace, was re-committed and reported agreed to.

A Bill to amend the Act for regulating the inspection of pickled fish, and a Bill to amend the law for the better advancement of justice, were read the third time and passed.

A message was brought from the House of Assembly by the Hon. Sol. General, with a Bill for appropriating certain monies therein mentioned for the service of the year 1865. Also, a Bill in further amendment of the Act to incorporate the Royal Agricultural Society.

MILITIA LAW.

(Committee resumed.)

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: I do not see anything objectionable in the Act which this Bill repeals. It allows the militia to be called out in case of invasion or civil commotion. It also reduces the salary of the Adjutant General from £75 to £25.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: If the Adjutant General has to travel through the country and inspect the militia, it cannot be expected that he would do it for £25. £75 would be little enough. The law at present in force only allows the militia to be called out in extreme cases, and it is thought that they should be called out for the purpose of being drilled. Therefore, it is necessary to repeal the Act.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: That Act stands in the way, and, in fact, it is a total prohibition, for it expressly says that the militia shall not be called out except in cases of [illegible]gency. It has been seriously called to our notice by the Colonial Minister as being without a parallel in any part of the British dominions, and discreditable to the Colony. Great commotions are probably approaching, and events arising which it behooves us to meet as British subjects. We are invited, and not only invited, but almost forced into a Confederation of the North American Colonies for the purposes of self-defence; and we know this Colony has spoken out sufficiently well to convince us that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the inhabitants are opposed to Confederation as proposed. It, therefore, follows that we must now take up the question of self-defence and deal with it in such a reasonable way as will convince the British Government that, while we are opposed to Confederation on good grounds, we are not unwilling to take upon ourselves our fair share of the defence of the Colony; and it is the first step we should take to wipe away the reproach of the present law from our Statute Book, so that our people may be trained and put upon a footing with those of the other British Colonies. I know it is an unpopular subject, but the people must be made sensible that they must bear their share of self-defence. It was with surprise that I heard the objection to this Bill made by his honor on my right (Mr. McDonald.) I would have given him credit for more patriotism. But I believe he is one of the very few advocates of Confederation in the Legislature, and who have their part to play. I dare say it is a piece of policy to allow the Militia Laws to remain as they are, so that the advocates of Union would have a strong reason to say, "the Island is unwilling to contribute its share for self-defence, and, therefore, we must go into the Union." I do not wish to impose burdens upon the people in this respect more than any other person, but if they consult their own interest, they will approve of placing the Militia Laws in such a state as to enable them to have such training that they would be prepared for the worst. Events do not bear a very pacific aspect in Great Britain at present. There is some anxiety on the minds of leading statesmen relative to America. Canada is exceedingly anxious, and we cannot look to a better barometer than the sentiments of statesmen there, and we see that they are making great efforts to put their Colony in a state of defence. They are not going to wait till they hear that the enemy is about to invade their territory, and then call the Legislature together to pass a law and have their people drilled in two or three weeks. Such an idea is absurd. I, therefore, think it is our wisest policy to do something to put the people in a state of training and in a position for self-defence, which cannot be done as long as the present law remains on our Statute Book. I am only sorry that the other branch of the Legislature has not made a more liberal provision for this service. Another reason why we should repeal that law is, that we are threatened with the withdrawal of the salary of the Lieutenant Governor, and it will be another argument to hasten that burden upon our shoulders if we neglect the Militia Laws. The British Government will say, "You refuse to make any provision for self-defence, and you will, therefore, have to pay the salary of your own Governor." I, therefore, hope your honors will be induced to accede to the repeal of the present law—that you will go, at least, as far as the lower branch of the Legislature has gone, which I do not consider too far, neither will it be so considered by the British Government. And I do hope that if things look as unpropitious at another session, the matter will be taken up and the laws rendered something more in fact than they are in name. In Nova Scotia, they have been training the Militia for the last twelve months; and I have no doubt but there will be improvements made in their Militia Laws during the present session. I, therefore, hope that our Militia Laws will not be a reproach to us any longer as they have been for some time past.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: His honor the Attorney General has given us a good description of the Militia Law, but I cannot go so far as to condemn the law known as "Mooney's Law," for it has saved the country £50 a year in the salary of the Adjutant General alone, and your honors know that if that officer had a salary of £75 a year, he would have to show that he done something for it. He would probably call out the Militia to drill two or three days in the year, and if a man with a family of sons were called away from his farm, I consider that it would be a loss of twenty shillings a day to him. So if we calculate the saving that it has been to the country, I do not think "Mooney's Law" should be despised. I think it has worked well up to the present time, and if it is necessary now to show our loyalty, or if danger is apprehended, I have no objection to repeal it; though, perhaps, the Act we are now passing will not be so acceptable to the country. But I do not intend to oppose anything to show the loyalty of the people, for I believe they are as loyal as any in the British dominions. As I have heard one of the Commissioners on the Land Question say, they must be a loyal people, or they would have shown disloyalty when they have had so much provocation.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: I think the time has arrived when the inhabitants of the Colony should do something for their own defence. We frequently hear that there is danger of war, and the Colonial Minister says there is no other Colony in the same position as this with regard to the Militia Laws. I remember when Col. Lane used to come round to inspect the Militia that the people turned out and had a field day, as it was called; but now, though I dare say there has been something saved to the Colony, it will cost a good deal to reorganize the Militia and put them upon the same footing that they were before. The men do not know their officers, nor the officers their men. I had charge of a Battalion myself, but I do not know how I would go to work to organize it. It will be a great deal of trouble and expense, and if "Mooney's law" stands in the way the sooner it is repealed the better.

Hon. Mr. LORD: I do not see any more necessity for this bill this year than there was last. Does the Government intend to frighten us? I do not see anything to be alarmed at; and I think it would be just as well to let this bill lay over till next session. I presume the Government would have brought in a more stringent measure if they thought it would go down with the country. As we are not far from a general election they will have to try to please the people. As far as this bill is concerned, I was astonished when I heard it read. It revives an old act which has not been in operation, I suppose, since the first formation of a Government in the Colony.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know how we could better please the people than by putting a sound argument in their mouths against Confederation. But I do not rise as an apologist for the Government in bringing this bill in its present shape, and I own that I think it should have been brought in at an earlier period of the session. The only difficulty which I see is, that old laws which this bill revives have been so long repealed that they are almost out of print, but to have re-enacted them would have taken a great deal of time and would have incurred a good deal of expense.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: In reference to what was said by his honor from Prince County (Mr. Lord) about pleasing the people, I would say that there is a great difference between pleasing the people and informing them on subjects of vast importance to themselves, and assuming that they will not do their duty when they are informed. I have no fear, but when the people are informed of what appears to be their duty they will do it. And while I would be the last to impose any unnecessary burdens upon the people, I would be one of the first to speak out and tell my experience when I think it is necessary to do so. I do not think they are the friends of the country who would take advantage of our Militia Laws to drive us into Confederation. That question should be considered purely on its own merits, and if it will not stand the test let it be laid aside. Therefore I consider that we should pursue such a course with regard to our Militia Laws as would tend to maintain our connection with Great Britain.

Hon. Mr. YEO: I would be very sorry to put the country to the expense if it was not called for, but I think it is called for. We should do something to put our Militia on the same footing as those of the other Colonies.

At the request of the Hon. Mr. McDonald, the old Militia law was then read.

Hon. Mr. BEER: I think that law is obsolete and does not suit us at the present time.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: We now have the Bill before us in its true light, and I would ask your honors if such a law is suited to the country at the present time? I am surprised that the Government would bring in such a Bill which would put the people to so much unnecessary trouble. Would your honors pass such a Bill if it were not a Government measure? Perhaps the Government thought we would not take the trouble to read that old Act. It is probable that the Bill will pass, and I regret it; and I also regret that any of your honors are in such a position as to have to support such a measure. I oppose it from principle and from conscience, and I feel for any of your honors who have to support such a measure. When it is published, what will the country think of it? I would not oppose any reasonable amendment to "Mooney's Bill" to show the loyalty of the people, but I am opposed to any Government bringing a Bill in this manner to deceive the country, for the people will not know what this Act is subjecting them to. I oppose it because I believe I would be doing an injury to the country if I voted for it, not because I am not as loyal as any member of the Government.

Hon. Mr. BEER: I am sorry that this Bill will revive such an old obsolete Act—an Act which was passed in the year 1780. It is not adapted to the circumstances of the country at the present day. I cannot vote for it, there are so many things in it that would bring us into contempt.

Hon. Mr. LORD: What is the use for his honor to be playing fast and loose in that way? What is the use to talk about not supporting the Bill? He knows that it is a Government measure and he is bound to support it.

Hon. Mr. BEER: I said I would not oppose it.

Hon. Mr. LORD: It is just what I expected; and I said when the address in answer to His Excellency's speech was before us that I would not be bound to support such a Militia law as the Government would bring in. And I remember that when I heard the remarks of his honor from the first district of Queen's County (Mr. Henderson) I thought we would have a very stringent measure from the Government,