

April 27, 1874

MONTREAL CUSTOM HOUSE

Mr. RYAN moved for a return of appointments made since 1st January, 1874, to the present date, to the Custom House in Montreal. He complained that too many appointments had been made for all the work there was to do, and what was wanted was quality rather than number.

Hon. Mr. BURPEE (St. John, City and County) said there was no objection to the motion. The late Government had recommended some increases in salaries which in a number of cases were made, and in others were not. Any appointments made by the present Government were made on the recommendation of the responsible officers at Montreal.

The motion was then carried, and, it being six o'clock, the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

DUTIES AT ST. JOHN

Mr. DOMVILLE moved for a comparative statement of the duties paid on imports at the Port of St. John, New Brunswick, for the first fifteen days of the month of April of the years 1873 and 1874, showing the description of goods, whether out of vessel or in bonded warehouse, and the names of the importers.—Carried.

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FORTIFICATIONS AND ORDNANCE LANDS

Mr. WILKES moved for a statement respecting fortifications, lands, and material of war transferred to the Government of this country by the Imperial Government. He said that he thought it was desirable that they should ascertain just what fortifications had been transferred to the Canadian Government, with a view to putting them in an efficient state. He heard that the fortifications at Quebec and on St. Helen's Island were not in that state.

With reference to Ordnance Lands, he said that there was a large piece in Toronto, and he did not know of what use it was at present. If it were ceded to the city it might be turned into a park. There were important fortifications at Kingston, which he thought should receive some attention from the Government, and the same on St. Helen's Island. He thought, however, that it might be well to allow the city to have the Ordnance land on the Island for a park, for which it would be very suitable.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said that the Government were taking a vote in the militia estimates to put the fortifications at Quebec, Kingston, and Point Lévis in good condition, and an officer had recently been sent to report on the condition of the buildings and walls of the forts at Quebec, which were said to be in a bad state, but his report was not intended to be an exhaustive one on the subject.

The Government had arranged to let the city of Montreal, on certain conditions, have St. Helen's Island for a public park, the Government retaining the fortifications and certain quantity of land in the vicinity. They had also let the city have Logan's Farm; but both this and St. Helen's Island the Government might resume possession of on an hour's notice. With reference to the ordnance land at Toronto he said that if the Government were likely to need it themselves immediately they would not let it out of their hands at all; but if they did let the city have it at all, it would only be temporary.

Mr. CAMERON (Ontario South) was surprised to hear his hon. friend going in for such warlike preparations. It had always been his idea that, when they became an independent people, they should have a treaty of peace and surety with England and the States, as a means of settling difficulties without resort to arms. He contended that the forts were as absurd as those on the Rhine, and that the whole system of war was suited for a bygone age.

Right Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said he supposed his hon. friend would be bringing in a Bill to do away with the Militia Department; that was the logical consequence of his observations. (*Laughter.*)

Mr. CAMERON (Ontario South) said he would be quite willing to do so, and he thought we would be quite as prepared without it to defend ourselves as we are now. (*Laughter.*)

The motion was carried.

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A CANADIAN HANSARD

Mr. YOUNG moved that a Select Committee, composed of nine members, viz., the Hon. Messrs. Cauchon and Tupper, and Messrs. De Cosmos, Dymond, Buell, Burpee (Sunbury), Davies, Ross (Middlesex West), and the mover, be, and are hereby appointed to report to this House the most effectual and cheapest mode of obtaining the publication of a Canadian *Hansard*, containing a correct report of the proceedings and speeches in this House, the work to be commenced next session.

He said that he need not enlarge very much upon the motion—that spoke for itself. He believed that there were some members of the House who had felt not only the desirability, but the actual necessity, of having a correct report of their proceedings. They could not expect that in a city like this full reports would be published in the ordinary newspaper press, and although the leading papers of Toronto and Montreal had an excellent staff in the gallery, yet, on account of having to telegraph their reports, it was almost impossible to prevent errors from creeping into them.

If it was considered that the reporters had to work very late at night, that the reports had to be telegraphed, that they had to be taken off the wires at the ends of the line, and that they had then to be printed and published in the papers at four o'clock next morning, it was quite evident, from a mere statement of the facts, how impossible it was for them to obtain full or accurate reports in that way.