

n St. John put each number up in a wrapper, and sent the whole load over the Province, post free. And this while our own and British pamphlets actually were charged postage! The Government therefore ordered the imposition of postage, but had, under the authority of the Act, decreased the rate fixed in the Law five thirds. He would put it to the good sense of the House if they had not done as they should! We were now carrying through New Brunswick Canadian and Nova Scotian newspapers free, while our papers going into these Provinces had to pay postage. Would not the appointment of a political Postmaster General lead to a different arrangement? He could say, and the interests and wishes of the public would require him to say, - If you will not carry our papers free, we shall charge yours. He would mention another matter in which the efforts of a political Postmaster General would be required. It was generally understood that there was an arrangement between our Government and that of the United States by which the mail matter of both countries was carried in the other without preparation being required, each Government retaining for his share the amount collected within its territories. Our Government carried out this arrangement in good faith. But soon from the United States Postal Department was issued requiring preparation of letters sent into New Brunswick. When the attention of the United States Government was called to this it was said to be a mistake, and another order repealing the first, was issued. But when the first order was published everywhere, and brought most fully under the notice of the public, the latter was posted up only in a few corners, where but few would notice it. Besides this, as the United States postmasters were partly paid by a per centage on postage collected it was ever their interests to have letters prepaid. The result was that they collected much more postage than we did. Again, we carried through mails for Prince Edward's Island; but that Province carried none for us. Many of our disadvantages rose from the geographical position of New Brunswick. They would be remedied by the assiduous and persistent efforts of a political Postmaster General. - Hon. Mr. Speaker went on to show the inconvenience of having an Executive Council not composed of heads of departments, who would have to call these heads into their councils in order to procure from them information concerning these departments. He made a general defence of the departmental system, and proceeded to speak of the expense of the Post Office. In the State of Maine there was last year a deficit in Post Office of £8000. Yet Maine had three times our population, had railroads on which many of the mails were carried, and had no more extensive country over which to carry mails than New Brunswick. There was not in the world a country which for the same population the same amount of mail accommodation was given as in New Brunswick. (Hear, hear.) Under the old system if a new way office was wanted it had to be got by a resolution on the floor of the House, which gave occasion for the practice of the log-rolling system. One fact might be mentioned as significant - Mr. Howe during the whole time that he was at the head of the department never once visited the post and way offices throughout the Province. - Mr. Williston had said that the people would call them to account. - Well; he had met the people on the hustings six times, and he was prepared to meet them again. Did the people conclude to leave him at home it was their privilege to do so, and he would have no right to complain. The forty-one men now on the floor of the house were not the only set of men in this country fit to legislate for it. - The hon. Speaker concluded with a warm eulogy on parliamentary and responsible government, and upon the results which they produced upon the general intelligence and intellect of the community.

Progress was then reported. WEDNESDAY, Feby. 23. At two P.M. the House again went into committee on Mr. Williston's Bill for the abolition of the political Postmaster Generalship. Mr. Gilbert in the chair. Mr. Wilmot said that he had a few words to say in reply to remarks made in the debate yesterday. - He then went on to defend himself against the charge of inconsistency. Hon. Mr. Tilley had charged him with changing his opinion respecting the building of railways by Government. In 1852 the question of the inter-colonial line was before the country. The only person from St. John then in the Government was Mr. Hazen. It was thought that in a question so deeply important as this line and its route the great commercial emporium of the Province should be fully represented in the Government. He therefore accepted office, feeling that this matter was of far more importance than any merely party or political question. If he was inconsistent it was with a view to the promotion of the interests of the Province. - With respect to the Bill of the office of Postmaster General by the former Fisher Government they certainly never offered it to him; but he was given to understand, through a channel which could not be doubted, that he could have the office. Hon. Mr. Tilley. - I never heard of it. Mr. Wilmot. - He did not care whether the Secretary had heard of it or not; he said it from a source which he would not

name, but which he could not doubt. - The Province was running extravagantly into debt. He was at one time burnt in effigy in St. John for opposition to the railway schemes of the day. He had always thought that the building of a railway to Shediac, in the direction of a line of road which would not support a daily stage, was folly. If he had afterwards taken another course, and agreed to the contract with Jackson, it was only upon a footing which the present Attorney General had declared to be safe in any part of the Province, - pledging the Province to the extent of only £3000 a mile. When Mr. Tilley spoke of the large revenue, and the great taxation by the Tariff Bill of 1854, he (Mr. T.) seemed scarcely to recollect all the circumstances in connection with that Revenue Act. Mr. Tilley's own Estimates in 1855 made the revenue £10,000 short of what was needed. Hon. Mr. Tilley. - But the Reciprocity Act had been passed in the meanwhile. Mr. Wilmot. - Well; he was only looking at the Secretary's own arrangements. The Revenue Bill of 1854 taxed certain unenumerated articles 7 1/2 per cent; Mr. Tilley's Revenue Bill of 1855 made them 10 per cent. In 1850 he had supported Mr. Tilley in the election for St. John as a Protectionist. What did he do in his Revenue Bill of '55? Certain articles which the Government of '54 thought could be manufactured cheaply and profitably in this Province, and which in fact under that tariff were sold more cheaply than now, were taxed 20 per cent. The Secretary in his tariff of '55 reduced them to 15 per cent. In 1854 the Partelow Government announced that the Province was virtually out of debt. A debt of £40,000 to the Bank of British North America, but not then due, had been paid off in anticipation, and the one per cent. Loan Duty was repealed. Now the Province was in the position that it was issuing Debentures to raise money to pay the interest on its debt.

Hon. Mr. Tilley denied this assertion, and some sparring took place between the two members, the exact purport of which we could not understand. Mr. Wilmot continued. - When the accounts came in they would see. The Shediac Railway would not, he believed, pay running expenses. If instead of building that line the efforts of the Province had been turned to making a railway connexion with the Canadian railways, or those of the United States, there would have been a project of the line becoming profitable investments. But when the last year Government of Nova Scotia invited negotiations for an union of the Shediac line with theirs, our Government never even gave them an answer.

Hon. Mr. Tilley said that he could promise to lay in a few days the estimate before the House, when a full and satisfactory explanation of the financial condition of the Province would be given. He should then have an opportunity to reply to the hon. member.

Mr. McAdam made some remarks in favor of railways; and expressed himself as opposed to the Bill before the committee.

Hon. Attorney General said that he was prepared to show that it was Mr. Wilmot and his friends who had led the Province into the present railway scheme. He was not afraid of our debts. - With respect to the filling up of the Postmaster Generalship by the Government in 1855 - 6 he could conscientiously state that when that Government went out of office in 1856 he had not made up his mind as to the propriety of making it political. Now that he had seen the working of it he was satisfied that the change was a good one; but at that time he was not convinced of it. In the framing of the Bill his Government had used such terms that even after its passage the subject was open to inquiry.

Mr. McPheilm said that all parties were responsible for the erection of the office of Postmaster General, as all had voted for it. He thought that his own appointment was not an injudicious one. He had to begin at the very foundation of the department, and he believed that every measure which he had adopted would become a fixture in the department. Mr. McP. went into a history of the department from the first appointment of Mr. Howe to the Post Office at St. John. Against that gentleman he did not desire to say a word; but he found him totally ignorant of the mode of contracting for sending mails abroad; and he believed the department had gained by its change of hand. He would call attention to the progress made in the Department. By the first Report of the Postmaster General it appeared that in 1850 there were 892 miles of mail route; the mails being carried over in the year 149,916 miles, at a cost of £3780. In 1856, after the control of the office came into the hands of our Government we had 2720 miles of mail route, and the mails were carried 558,608 miles, at a cost of £6,873. Every man now had his letters and papers carried, so to speak, to his own door. Those who talked of the deficiency in the revenue of the Post Office took a wrong view of the matter. Where was the revenue afforded by the Board of Works; it never placed a shilling on the credit side of the Provincial accounts; and yet who talked of abolishing it on that account? The erection of the Post Office was not a question of revenue, but of public accommodation and convenience. In the United States Postal Department there was a large annual deficiency; in Nova Scotia the Post Office deficiency last year was over £7,000; in Canada it ranged from £27,000 to £40,000. The mail arrangements between the colonies were made in 1850 by a deputation from the several Provinces which met at Montreal. These arrangements were very unjust to New Brunswick. We carried a mail of 700 lbs. for Nova Scotia from Amherst to Lake Temiscouata, a distance of 416 miles, and another mail of 400 lbs. from Amherst to Robbinston, in Maine; while Nova Scotia in return only carried a mail never exceeding 400 lbs. from Amherst to Halifax, 124 miles. Not satisfied with this the Post Office Committee of the Nova Scotia Assembly asked for still further advantages. Messrs. Hyde & Archibald, the Nova Scotian mail contractors, had Mr. Woodgate, the Postmaster General, bound hand and foot. Had he (Mr. McP.) remained longer in office he would have established a mail line of our own from Amherst to Halifax. - Respecting the cost of our Post Office he might mention that when it was in the hands of the British Government they sent out a Post Office surveyor, whose allowance did not amount to less than £650, which might be set off against the salary of department in the Province, except perhaps the Secretary's, was there was too much work to be done as in this department. No chief was so capable of conducting it successfully as a political chief. The political office had never yet had a fair trial; he went into it ignorant of the duties; and he supposed that his two successors did the same. It required time to acquire a knowledge of all its intricacies and of its working. By judicious management it could in a few years be made self-sustaining. Not one of the recommendations which he submitted in his first month, out of the twelve, in which he generally had nine-tenths of the correct; he had not gone to the Court at Dorchester, nor into Gloucester. He had been in Fredericton frequently; had travelled round visiting the post and way offices; and answered with his own hand all the important correspondence. At the close of a year he found he should have to resign or lose his practice, and concluded to do the former. He would not now take the office with double the salary. With respect to the remarks of Mr. Cudlip concerning St. John he felt bound to say that the simple truth was that Mr. Howe had been nothing more than Postmaster General for St. John. All he had to do was to keep St. John quiet. Mr. McPheilm or himself in the short time he had been in the office had learned more about the department than Mr. Howe himself knew. That gentleman was of a disposition so facile that almost any person could impose on his good nature. He had not said he was on the eve of making reforms when he resigned. He said that his correspondence with the Canadian Government would have resulted in their no longer required. Respecting Nova Scotia, the Postmaster General should proceed thither; and he should not go merely as Postmaster General, but as a member of the Executive, and clothed with the power and authority of the Government. The terms made in 1850 with the other Provincial Governments were unfair to us because the House could not furnish the information on which just terms might have been demanded. When called upon by the House for information and advice Mr. Howe could not give the former with accuracy, and had no foundation on which to rest the latter. The additional expense of the department was actually £637 - the chief's salary, and office rent. The conduct of the Postmaster General was likely to be much more fair and impartial when he was a political officer, a member of the Government and Assembly, than if he was outside of both. If the Government desired to perpetrate an injustice it could be much more easily and safely done through a subordinate officer than through one of themselves. Members said that they could see no reforms; nevertheless there had been reforms effected, one of which was the adoption throughout the Province of a regular and uniform system of proceeding by the Postmasters and Way Office keepers. The press and public opinion were both said to be against the office. - The truth was the press did not know what it was talking about. The oldest and best informed members in the House would acknowledge that this very discussion would do good, and place us in a better position with reference to making postal arrangements with other countries.

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Mr. McAdam moved that the further consideration of the Bill be postponed three months.

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Mr. Williston closed the debate in a short speech. He said that he had anticipated that both the members of the present Government, who had the office, and the leading members of the opposition, who expected it, would oppose its abolition. - He did not wish all the Executive Councilors removed from the floor of the House, but he wished the number decreased. If that was not done there must be an increase of the representation, or the only remedy which could be found for the evil of Executive influence would be in a federation of the colonies. Mr. Williston went on to reply to the arguments advanced against the Bill.

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Mr. Cudlip said that he represented the wishes of his constituents when he voted for the abolition of the office. There was a great deal of red tape about it. Some reform must be made; the people of St. John felt that they had never received a money consideration for the expenditure on the Post Office. He would have been pleased had the present Government left the office vacant.

Mr. Kerr said that after hearing the arguments which the two ex-Postmaster Generals had used for the retention of the office he had come to the directly contrary conclusion. If the department was of so much importance, the duties so numerous and onerous, it would be much better that its chief should be in his office instead of taking part in the business of

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Hon. Mr. Speaker said that if Mr. Kerr had lost money it was his own fault. He had sent money letters without registering them. There never had been an instance of a registered letter being lost in New Brunswick. (Mr. McPheilm and Mr. Tilley here corroborated this statement.) - There never had been a registered letter through the Post Office but either the letter had been received or the receipt from the border office through which it passed could be procured. Mr. Speaker here related the circumstances of the letter sent by Mr. Kerr, the manner in which it had been traced from office to office from Chatham to Quebec, its destination, where it had evidently been opened and its contents abstracted. He went on to defend himself against the charge of having neglected the office for his profession. He had not been in his law office at Chatham one month, out of the twelve. He had not had one case in Kent, in which he generally had nine-tenths of the correct; he had not gone to the Court at Dorchester, nor into Gloucester. He had been in Fredericton frequently; had travelled round visiting the post and way offices; and answered with his own hand all the important correspondence. At the close of a year he found he should have to resign or lose his practice, and concluded to do the former. He would not now take the office with double the salary. With respect to the remarks of Mr. Cudlip concerning St. John he felt bound to say that the simple truth was that Mr. Howe had been nothing more than Postmaster General for St. John. All he had to do was to keep St. John quiet. Mr. McPheilm or himself in the short time he had been in the office had learned more about the department than Mr. Howe himself knew. That gentleman was of a disposition so facile that almost any person could impose on his good nature. He had not said he was on the eve of making reforms when he resigned. He said that his correspondence with the Canadian Government would have resulted in their no longer required. Respecting Nova Scotia, the Postmaster General should proceed thither; and he should not go merely as Postmaster General, but as a member of the Executive, and clothed with the power and authority of the Government. The terms made in 1850 with the other Provincial Governments were unfair to us because the House could not furnish the information on which just terms might have been demanded. When called upon by the House for information and advice Mr. Howe could not give the former with accuracy, and had no foundation on which to rest the latter. The additional expense of the department was actually £637 - the chief's salary, and office rent. The conduct of the Postmaster General was likely to be much more fair and impartial when he was a political officer, a member of the Government and Assembly, than if he was outside of both. If the Government desired to perpetrate an injustice it could be much more easily and safely done through a subordinate officer than through one of themselves. Members said that they could see no reforms; nevertheless there had been reforms effected, one of which was the adoption throughout the Province of a regular and uniform system of proceeding by the Postmasters and Way Office keepers. The press and public opinion were both said to be against the office. - The truth was the press did not know what it was talking about. The oldest and best informed members in the House would acknowledge that this very discussion would do good, and place us in a better position with reference to making postal arrangements with other countries.

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Mr. Cudlip said that he represented the wishes of his constituents when he voted for the abolition of the office. There was a great deal of red tape about it. Some reform must be made; the people of St. John felt that they had never received a money consideration for the expenditure on the Post Office. He would have been pleased had the present Government left the office vacant.

Mr. Kerr said that after hearing the arguments which the two ex-Postmaster Generals had used for the retention of the office he had come to the directly contrary conclusion. If the department was of so much importance, the duties so numerous and onerous, it would be much better that its chief should be in his office instead of taking part in the business of

this House. Both the ex-Postmaster Generals had spoken of reforms and improvements which they were on the eve of making when they left the office. These facts presented the strongest possible reasons for making the office permanent in Nova Scotia the Postmaster General though non-political had introduced many reforms, - among them the preparation of postage. - There were many important departments the chiefs of which were not required on the floor of this House. The chief Commissioner of Public Works was not here; nor the Provincial Treasurer, nor the Chairman of the Railway Board. He believed that the Surveyor General was not needed here. Mr. Johnson appeared to be holding the office, and he therefore inferred that the duties could not be very onerous. The improvement in the Post Office he could not see. He had met with some losses himself through it.

Hon. Mr. Speaker said that if Mr. Kerr had lost money it was his own fault. He had sent money letters without registering them. There never had been an instance of a registered letter being lost in New Brunswick. (Mr. McPheilm and Mr. Tilley here corroborated this statement.) - There never had been a registered letter through the Post Office but either the letter had been received or the receipt from the border office through which it passed could be procured. Mr. Speaker here related the circumstances of the letter sent by Mr. Kerr, the manner in which it had been traced from office to office from Chatham to Quebec, its destination, where it had evidently been opened and its contents abstracted. He went on to defend himself against the charge of having neglected the office for his profession. He had not been in his law office at Chatham one month, out of the twelve. He had not had one case in Kent, in which he generally had nine-tenths of the correct; he had not gone to the Court at Dorchester, nor into Gloucester. He had been in Fredericton frequently; had travelled round visiting the post and way offices; and answered with his own hand all the important correspondence. At the close of a year he found he should have to resign or lose his practice, and concluded to do the former. He would not now take the office with double the salary. With respect to the remarks of Mr. Cudlip concerning St. John he felt bound to say that the simple truth was that Mr. Howe had been nothing more than Postmaster General for St. John. All he had to do was to keep St. John quiet. Mr. McPheilm or himself in the short time he had been in the office had learned more about the department than Mr. Howe himself knew. That gentleman was of a disposition so facile that almost any person could impose on his good nature. He had not said he was on the eve of making reforms when he resigned. He said that his correspondence with the Canadian Government would have resulted in their no longer required. Respecting Nova Scotia, the Postmaster General should proceed thither; and he should not go merely as Postmaster General, but as a member of the Executive, and clothed with the power and authority of the Government. The terms made in 1850 with the other Provincial Governments were unfair to us because the House could not furnish the information on which just terms might have been demanded. When called upon by the House for information and advice Mr. Howe could not give the former with accuracy, and had no foundation on which to rest the latter. The additional expense of the department was actually £637 - the chief's salary, and office rent. The conduct of the Postmaster General was likely to be much more fair and impartial when he was a political officer, a member of the Government and Assembly, than if he was outside of both. If the Government desired to perpetrate an injustice it could be much more easily and safely done through a subordinate officer than through one of themselves. Members said that they could see no reforms; nevertheless there had been reforms effected, one of which was the adoption throughout the Province of a regular and uniform system of proceeding by the Postmasters and Way Office keepers. The press and public opinion were both said to be against the office. - The truth was the press did not know what it was talking about. The oldest and best informed members in the House would acknowledge that this very discussion would do good, and place us in a better position with reference to making postal arrangements with other countries.

Mr. Montgomery thought that information as to the improvements in the Post Office should have been laid before the House. The two ex-Postmaster Generals had spoken for four or five hours, but he had not received from them the slightest particle of information concerning the office. He could not vote for the Bill as he wished to give the office a fair trial.

Mr. McAdam moved that the further consideration of the Bill be postponed three months.

Mr. DesBrisay complained bitterly of mail arrangements. They were all in a mess together. The Chairman of the Railway Board, in whose hands it might be said were the destinies of the Province, ought to be on the floor of the House. He should vote for the Bill.

Mr. Tibbets spoke briefly in favor of the retention of the office, and of bringing other heads of departments on the floor of the House.

Mr. Gillmor said he had changed his mind somewhat concerning the office. - One thing should be perfectly understood - a head of department was paid for devoting his whole time to it. Whether a lawyer or a merchant he should remove to Fredericton, and give himself entirely to the department. The reasons which might be used for bringing the Postmaster General on the floor of the House would not apply to the Railway Board. The former was a permanent office; the latter was not for we could not go on for many years expending £250,000 a year. He would like to see an amalgamation of the Board of Works with the Post Office.

Hon. Mr. Brown spoke against the Bill. Mr. End spoke against the Bill, and eulogised the two ex-Postmaster Generals.

Mr. Scovill supported the Bill. The people expected that the paid head of a department should devote his time to it; but he was afraid that when Mr. Connell saw his logs coming down the river in the spring he would be in St. John, and in Woodstock, and anywhere but in his office.

Mr. McIntosh said that he should vote against the Bill because so long as they had Executive Councilors on the floor of the House it was best to give them the departments, and hold them responsible for their management. Mr. Gillmor had called the Railway Board a trumpety department, because the construction would soon cease. But when the railways were completed what was to be done with them? - were they to be given away? Would not they still require management? He believed that to keep up the Railway from St. John to Shediac would require the expenditure of £100,000. If it was necessary to have on the floor of the House the Postmaster General, who had the expenditure of six or seven thousand pounds was it not much more necessary to have the Chief Commissioner of Railways, who would spend £100,000?

Mr. Williston closed the debate in a short speech. He said that he had anticipated that both the members of the present Government, who had the office, and the leading members of the opposition, who expected it, would oppose its abolition. - He did not wish all the Executive Councilors removed from the floor of the House, but he wished the number decreased. If that was not done there must be an increase of the representation, or the only remedy which could be found for the evil of Executive influence would be in a federation of the colonies. Mr. Williston went on to reply to the arguments advanced against the Bill.

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