

DEBATE ON MR. HAVILAND'S MOTION FOR THE PRODUCTION OF SIR GEORGE GREY'S DESPATCH.

Mr. HAVILAND denied that he had brought forward his motion from any factious motives. Does the hon. member suppose me so foolish as that I imagine that the defeat of the Government on one solitary motion of this nature would lead to a dissolution? The hon. member desires to impose on the better judgment of his party, by raising the cry of, "keep down the minority."

Hon. COL. SECRETARY.—The hon. member and Mr. Douse signed petitions against the Bills, not that they might gratify the people of the Island, but to aid and comfort the minority. It is the duty of a Government to consider the probable effect of a Despatch. The majority represent the people; the minority do not; and the members of the Government said from the first of the discussion that they would not produce the entire document. The hon. member, Mr. Douse, had expressed his regret that the Governor should have an adviser so ignorant as I am of the mode of transacting business at the Colonial Office. He said that he could get Despatches from its records.

Mr. DOUSE.—So I can. Hon. COL. SECRETARY.—Well, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the influence of the proprietors is very great at the Colonial Office—so great, indeed, that it is a difficult matter to carry any measures through it, which in any way effect their interests. I am sometimes astonished when I consider what has been done. Take, for instance, the One-ninth Bill. The proprietors raised heaven and earth against it. The royal sanction was withheld, it was reconsidered, and carried at last by a stratagem. The minority, Sir, must not claim to impose terms on the majority, and threaten them by saying, "if you don't do as we wish we will address the Lieutenant Governor."

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Mr. Speaker, I did not expect so protracted a discussion on this motion. I infer from what has fallen from the Hon. Col. Secretary, that there may be one or two expressions in the Despatch that he does not like. But if so, why not produce it? I am no friend to the proprietors, but if there is anything in the Despatch justifying their opposition to the Bills, it should be furnished; but I can see no reason why we should not have the entire Despatch here. Perhaps, Sir, the extracts alone are more calculated for the manufacture of political capital than would be the whole Despatch. Considering the antecedents of some hon. members, I have listened to strange doctrines to-night. While I never would press for the production of private Despatches, I must support the motion before the House, as Sir George Grey's Despatch is a public one.

Mr. McINTOSH.—Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of the motion. I never could, if I know myself, become a party to the withholding a public Despatch from the public. I consider such conduct would be tyranny. I may, Mr. Speaker, be charged with a desire to upset the Government, but I have no such desire. I have supported and will support it as long as it carries measures that are just and beneficial to the people. I will never be a party to prevent a minority or majority obtaining a public document.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY.—As so tyranny, the present was an attempt of the minority to tyrannise over the majority, by compelling them to do as they (the minority) pleased.

Mr. McINTOSH.—A minority cannot tyrannise.

Mr. LAIRD would support the motion. The Lieutenant Governor had stated that he would lay the papers before the House.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN charged Messrs. Cooper, Laird and McIntosh with co-operating with the minority against the party they were returned to support. This gave rise to a great deal of confusion and personal recrimination, which the Reporter did not take down. The hon. member went on to say, that the Governor having said that he would communicate to the House the reasons assigned for the disallowance of the Bills, they were bound to believe that those reasons were embodied in the extract sent down. Of course the minority must feel gratified at the accession to their ranks of the hon. members, Messrs. Cooper, Laird and McIntosh, and he wished the two sections of the Opposition mutual joy of their new association.

Hon. Mr. MOONEY.—The country will see with surprise the new coalition, Messrs. Douse, Yeo and Palmer supporting the rights of the people! We must be near the end of the world!

Mr. HAVILAND.—The hon. member hardly ever votes without reference to private motives, yet is constantly imputing this to others.

Hon. Mr. PALMER condemned the unparliamentary and unparliamentary manner adopted by the loud voiced member of the Government towards the Opposition. When my hon. friend, Mr. Haviland, made the motion, he confined his observations within legitimate bounds, but he was met by the Hon. Mr. Whelan with the imputation, that his only motive was the gratification of private pique and personal malice. Sir, I might retaliate by saying that the Government is influenced by similar motives. I might suggest to the hon. member himself the effect of the present discussion with regard to the continuance of his salary, about £1000 a year.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—That is not correct.

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—I ask, Mr. Speaker, are our mouths to be shut? When the Government wish to oppose any measure emanating from this side of the House, the hon. member from Flinty Glen gets up and tries to frighten members with the cry that the Government is in danger.

What a fall it would be! The sword of Damocles, the hon. member feels, is suspended over his head by a hair, and may at any moment descend. Sir, I agree with the hon. member, Mr. McIntosh, that no man should be abused because he indignantly spurns a state of abject servility to any man or any body of men. It is fortunate for the country that there are members in this House who are not bound down by regard to their salaries to vote as they are bidden. I, for one, am not dissatisfied to hear hon. members declare that they are not bound to vote against their convictions. The present question, Mr. Speaker, is a most important one. Here we have a motion for the production of a public Despatch, and as the reasons therein assigned for the course pursued would exert a great influence on the opinions of the people one way or another, the public should be made acquainted with those reasons. What better indication of the intentions of Her Majesty's Government could we have than the Despatch? If it should, in addition to the extract before us, contain suggestions as to modes of developing the resources of the Colony, and advancing its material interests, we should have it here for the general good; if adverse to the rights or legitimate influence of the people, more satisfaction would be given by its general publication than can ever arise from the circulation of a mere extract. As to private or confidential Despatches, we have nothing to induce the belief that this is one of that class. It is a public document, and the question is, have the public a right to its production? The Government say, "We are responsible." Then let the people judge after getting the Despatch. It will not do for the Government to say, "It will not do for us to publish it, such a course might peril our situations." I do say, Sir, that so long as a Despatch is not marked "Private" or "Confidential," it is the right and duty of the minority to rise and ask for it. In concluding those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I must do the hon. Col. Secretary the justice to say that he has throughout this discussion manifested perfectly good temper. I wish, Sir, that I could say as much of some of his supporters, and that they were not so much addicted to personal and unparliamentary remarks, in attributing the conduct of hon. members to private pique and personal malice. It occurs to me to state that the Despatches withheld from the present Government, when in opposition, to which allusion has been made, were marked "Private," and therefore could not with propriety be submitted.

The House then divided, when there appeared for the motion—Hons. Messrs. Palmer, Longworth and Montgomery, Messrs. Haviland, Douse, Yeo, Cooper, Laird and McIntosh.—9.

Against it—Hons. Col. Secretary, Col. Treasurer, Messrs. Wightman, Mooney and Whelan, Messrs. Clark, Perry, Munro, McDonald, McGill.—10.

MONDAY, March 3.

The Hon. Col. Secretary presented a report and plans of a Survey and probable expenditure for the making of a new line of road to be substituted for the present route between Charlottetown and Haslam's, Princetown road. Papers laid on the table.

The Hon. Col. Secretary, from the Committee appointed last session to report on the practicability of building a bridge over the Oyster bed at Rustico, presented the following report:—

"Your Committee, to whom was referred the Petition of the inhabitants of Rustico, praying for the erection of a bridge over the Oyster bed near the residence of Mr. Hughes, have to report—that they consider the desired bridge would be of great benefit to a large portion of the inhabitants of Lots 33 and 24, and therefore beg to recommend the erection of said bridge, with a provision for the passage of new vessels.

"Mr. Hughes agrees to give a right of way through his farm to the intended site of the said bridge, on the west side of the river. Mr. Blatch offers also to give a right of way through his farm, on the east side, for ten pounds—all of which is respectfully submitted."

The above report was referred to the members of the district to provide the necessary amount for the erection of the bridge.

The Hon. Mr. Longworth presented a petition from John McKinnon, late Preventive officer, praying compensation for services performed and expenses incurred in placing a watch on board the Sloop "Dragonet," seized by petitioner and the late N. LaPage. Petition referred to a special committee to report thereon.

The Hon. Mr. Mooney presented a petition from inhabitants of Lots 35, 36 and 37, south side of the Hillsborough river, praying a grant towards building a bridge over Pisiquid river. Petition referred to a special committee.

The following road petitions were then presented and read:—By Mr. Laird, from inhabitants of Lot 33. By the Hon. Col. Secretary, from John Bell and others, residents of Covehead. By Mr. Perry, from inhabitants of Lot 17.

Mr. Digwell presented a petition from certain inhabitants of the eastern section of King's County, praying a grant to open a new line of road from Lewis's burnt house, Lot 41, to Newfrage, Lot 43, instead of the present highway which runs too near the Gulf Shore. Referred to Committee on opening new lines of road.

Mr. Laird presented a petition from inhabitants of Lot 33, praying for a more stringent enactment against the running at large of Swine. Referred to the Committee appointed to report on similar petitions from inhabitants of Summerside and St. Bonaventure. House adjourned.

ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.—A suit has been entered by a female named Maria Suzanna, in the District Court at New Orleans, against Nathieu Richeto, to recover damages for slander. The circumstances of the case are peculiarly romantic, and are thus narrated in the True Delta. Miss Maria Suzanna, in her petition, states that she was born in the city of New Orleans, in the year 1818, and resided here ever since with a free colored woman who nursed her, and whose name is Martha Den Andre, under the impression for the most part of the time, that is, until she had attained her majority, that she was of colored extraction, and daughter of Martha Don Andre. On becoming of age, however, her nurse and guardian told her that she was born of white parents, who for reason best known to themselves had kept her birth a secret from her. On this information, Maria took her position in society as a white woman. Although the circumstances were explained to the general satisfaction of the parties whom she was in the habit of visiting, nevertheless, there were persons malicious enough to insist that she was nothing more or less than a colored person, and among the rest one Mathieu Richeto, on various occasions, denominated her publicly a such thereby depriving of her right to the social position to which she was entitled amongst white persons. For this deprivation of her right, damages are claimed. In proof of this statement the deposition of Martha Don Andre, her former nurse, is before the court. She is now 75 years of age, and resides at the corner of Bourbon and Orleans streets. She says that some time in the year 1818 a certain Madame Picole came to her residence, bringing with her a newborn infant, and requested her to take charge of it at monthly wages, to be paid her. The lady expressed a wish that the child should be secretly raised, as its mother was a young lady of the first families in the city, who would not for the world's wealth, have her name mentioned or her reputation sullied. Shortly afterwards the mother of the child, described by Martha as a beautiful young female, about twenty years, called and imposed on her solemn injunction that she would never reveal anything of the matter, and at the same time told her the real name of the child, her lineage, &c., &c., requesting her to have the child baptized as a white child, by the name which she now bears. The request was complied with, and the baptismal record of the Cathedral of St. Louis proves the fact. Up to her majority Suzanna was under the impression that she was the daughter of Martha, as it was the wish of her own mother such should be the case. Proof in substantiation of these circumstances of the death of Martha's child, shortly after the reception of the little nursing, was also produced, and on this Martha passed off her as her own child. At this period of the death of Martha's infant she was living with a man named Gibbs, and therefore it was that the child, Maria Suzanna, was brought up as Maria Susanna Gibbs, which name she, however, discarded on coming of age, and being informed of the facts narrated. The defendant, in his reply to the petition of the plaintiff, admits her statement to be true, as far as his calling her a colored woman goes, and calls upon her to prove her status. This the complainant says she is prepared to do, and so the case stands before his Honor Judge Reynolds, whose decision in the matter will no doubt be anxiously looked for.

FOOLSCAP.—Everybody knows what "foolscap" paper is, but they would be puzzled to tell how it came to bear that singular cognomen. Well, when Charles I. found his revenues short, he granted certain privileges, amounting to monopolies, and among these was the manufacture of paper, the exclusive right which was sold to certain parties, who grew rich, and enriched the Government at the expense of those who were obliged to use paper. At this time all English papers bore in water marks the royal arms. The Parliament under Cromwell made jests and jeers of his law in every conceivable manner, and among other indignities to the memory of Charles it was ordered that the royal arms be removed from the paper, and the fool's cap and bells be substituted. They were also removed when the Rump Parliament was prorogued, but paper of the size of the Parliament's journals still bears the name of "foolscap."

THE MONSTER STEAMSHIP.—Next week about 1000 men will be employed upon the "great leviathan" belonging to the Eastern Steam Navigation Company, now in course of construction at Messrs. Scott Russell's. She will be 23,000 register, and will carry about 12,000 tons of coal in addition. She will be able to carry 10,000 passengers, and will have eight screw steamers as her complement of large boats, four on each side. She is of a most gigantic proportions, and a visit to her, is a sight to be talked of. When she is completed and in the water, she will assuredly draw "all London" to her; and, in fact, be the greatest curiosity in the kingdom.