

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

From the Novascotian.

Pay of the Legislative Council.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.—APRIL 10.

Mr *Uniacke*, in absence of Mr *Dodd*, who had given notice on the subject, rose to move that a sum similar to that appropriated to each member of the Assembly, be granted to each of the Legislative Council, who did not reside in Halifax. He (Mr *U.*) considered that no man should be expected to devote his time to the public, entrusting his private concerns to others during his absence from home, without being saved from actual outlay. If this were denied, the House would place the country in an unpleasant condition; men of thought and probity, but not of fortune, in each of the counties, would be deterred from giving their services to the public, on account of the expenses which would ensue. It would be easy to discover in the Council, as now constituted, men who should not be expected to come from a distance on public business, without being saved from pecuniary loss. The expenses might be thought trifling, but including 200 or 300 miles of travelling, they were serious, and more than some could afford, he was astonished to see the list of expenses of one gentleman who possessed the confidence of the county which he came from, and of that house,—that gentleman could not, in justice to his family, incur such an expenditure another time, in addition to the loss and inconvenience of leaving his business to others during his absence. To remove difficulties of this description from the way of the Executive and the country, in endeavours to get the services of proper persons, he would move the resolution named.

Mr *McKim* said that there was but little use in bringing men from the country to serve in the Council, while a majority of that body lived in Halifax. It would be time enough to move such a resolution as that before the House, at a future opportunity, when the Council would be differently constructed.

Mr *Holland* spoke to the same effect, and enumerated several counties which had no representatives in the Council.

Mr *Doyle* followed on the same side; the refusal of the pay might occasion individual hardship, but an acquiescence would be a sanction of the formation of that body, which should not be given.

Mr *Young* said that the ultimate question was beset with difficulties,—refusal might occasion hardships—on the other hand, the remuneration of a Legislative Council in that manner, would be against the policy in which a Legislative Council was established. If that aristocratic portion of the people came year after year for payment to that House, where would its independence be? Remuneration if given at all, should be by a bill, which ought to be passed to continue during the term of the Assembly which should pass it. Those called to the Council Chamber should represent the property of the country more particularly than that House did; they should form a counterpoise of the wealth of the country,—and would it be said that the Province could not furnish ten or twelve persons of the requisite description, without the desired provision of 40 or £50 a year? Should those who sought nearly the highest dignity in the country, stipulate for that paltry sum as one of the conditions of their acceptance of the honor? If it should be proved that Nova Scotia could not furnish men who would serve without pay, he would unwillingly agree to set the first example to the other Colonies. When he found that the fertile districts of King's County, Annapolis, Digby, and Queen's, did not send a member to that board, except the gentleman from the town of Windsor, he could not think that it was

so constituted as to give general satisfaction. Some changes would be necessary and he was not inclined to pass the proposed grant this session at least.

Mr *Huntingdon* said, if the house expected persons living at a distance to attend as members of the Council, they should provide pay for them. Remove the sitting of the Council to one of the extremities of the Province, and see how many from the Capital would attend without pay. If they did not agree to pay until it was constituted to the satisfaction of the country, it never would be so constituted. The effect of the non-payment would be to prevent persons from coming from the country, and to confine members to the Town of Halifax.

Mr *Forrester* suggested the introduction of a short bill to enable the Grand Juries of Counties to assess for the pay of members of the Legislative Council.

Mr *Young* would agree to a system of payment if necessary, not else. If they passed the measure at present, it would be with a view that some members should not suffer deprivations which they could not afford, but, at the same time they would be giving to some who would not wish payment.

Mr *Goudge* opposed the motion. He did not think that the Council was selected according to the Despatches, and he believed that whether pay was given or not, the majority would be selected from town; the advisers of his Excellency would occasion such selection. He was against an Elective Council in a former session, he thought the mode un-English, but he had since seen that there would be no satisfaction without some such system. His Excellency had reference to wealth, and chose persons who did not require pay. Those from the country in the Council, were not from the agricultural portions of the province.

Mr *DeEntremont* spoke in favour of the proposition. Why should he get pay for coming to the House of Assembly, while his neighbour should not receive any for his services in the other end of the building.

Mr *McLellan* saw much difference between the reasons for paying members of Assembly and members of Council. Look to the mode of getting seats in each end. Expenses and trouble had to be encountered to get a seat in the Assembly; if the expenses were all included, the pay of six years would hardly make a balance. He would be opposed to paying the other branch, except they came to the system that every one who performed any service should be paid, and that none should do any thing for the public without pecuniary compensation. The House of Assembly, he contended, receiving nothing for their labours; let the Executive Council, and Boards of Revenue, and all be paid. If members could not attend the other Branch without injury to themselves and families, a Bill might enable Counties to assess for the pay of such persons.

Mr *Howe* said as the Hon. Mr *Dodd*, who first proposed the measure, had returned home without moving it, he did not think that it would be again brought forward; he felt obliged reluctantly to oppose it now, and would not vote a shilling for the object under present circumstances—to do so would be to commit an act of folly and extravagance, and to sanction the present constitution of the Council, against which the majority of the house had remonstrated. The member for Londonderry had pointed out a strong distinction between members of the two branches, as regarded remuneration. A gentleman who sat for a while, for part of Cape Breton, spent £3000 in contesting his seat—what his opponent expended, he (Mr *H.*) could not tell; every man who got a seat in the House had to reckon on an ultimate expenditure of 200 to £300

Some indeed received their seats with but little outlay, at first, but their feelings became interested in the questions which came before them, and they would resist attempts at depriving them of their seats; but few members were frequently returned without considerable expenditure—the trouble did not end at the hustings, as those know who had to dispute elections before committees of the house, at the cost of 200 or £300 each. The Counsel's fee in some of those cases was fifty guineas—these were expenses which every member of the house was liable to, and which members of the Council had no fear of. A mandamus gave each in the other end his seat, and he was thus made "honourable" for life, without trouble or expense. The selections had been all made with reference to the property of the parties, as a necessary element; this should be the case, and it will continue to be. When he should find the Council representing all parties and interests in the country, if it should be then shown that pay was necessary to sustain that character, he would be reluctantly compelled to assent to such a measure; until then it should not pass.

Mr *Forrester* spoke to the same effect.

Mr *Dickey* did not think it right to call on persons to come from a distance on public business without paying them. The pay of members of that house was all that was sought, although perhaps the station of gentlemen at the other end required more. He would move in amendment to the resolution before the house that the pay of members of that house who resided in Halifax, should be appropriated to pay the members of the Council who came from the country. He was sure that that would be concurred in by those who opposed the original resolution. (A laugh.)

Mr *Bell* said, that the influence of Halifax had been frequently spoken of, but members resident in the town, had cause to look pretty sharply after their country friends. While he felt that to refuse the payment demanded, would be a hardship on some, yet, taking an extended view of the subject, he was convinced that the measure proposed was of dangerous principle. The seats in the Council were objects of honour and ambition, but if pay was attached, they would be posts of interest also, and would be retained on that principle. That body was intended to strengthen the hands of the Governor in opposition to the house—but suppose its members to be paid, would not such destroy the balance of power between the two parties? Let the persons appointed to that Branch approach as near as possible to notions of aristocracy. If no such persons were in the country, then the province did not appear to be prepared for such a branch of Legislature. He would not be inclined to pay the Council, no matter how it should be constructed; he hoped that a premature step would not be taken—if they passed the resolution a period might come when they would regret the circumstance.

Mr *DesBarres* said, that if he felt satisfied that persons could be found in various parts of the country able to serve without pay, he would not agree to the measure, but he felt satisfied of the reverse; persons might be found of that description in the Western countries, but he doubted respecting the Eastern. He did not wonder at opinions respecting the danger of the measure—it might be for the interests of some that the majority of the Council should be selected from the town of Halifax; but the country felt interested in more general selections, and to have these, pay should be provided—there was no analogy between Nova Scotia and old wealthy countries. If in the Address of last session an intimation had been given that the house would provide for pay for a properly constituted council, perhaps the result