

April 16, 1874

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 16, 1874

The **SPEAKER** took the chair at 3 p.m.

Prayers

PETITIONS

A considerable number of petitions were presented, praying for a prohibitory liquor law. Among them was one presented by **Mr. SNIDER** from 1,076 inhabitants at Owen Sound.

Mr. O'DONOHUE presented a petition from Noah Bernhart and others praying for a charter to construct a railway from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg.

Mr. WALKER presented a petition from 416 citizens of London for the repeal of the duties on petroleum; also one from the coopers of London to the same effect; also one from the oil refiners of London to the same effect.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE presented a petition from the oil refiners of Petrolia and others, asking for a remission of the excise duty on petroleum; also, from certain inhabitants of Sarnia, Wyoming, Township of Moore, and the Village of Oil Springs, praying for the same.

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PRIVATE BILLS COMMITTEE

Mr. OUIMET was, on motion of Hon. Mr. Robitaille, seconded by **Hon. Mr. TUPPER**, added to the Committee on Private Bills.

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PRIVILEGE

Mr. BOWELL called attention to the fact that the motion before the House last night, forming a question of privilege, should be continued and disposed of.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. COSTIGAN said that, before that motion was taken up, he wished to make a statement with regard to an article which had appeared in a newspaper, and claimed the privilege of contradicting the statement contained therein. The statement was contained in some correspondence on the New Brunswick school question in *La Nationale*, a paper published in the Province of Quebec. The article was in French, and the only objection he had to the article was that the paragraph which he would read was incorrect. After having read the greatest portion of the letter in French, he said as near as he could translate it, it ran as follows:

“In 1873 Mr. Costigan showed himself to be rather a political partisan of Sir John Macdonald than a zealous and independent

defender of his co-religionist. When the Liberals of Ontario united with the Catholics to form a majority in favour of the cause of the Catholics oppressed in New Brunswick, Mr. Costigan refused energetically to carry the question any farther. The concurrence of the moderate and reasonable Protestants was becoming dangerous to the interests of his political idol; but it was to be hoped that the party considerations which must have entered largely into the motives of his conduct at that time, were not the same as are now actuating him in his present course.”

He complained that this was entirely misrepresenting his course upon that question, and he did not merely ask the House to accept his contradiction, because he thought he could safely appeal in making this contradiction to the Hon. Minister of Justice (Hon. Mr. Dorion) and the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Jetté) and, if he were in order, he thought he could appeal to Mr. Speaker upon the subject. The statement was incorrect, for at no time during that discussion did he hesitate to take any steps calculated to advance the interests of those whom he tried to represent in this question. Upon the occasion referred to he was prepared to go further if necessary and he never refused. On the contrary, he was most anxious to take any steps he could to advance the interests of his co-religionists on that question.

With regard to the motives which were said to have actuated him such motives did not exist at the time; they were not for the sake of defeating or embarrassing the Government, and his motives were not changed now.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON thought the practice that the hon. gentleman had introduced would be found to be very inconvenient, and he would suggest that the Speaker should not allow this course to be pursued. It would be exceedingly inconvenient to permit the replying to newspaper strictures on the acts of members of that House here. A misstatement of facts should be brought up in the House, and he thought the line could be easily drawn.

Hon. Mr. MITCHELL observed that he might say in justification of the course his hon. friend had pursued, that it was universally allowed that the distinction the hon. member for Châteauguay had drawn was a nice one; but the case quoted by his hon. friend from Victoria, New Brunswick, appeared to be a misstatement of fact. It was hard to state where the line was to be drawn.

He (Hon. Mr. Mitchell) said that the practice of replying in articles in newspapers was quite common in the Legislature of New Brunswick.

The matter then dropped.