

and who is in a position to become a permanent director. I have no hesitation in saying that I would regard this Bill with much less favour than I do if the names of these gentlemen were not among the provisional directors, with the possibility of becoming permanent directors and having the permanent influence in the company that such a position would give them. The fact that these gentlemen are in a position to become directors of that company and to receive an annual payment as such, is what brings them within the rule of having a direct pecuniary interest.

The **PRIME MINISTER**. Mr. Speaker, this is a point which involves some delicacy, and a cursory examination of the book on the subject adds still more to the doubt which I entertained with regard to it. In May's 'Parliamentary Practice,' the last edition, at page 355, the following occurs:—

The votes of members, who are subscribers to undertakings proposed to be sanctioned by a Bill, or who were interested in private Bills, have frequently been disallowed. In 1800, the votes of three members were disallowed, as having a direct interest in a Bill for incorporating a company for the manufacture of flour, wheat and bread. On May 28, 1825, notice was taken that a member who had voted with the yeas on the report of the Leith Docks Bill, had a direct pecuniary interest in passing the Bill; he was heard in his place, and stated that on that account he had not voted in the committee on the Bill, and that he had voted in this instance through inadvertence. His vote was ordered to be disallowed. Instance also may be given of motions to disallow the votes of shareholders in the company which was the promoter of the Bill on which the division was taken, that have been negatived. And in like manner, on the second reading of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Bill, May 15, 1845, objection was taken to one of the tellers for the noes as being a land-holder whose property would be injured by the proposed line. A motion for disallowing his vote was withdrawn. On July 15, 1872, objection was taken to two of the tellers in a division, who had voted against the Birmingham Sewerage Bill, on the ground of personal pecuniary interest; but the Speaker stated that they had no such pecuniary interests in the Bill as would disqualify them from voting against it.

The extent to which the rule of personal interest in a vote given by members against a private Bill, which would create a project intended to compete with an undertaking in which he had a pecuniary interest, is as yet undecided. As the Speaker stated, May 12, 1885, there is no rule of the House on the subject. He recommended that each member should be guided by his own feelings in the matter, and should vote, or abstain from voting, as he thought fit, though the Speaker added to his statement a reminder that members should be aware that they ran the risk of having their votes disallowed by the subsequent action of the House.

I have referred to authorities for the decision of the Speaker, who is in a somewhat delicate position as to whether he should allow the vote to be taken or not. What I would suggest is that the matter be left over for his consideration, and for the

guidance of the House on future occasions. Whether these gentlemen vote or not, the result of the division could not be affected, and, therefore, I think, while not taking this vote as a precedent, we should allow it to stand as it is and let the subject be investigated by Mr. Speaker for the information of the House on a future occasion.

Sir **CHARLES TUPPER**. That is quite satisfactory. These votes do not affect the division, and we will have, no doubt, a more satisfactory settlement of the question, after careful consideration by Mr. Speaker.

Amendment (Mr. Clarke) negatived.

Mr. **CAMPBELL** moved third reading of the said Bill.

Some hon. **MEMBERS**. On division.

Mr. **RICHARDSON**. With reference to that, I would like to be recorded as voting for the Bill.

The **PRIME MINISTER**. We all know your sentiments.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the third time (on division) and passed.

The Speaker left the Chair at 6.20 p. m.

AFTER RECESS.

POSTMASTER OF ST. THOMAS, ONT.

Mr. **CASEY** asked :

1. Was the postmaster of St. Thomas, Ont., suspended, and on what grounds?
2. Did any delegation see the Postmaster General about the suspension? If so, what did they ask, and what answer did they receive?
3. Was the investigation held, and by whom? Was it under oath?
4. Has the postmaster been reinstated as the result of such investigation?
5. If so, will the Postmaster General lay on the Table the reports on which the suspension and reinstatements were based?

The **POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. Mullock). Complaint having been made that at the St. Thomas post office only one wicket was kept open in the general delivery, and that the attention of the staff was slow and unsatisfactory, causing annoying delays, Mr. W. E. Bennett, who has been acting as inspector of city post offices, proceeded to St. Thomas to investigate such complaints, and, from personal observations, having become satisfied as to the correctness of the complaint, and having come to the conclusion that the service was negligent, and that the postmaster had been negligent in the discharge of his duties, suspended the postmaster. He further expressed the opinion that the postmaster was indolent, incompetent and negligent in the discharge of his duties, and was entirely to blame for the unsatisfactory condition of affairs which he found on the occasion