

REVISION OF VOTERS' LISTS

HOUSE SPENDS WHOLE AFTERNOON ON MATTER

Amendment of Leader of Opposition Accepted in Part.

Legislative Press Gallery, Feb. 19. Just one item of business occupied the attention of the House to-day, the amendments to the provincial elections act, and a large proportion of the time up till six o'clock was taken by the three Socialist members. The chief point around which the debate waged was the striking of the voters' lists of the names of men who have left the district where they are registered, perhaps only temporarily. A proposal by the Liberal members, that no name be struck off because of absence until a year had elapsed from the time the voter went away, was opposed by the government.

The bill as it appeared when passed, will bear no likeness to the measure as it was introduced, though in effect it will be the same. As brought in it increased the time for receiving applications for registration by two weeks, after altered to one week, reduced the notice of holding a court of revision from two months to one month; provided that in addition to the voters a notice should be posted up in the office of the registrar of voters within a week after an objection to any name had been received; and, most serious of all, that the registrar should have power to strike off names on the ground that the elector has ceased to reside in the electoral district, instead of having ceased to reside in the province, as the law now stands.

After the minister had debated at previous sittings the leader of the opposition, to make the law clearer and to define specifically the causes for which a registrar might strike off names, proposed an amendment to the effect that the grounds of objection to a name being retained on the list should be that the person named was dead, had ceased for a year to reside in the district, was not qualified to vote, or was not so qualified when his name was put on the list. These objections must be decided in open court. This the attorney-general agreed to, except as to the minimum of a year's absence, and Mr. Macdonald consented to the amendment. He consented, especially as the member for Grand Forks had a notice on the order paper of an amendment covering just.

The Present Proposal. The attorney-general re-drafted Mr. Macdonald's amendment and his draft came up for consideration to-day. It is as word for word with that of the day of the opposition except as to the year's absence, and the definition of the names of the registrar as to striking off names at the court of revision, in almost the words of the present act, added, unless the voter objected to the holding of the court, instead of the registrar that the objections are not well-founded. Mr. Bowser further amended the act, as he intimated a day or two ago that he would, that notice of objection must be given to the registrar thirty clear days before the holding of the court, instead of fifteen, and that notice of this objection shall be mailed to the voter's last known address twenty-one clear days before the sitting, instead of twelve. The original provision in the bill as to posting up notice of objections within a week after their receipt also stands.

The Socialist members started in from the drop of the hat to object to the elimination of a time limit, in view of the fact that many miners and other workmen moved from place to place in search of work. Should Vote Where They Chose. Parker Williams (Newcastle) argued that a man should be allowed to vote where he chooses, and that he should be able to decide where he could vote that the attorney-general. He therefore objected to a man's name being struck off the list because he had gone away to work elsewhere unless he applied to have his name struck off.

The attorney-general declared that the only intention of the bill was to cleanse the lists of names which should not be on them. At H. B. Macdonald (Vancouver), expressed the opinion that every citizen of British Columbia should have the right to exercise his franchise, that every facility should be given him to have his name put on the list, and that everything should be done to keep the lists clear of names which should not be on them. The hon. gentleman declared that there should be some ready system by which a collector of voters at the registrar and transfer his vote, take it with him wherever he went.

Dr. Kergin (Skeena), complained that the time given for notice of objection to a name being on the list was too short. Up to Skeena there was a mail only once a month. The consequence would be that a miner who had gone up to Masset or Jedway or Stewart, at the head of the Portland canal, would not receive a notice of objection to his name until too late. In place of twenty-one days there ought to be at least sixty.

J. H. Hawthornthwaite objected to the attorney-general sending instructions to revising officers; any instructions to be sent should be decided upon by the House. Mr. Bowser explained that the instructions he had spoken of sending out were instructions to the revising officers, and he did not propose to go outside of it. "I should think your revising officers ought to be able to read English," commented the member for Nanaimo.

Soon after the committee had resumed its deliberations, interrupted by the attendance of the lieutenant-governor to give the royal assent, Mr. Hawthornthwaite, probably because the opposition members present outnumbered the government supporters, moved that in the absence of the attorney-general, who was in charge of the bill, the committee rise and report progress. Thomas Gifford (New Westminster), who was in the chair, appeared to be at fault for a few moments. He had no recourse but to put the question but did not do so, although there were loud calls of "question." Eventually the division was taken, and enough Conservative members came in to save the situation.

The chairman put the question as if it had been moved in the form "that the committee rise, by a motion which, if carried, would have meant the sudden death of the bill. The member for Nanaimo drew the chairman's attention to what the actual motion was, and when the chairman appeared incredulous the leader of the opposition corroborated the Socialist leader as to what had been said. "I do not intend to allow you to overrule my privileges in this House," declared the member for Nanaimo, as the chairman hesitated about putting the motion to a show of hands, after declaring it lost on the ayes and nays.

In the end the question was put to a vote, and the bill, as amended, was carried. John McInnes (Grand Forks), suggested that all voters should be obliged to re-register on the occasion of every election. Blow at Workingmen. Parker Williams objected very strongly to what he declared was an attempt to deprive workmen of their vote. Men had to move about looking for employment, sometimes because the capitalist employers discharged them, and sometimes because they were laid off, or the place they looked upon as home; was where they were registered as voters. Their absence not being due to their removal of residence but to the exigencies of employment, it was not fair to strike them off the list, one place he should go on automatically in the place he went to.

had gone out and wagered to the extent of \$1,000 upon the return of the Conservative candidate. The government agent and collector of voters at Rossland, on the other hand, was one of the most honorable men in British Columbia, and if there was a similar man in every district there would not be so much danger in trusting them with the power the present act gave them.

The attorney-general's only comment on Mr. Wright's action that betting on the Conservative candidate in John Kootenay and Yale-Cariboo was "easy money." Ministers Affected. Stuart Henderson (Yale) pointed out that the premier was still on the list in New Westminster, the minister of finance in Vancouver and the provincial secretary in Atlin, and therefore would be struck off under the attorney-general's proposal.

Hon. Dr. Young stated that he was not now on the list in Atlin but was registered in Victoria. "Then you and the minister of finance have no right to represent your constituency, according to the attorney-general's view," remarked Mr. Hawthornthwaite.

Mr. Henderson agreed that the two ministers would have to resign under that view. The time might come when they would be without a vote in the province, the proposed amendment of the attorney-general was carried out and so he not qualified to hold office. He would not like to see them removed from the enjoyment of the emoluments of office by such means. There was a more easy means and a surer one in a general election. Mr. Henderson declared the proposal a retrograde step and one not in the best interests of the province or particular communities.

The attorney-general remarked that instead of registrars of voters being too ready to remove names they had not been careful enough to clean the lists up. For instance, in a case like that of W. W. McInnes, who was absent from the province for three or four years living in Dawson as governor of the Yukon, his name was allowed to remain on the lists.

Agent Was Not Liable. George R. Naden (Greenwood), on the point of official protest, stated that a few years ago the collector of voters in Greenwood was the government agent, an absolutely fair-minded man. Because he insisted on having clear proof of a voter's having left the district before he would strike the name off, he was complained against, and a new collector was appointed, a man more amenable to the wishes of the party.

A. E. McPhillips (The Islands), held up the Conservative party as the party of excellence which looked after the interests of labor. He, however, took issue with his leaders as to the removal of cases like that of Mr. McInnes from the list. Mr. McInnes, he said, had only been absent from the province filling a high office in the gift of the crown and had not ceased to be a British Columbia man. No one would say that the name of Mr. McInnes should be removed from the list in Victoria, for that gentleman was known for his deep interest in the province and had a right to be retained on the voters' lists.

"He won't have under the attorney-general's amendment," Mr. Hawthornthwaite said. Mr. McPhillips also cited the cases of the governor-general or lieutenant-governor or a member of the cabinet, other than their own, none of whom would be claimed to be absentees although away from their homes for five years. The only determining factor was proof of residence in which connection Mr. McPhillips referred to the divorce law, and the proposal to strike a name off because a man had been absent a year he condemned.

The leader of the opposition asked him whether the onus of proof should be on the objector or the person objected to. Mr. McPhillips thought it would depend on the particular case. He went on to pay his respects to the Socialist party, for which he was repaid in kind.

Mr. Macdonald, in reply to the argument, that a letter addressed to the last known address was sufficient notice, recalled that he once had occasion to wire Mr. McPhillips for some information and got a wire stating it was being mailed to him in Vancouver, but the letter never arrived.

"But that was the mistake of the post office department of your friends at Ottawa," returned the member for the Islands. A Usual Speech. Premier McBride intervened in the debate long enough to declare his thorough confidence in the honor of all the officials of the province, his conviction that none of them would do anything so contemptible or mean as deprive a man of his franchise, and the earnest desire of his government to do what was right.

"I am glad to know that a large number of the public officials are men of honor and integrity but there are many ready to strain a point in favor of the party which they pointed them and which maintains them in office," said the leader of the opposition. The premier has given us one of his usual speeches, but his party are always willing to do what is right; they lie awake at nights thinking of the interests of the people. What I would like to see the premier do is come down to details. Not a word have we from him as to the amendment except to say that he has full confidence in the integrity of the registrars of voters. We want the rights of the people safeguarded and the temptation removed from the way of those officials who are inclined to think more of party than of their public duty.

House Is Responsible. C. W. Munro (Chilliwack) reminded the house of the serious responsibility it took in enacting legislation which was certain to disfranchise hundreds and thousands of men in the province. The lists were loaded with names, but their cancellation was not advisable. Men were very careless about getting their names on the list, and it was not likely that they would leave their addresses on moving away. Political associations had to get out after them to get them to register, and it would be the same thing as keeping a party in the evening refreshments served and a hearty vote of thanks was tendered the entertainment committee immediately after the singing of "God Save the King."

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J. H. Hawthornthwaite took the time from half-past five to six, and at the hour moved that the committee be reported progress. This was agreed to. The Royal Assent. At 3 o'clock His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor attended in the chamber of the province, and assented to the following bills:

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An act to regulate the sale of certain poisonous substances to be used exclusively in agriculture and horticulture. An act to amend the Supreme Court Act. An act to incorporate the Flathead Valley Railway Company. An act to incorporate the Meadow Creek Logging Railway Company. An act to incorporate the Victoria & Barkley Sound Railway Company.

An act to extend the time for the expenditure of ten per cent. on the amount of the capital of the Southeast Kootenay Railway Company. Cortes Island Roads. The closing of some roads on Cortes Island, in the vicinity of Whaletown, has led to the putting of the following resolutions before the House:

"I have any communications been received from W. Allen, or other residents on Cortes Island, protesting against the closing of any roads in the vicinity of Whaletown? Is it a fact that Wilfrid Allen was convicted of trespassing on the lands of one W. H. Robertson, whilst, as a matter of fact, the said W. Allen was travelling a public highway established by the government?"

The minister of public works replied that the government had been advised of this matter, and had closed the old road and gazetted the new one. "Not satisfied with this answer Mr. Oliver will have under the attorney-general's amendment," Mr. Hawthornthwaite said.

Mr. McPhillips also cited the cases of the governor-general or lieutenant-governor or a member of the cabinet, other than their own, none of whom would be claimed to be absentees although away from their homes for five years. The only determining factor was proof of residence in which connection Mr. McPhillips referred to the divorce law, and the proposal to strike a name off because a man had been absent a year he condemned.

The leader of the opposition asked him whether the onus of proof should be on the objector or the person objected to. Mr. McPhillips thought it would depend on the particular case. He went on to pay his respects to the Socialist party, for which he was repaid in kind.

Mr. Macdonald, in reply to the argument, that a letter addressed to the last known address was sufficient notice, recalled that he once had occasion to wire Mr. McPhillips for some information and got a wire stating it was being mailed to him in Vancouver, but the letter never arrived.

"But that was the mistake of the post office department of your friends at Ottawa," returned the member for the Islands. A Usual Speech. Premier McBride intervened in the debate long enough to declare his thorough confidence in the honor of all the officials of the province, his conviction that none of them would do anything so contemptible or mean as deprive a man of his franchise, and the earnest desire of his government to do what was right.

"I am glad to know that a large number of the public officials are men of honor and integrity but there are many ready to strain a point in favor of the party which they pointed them and which maintains them in office," said the leader of the opposition. The premier has given us one of his usual speeches, but his party are always willing to do what is right; they lie awake at nights thinking of the interests of the people. What I would like to see the premier do is come down to details. Not a word have we from him as to the amendment except to say that he has full confidence in the integrity of the registrars of voters. We want the rights of the people safeguarded and the temptation removed from the way of those officials who are inclined to think more of party than of their public duty.

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OPPOSITION TO NEW WATER BILL

OPINIONS DIFFER AS TO ITS WORKING

Charles Wilson, Who Drafted it, Has Abounding Faith in Measure.

Before the Water Bill is finally disposed of by the legislature there promises to be a lot of discussion, and it is acknowledged that the utmost care must be exercised in the consideration of it before it becomes law. Chas. Wilson, K. C., of Vancouver, an old-timer in the province, sees no dangers in it for any of the present holders of water records. Mr. Wilson, however, probably views it with somewhat prejudiced eyes for he acknowledges that he drafted the bill.

Charles Semlin, another old timer, is fearful of the measure, and has come to Victoria to present his views to the members of the legislature before the bill goes through. Mr. Semlin is the owner of large areas in the dry belt, and knows just what water means to the lands.

The history of water legislation in this province has been an interesting one. The early ideas with respect to water rights and privileges were naturally brought from California, where many of the miners had worked previous to making British Columbia their home. The interests of California upon the laws of the province in early days, especially in the matter of water rights, was greater than that of any other state. But in the light of more modern conceptions as to the part that water plays in the economy of a district the Californian laws are regarded by most of those able to judge of such matters as being very deficient and conducive to litigation.

The present bill was drawn, therefore, a more modern state was taken as the source for light and Colorado's water legislation was made the basis upon which British Columbia's laws are to be founded. But in this very connection a strange coincidence is referred to by some of the old parliamentarians in the legislature. It is that the old Water Clauses Act, which is to be supplanted by the new bill drafted by Mr. Wilson, traces its lineage back to Colorado also. It is said that Hon. F. Carter-Cotton was largely responsible for the old Water Clauses Act, and if not his father he is believed to be the author of it. A residence in Colorado by Mr. Carter-Cotton is said to have given him an intimate knowledge of the water laws of that state, and on these the Water Clauses Act was framed. "It is the drafting of the statute has not been above attack the principle of the law is said by many to be all right."

Premier McBride is fond of making the statement that when the United States government desired a mining law for the Philippine Islands it was British Columbia's that was taken as the basis. So it would appear that when British Columbia wants water law it is Colorado's statutes that are the great attraction.

Charles Semlin in his opposition to the bill points out that in the dry belt the ownership of land is valueless unless the water rights on it so that it may be irrigated. For years he has in common with others in the district has had the right to the use of water. As it is essential to the proper use of the land the water records comes to be looked upon as really a part of the land. The present bill purposes to cancel all these records, and while it is stated that the rights will be renewed there is always uncertainty. He in common with others in the dry belt cannot regard the bill with other than suspicion.

On the other hand Mr. Wilson prides himself on the clear cut language of the bill. He contends that there can be little ambiguity. It is in fact written in Mr. Wilson's best style, which may be somewhat of a new claim for statutes. He thinks moreover that old record holders can have nothing to fear. They need the water they will get it, and instead of having it in the form of records open always to attack in the courts they will have an absolute right given them. In cases where a record exists for 5000 inches, and only 200 is needed there will, of course, be a chance made. Under the new act if it becomes law no waste will be allowed. Ditches will have to be puddled to prevent loss by seepage or if puddling will not do the work cement will be put in. Companies putting in irrigation schemes now recognize the necessity for this preservation of water. As an instance the company engaged in an irrigation work in Okanagan are putting miles of cement along the main canal, which is 14 feet wide at the base.

With conflicting opinions on the outside it is more than likely that there will be considerable discussion on the bill in committee.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR ASSENTS TO BILLS. His Honor the Lieut.-Governor came down to the legislative chamber Friday afternoon and gave his assent to nine bills that had already been passed. Among these was the bill making provision for the appointment of a commissioner to revise the statutes. The other measures were amendments to various acts.

The marriage took place Thursday at the residence of the bride, J. J. Thompson, who officiated, of Mr. O. E. Fitchcock, of Victoria, and Miss Jean Campbell, of Vancouver. Mr. Hitchcock, who comes from the States, is well known in the newspaper offices of the Northwest, and has been employed on the Times staff for the past year. His bride is a native of Nova Scotia. The newly married couple will reside at 608 Ellis street, Rock Bay.

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OLD TIMER PASSES AWAY.

New Westminster, Feb. 18.—James D. Rae, an old timer of this city, died at the Royal Columbia hospital Tuesday evening. Deceased was born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, on March 24, 1850, and came to Westminster in 1881 where he resided continuously, with the exception of a short time spent in Victoria. In 1884 he married Miss Jamieson, eldest daughter of the late Rev. Robert Jamieson, the first pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian church. He is survived by a widow, one son, Robert Garven, mail clerk between Vancouver and Calgary; one brother, Alexander, of this city, and two sisters, Mrs. James Bell, of Spanish, and Mrs. Caven, of Victoria.

TROUBLE OVER WORK AT SMITH'S HILL

Thirty Men Take Their Time and Seek the Mayor.

(From Friday's Daily.) J. Miller, A. E. Armbruster, A. Lowry and J. Smith, who have been employed on the Smith's Hill reservoir, called at the Times office this afternoon to complain that they with twenty-six others had been ordered at 1 o'clock to-day by Foreman Thomas Donovan, in charge of the work, to get their time, because they would not go to work on the afternoon shift in the rain. The men say they considered the weather too bad to continue work and told the foreman so. They were told they could get their time if they did not go back to work. The men then came to town to collect what was due them and also to interview Mayor Hall.

Donovan, the foreman, when communicated with over the telephone, said he had about sixty men employed, half of whom were willing to go back to work in the rain this afternoon, while the other thirty declined to do so. He then told them they could get their time if they did not want to get back to work. He said that he had half the men lay off the job and half work, and that he will fill their places with men who will work all the time.

When the deputation arrived at Dr. Hall's office they were met by the mayor, who said he could do in the matter. The mayor said it was out of his hand and under the direction of Mr. Adams, the engineer employed on the reservoir work by the council. If the men had any grievance they would have to see Mr. Adams.

HOW TO DEAL WITH JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

Superintendent of Ontario Children's Department Speaks on Subject.

Vancouver, Feb. 18.—A luncheon was yesterday tendered by the Canadian Club to J. J. Kelso, superintendent of the Ontario children's department, who is visiting the city. The function was presided over by N. Ellis, president of the Canadian Club. Mr. Kelso is now on the coast upon invitation of the provincial government, which has sought his advice as to the best methods of dealing with juvenile delinquents.

"We used to call it juvenile crime," said Mr. Kelso, in addressing the assemblage, "and what a number of crimes we have committed against the youth of our province in the sacred name of justice! Now we know enough to term it juvenile delinquency, for we have realized that we are responsible for those social conditions which lead boys and girls into misbehavior.

"I don't know why it is, but I sometimes love the bad boy. We all do, I suppose, doubtless because we remember our own youth and have a sneaking liking for the daredevil as against the milksoop. But we must remember that the so-called bad boy is not half so bad as he appears when you get to know him, and it only requires a little extra patience to bring him into the right path. Every boy and girl has a soft spot in their heart which it is possible to reach, and when you can do that you have them in a receptive mood, when they are willing to start right again."

Mr. Kelso, speaking of the work done by his department, said that he described how boys were taken out of the reformatories and put into homes with splendid results. In this connection he argued that the tendency of the law is to suppress the spirit of the initiative and crush the spirit of a boy and reduce the inmates to a dead level. He strongly deprecated the dragging of children into a police court, suggesting the juvenile court as a solution of this problem.

A hearty vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Kelso for his address.

EIGHT-HOUR DAY FOR RAILWAY TELEGRAPHERS

Ottawa, Ont., Feb. 19.—In the House of Commons this afternoon a bill was introduced by Ralph Smith providing for an eight-hour day for railway telegraphers and dispatchers. On the motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier three new committees were added to the standing committees of the Commons, viz.: On marine and fisheries, on mines and minerals, and on forests, waterways and water powers.

The marriage took place Thursday at the residence of the bride, J. J. Thompson, who officiated, of Mr. O. E. Fitchcock, of Victoria, and Miss Jean Campbell, of Vancouver. Mr. Hitchcock, who comes from the States, is well known in the newspaper offices of the Northwest, and has been employed on the Times staff for the past year. His bride is a native of Nova Scotia. The newly married couple will reside at 608 Ellis street, Rock Bay.

MAY WIDEN OAK BAY AVENUE

PROPOSITION PASSED UPON BY COUNCIL

Streets Committee Has Plan Submitted to Beautify Fountain Area.

A plan is under way for the widening of Oak Bay avenue, between McGregor and Rockland avenues, and for the cutting of a tram line through the piece of rock behind McDonald's grocery at the city end of the avenue. It was decided by the streets committee of the city council sitting Friday night, to take 20 feet off each of the frontages on the south side of the street, thus making that part conform with the lower part.

For years past the different councils have had their eye on this much needed improvement. They have approached the owners of property facing thereon and these with one exception have been agreeable to any reasonable plan for the widening of the street. This exception has delayed the work. Now the council has decided that if the owners of the property will not come to terms the property will be pre-empted and the cost charged to the whole street as far as the city limits. This is one of the main arteries to the city and is building up fast, and the council therefore deem it wise to do the proposed work at once before it becomes more difficult to carry it out.

Not only will the street there be widened, but the whole will be macadamized and put in first class order. Another matter of improvement which