

LAST NIGHT'S MEETING.

Noisy Gathering at the City Hall in Response to the Mayor's Call.

They Interrupt the Speakers, Amuse Themselves and Pass Certain Resolutions.

The public meeting at the city hall to discuss the municipal commissioners' bill, now before the legislature, was a decidedly noisy one. A large number of the audience were there evidently to have some fun and nearly every speaker was interrupted.

At 8 o'clock the Mayor took the chair, stating the object for which he had called the meeting. He spoke against the bill, maintaining that it was a retrograde movement as the modern tendency was that legislation should be through the sovereign will of the people and not in favor of a class. The present legislature was a fine body of men, no doubt, but he thought that the municipal councils of this city had done work in the past that they need not fear to look back upon. If men had axes to grind that was no excuse for the legislature to palm off a bad bargain on the city.

Ald. Dwyer was then called forward and offered the following resolution:

Whereas the public meeting has been called by the Mayor for the purpose of discussing the municipal commissioners' bill now pending in the legislature;

And whereas the intention of this bill is to place the government of the municipality in the hands of commissioners appointed by the government;

And whereas under the provisions of the said bill the citizens will be disfranchised and thus prevented from exercising a voice in the direction of the affairs of the government of the city;

And whereas the tendency of the bill is not only unequal to the character of the age, but is also inconsistent with the spirit and sentiment of progressive legislation, besides being a deliberate blow at the freedom of popular elections and a denial of the right of the people to appoint their own representatives;

Be it therefore resolved, that it is the emphatic opinion of this meeting that the measure will be very injurious to the interests of the community, an outrageous invasion of the rights of citizenship, and, if permitted to pass, cannot fail to lower the character of civic administration and check both progress and development; and be it also resolved that this resolution be placed in the hands of the city's representatives in the legislature.

The bill, Ald. Dwyer claimed, was a deliberate attempt to deprive the citizens of having a voice in civic affairs, while the commissioners who would be appointed would be the Mayor in their power, as they could not down his salary if he did not agree with them. If commissioners could govern a municipality they could equally well manage the business of the province. (Laughter.) Ald. Dwyer went on to claim that the citizens were opposed to the bill, his remarks being interrupted by calls of time before he had reached his fifteen minutes limit.

The Mayor then called for a second to the resolution, but for some time nobody responded, and it was only after a considerable pause that Mr. A. Wilson came forward and said he would support it. This he did in a speech of some length, indulging in personal remarks most of them with no bearing on the question.

Mr. Carey, who followed, said that he had come to the conclusion that the bill was foreign to our institutions. The legislature was no more than a municipal council. While the city had done its financial work well the province had not, and he wanted to see the Dominion government send an auditor to do the work of the province. (Laughter.) The bill disfranchised fully one-fifth of the ratepayers and made positions for drugged out politicians.

Hon. Mr. Higgins, in reference to remarks made by Mr. Wilson, said that, as Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, he was not supposed to have any voice on a bill while it was before the house, but he would not sit still after the attack Mr. Wilson had made upon him. He had never been asked to accept a commissionership, as had been stated, and if he were he would decline. A commissioner in this city would be in a hell on earth. He would not say whether he was in favor of the bill or not, but if he were a hunter with the flintlock gun that missed fire, he would pick the flint and try the mayor and aldermen again.

Ald. Keith Wilson considered the bill one of the most gigantic lumbagoes ever brought before the people. It took away the franchise which their fathers had fought and died for. He did not believe in one-man power. He found no fault with Mr. Dwyer, who had no doubt brought it forward with the very best intentions, but the bill was a humbug. He would suggest that the measure should increase instead of decrease the franchise. If municipal government turned out badly it was the fault of the people, for if the best men were selected for the municipal government there would be no trouble.

The resolution was then put and carried on the eyes and nose.

Mr. A. Wilson, who moved the resolution, moved, seconded by Mr. John Lovell, the following resolution:

Moved by Mr. Alex. Wilson, seconded by Ex-Ald. J. B. Lovell.

"Whereas from the receipt of a statement laid before the legislative assembly, now in session, by the Finance Minister, showing a system of alarming extravagance;

And whereas the financial policy of our provincial government is of a character calculated to land this province into bankruptcy at no distant date;

Be it therefore resolved that in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that the Dominion government be asked to take charge of the affairs of this province, as the present government have shown themselves to be incapable of satisfactorily conducting its affairs by their extravagant expenditure of the public moneys; and that the secretary of this meeting be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Premier of the Dominion.

Mr. Lovell spoke in support of his resolution, and was followed by another speaker whose name could not be learned. The latter took the same view, practically, as Ald. Dwyer.

Mr. H. Cuthbert spoke next, saying he had come to get some information regarding the bill, but with the exception of Ald. Dwyer's speech he had heard very little criticism of the bill. He disapproved of the principle of the bill and went on to advocate the election of commissioners for longer periods than one year.

One man started interruptions while Mr. Cuthbert was speaking, and the crowd who were there for fun kept it up some time. Finally Mr. Cuthbert succeeded in getting a hearing and having concluded the Mayor quickly put the resolution, which was hailed

with shouts of laughter. A show of hands was taken, the resolution declared carried and the meeting broke up.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

First Session of the Seventh Parliament.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 9, 1895.

The Speaker took the chair at 9 p.m. Prayers by Rev. G. Clement King. Mr. Eberts presented the twelfth report of the private bills committee, declaring that the preamble of the Victoria Hydraulic Mining Company's bill, adopted.

DR. WALKER introduced a bill to regulate the practice of veterinary medicine and surgery in British Columbia. Read a first time.

FRASER VALLEY RELIEF.

MR. KITCHEN moved: "That a select committee composed of Messrs. Booth, Walkem, Braden, and the mover be appointed to examine the returns brought down to this house in connection with the Fraser valley relief, with power to call for persons, books and papers, and to report to this house." He stated that he wanted to get the name of each person who had secured relief and its amount. He did not think it would be necessary to call anyone except Mr. Townsend, the chief distributor.

HON. COL. BAKER asked the mover to consider whether the result of such a committee can possibly justify its expense.

HON. MR. DAVIE suggested that if the mover did not wish to call for persons to attend before the committee, that part of his resolution be omitted. He might say for his own part that he would consider it rather a matter for surprise if it were found that in no individual case was greater relief secured than was deserved, as in the hurry mistakes were almost unavoidable.

MR. SWORD and Mr. KITCHEN having spoken in favor of it, the resolution was adopted.

AMENDMENTS TO ACTS.

HON. MR. DAVIE moved: "That the order of this house passed on the 23rd February, 1894, (Journal, 1894, page 69, and printed as Order 113), be amended by adding thereto the following words: 'unless the sense of the amendment be plainly manifested by a simple enunciation, substitution or deletion, and that it be the duty of the Law Clerk to alter any bill after its introduction, so as to comply with this rule, before the second reading thereof.'"

He explained that the new rule in its present shape has proved rather a nuisance, some without always serving the intended purpose of making the sense of the amendments clear. Agreed to.

TUBERCULIN.

The question of which Mr. Helmsken had given notice respecting the efficacy and manner of application of the tuberculin, was laid over after he had stated that he wished this information in view of a commission of inquiry recently instituted by the Imperial government; and Hon. Mr. Turner had asked for further time to look into the matter.

PRIVATE BILLS.

The Harrison Hot Springs extension bill was read a third time and passed.

MR. COTTON moved the second reading of the North Vancouver electric company's bill, asking for an extension of time for the construction of the enterprise; the condition of North Vancouver, and the general depression, having made it inadvisable to proceed with the work as at first intended.

Read a second time.

MR. HIGGINS moved the second reading of the Columbia and Kootenay railway bill. Agreed to.

NANAIMO WATERWORKS.

The house went into committee of the whole on the bill to amend the Nanaimo waterworks company's act. Mr. Bryden in the chair.

The bill is to give the company authority to take its supply of water higher up the river than it has power to do at present—as a point one mile above Stark's falls, which will allow higher pressure to be available.

MR. FORSTER moved an amendment: "The powers and privileges conferred by this act, and the provisions hereof, are hereby declared to be granted subject to the right of the crown, and also subject to any future legislation regarding the subject matter of this act, or of the powers and privileges hereby conferred which the legislature may see fit to adopt; and this act shall be subject to the express condition that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may from time to time impose and reserve to the crown, in right of the province, such rents, royalties, tolls and charges in respect of the use of the land of the good (if any), rights and privileges, which shall be set off, appropriated, or enjoyed by the company, or be conferred by this act, as by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council shall be deemed to be just and proper; and may direct, amend and pass such regulations and rules as may be deemed necessary and advisable for the collection and enforcement of such rents, royalties, tolls and charges, or any of them, not so that the franchise of the company shall be in any way affected by such regulations, rules, or any such order in council, shall be made within the space of five years from the passage of the order in council fixing the same."

The mover said the people of Nanaimo were now a bill before the house asking for power to construct their own waterworks and to take water from the same river as this company proposes to connect with, though they do not use it now. This action on the part of the corporation, he held, is an evidence that the company is not giving satisfaction, and that therefore it is not deserving of any special consideration.

MR. BOOTH spoke in support of the bill as it stood.

DR. WALKER also vigorously supported the measure, and opposed the amendment, which he considered would be an unjust interference with the company's rights.

MR. MCGRATH expressed himself as not so warm a supporter of the waterworks company, and spoke in justification of the action of the corporation of Nanaimo in seeking to make the city independent of the company. The corporation had made an attempt to purchase the stock of the company, but not more than one-third was offered, and that at a very high figure. He thought the water company have not given due consideration to the interests of the people, an evidence of which is that the insurance companies have had to force the provision of higher pressure by a cancellation of their policies.

HON. MR. DAVIE reviewed the circumstances which may be referred to as the ground for the provisions embodied in Mr. Forster's amendment. In view, he said, of the many franchises sought for the purpose of diverting and using water in 1892 it was deemed "in the interest of the people that the legislature should require some return for what might be looked upon as a valuable privilege, and should take proceedings for the purpose of securing a revenue commensurate with the privileges granted. This company secured authority by its act in 1885 to take water from Stark's falls. The next year the act was amended, and the legislature imposed, as an additional condition, as was the third clause, which bound the company not to employ any Chinaman. He consid-

ered that the principle which was recognized by the house in inserting this clause some years ago, was the same as that which would justify the house in annulling the present clause. The company now want greater power of gravity; they want to get further up the river. The house is passing the proposed amendment, approving the privilege provided for, will be imposing it with respect to the further rights which they seek to acquire. He could not see why this principle should not apply to this bill. He would vote for the amendment for the reason that he did not consider that it would result in any injustice to the Nanaimo waterworks company. He considered rather that its adoption by the house would be a great advantage to the company.

The opinion expressed by the mover of late is that the right of expropriation exists to a very great extent. When any concern is expropriated, in estimating the value of it no allowance is made for franchise rights, the value of the concern being estimated upon the construction value of the actual works. It must not be supposed for a moment that the government is going to make or let any franchise rights, the rights of property, and it must be assumed that the government, whoever may compose it, will continue to have regard for such rights.

But such a clause as that now proposed would be a great advantage to the company's franchise, making it manifest to all concerned that they have secured it upon fair and equitable terms. The position is, that they have a franchise out of which they are making the waterworks. The clause now proposed would be made to apply only to such privileges as are to be newly granted, and will not be applicable to privileges which the company already enjoy.

After much further discussion, Mr. SWORD raised the point that the whole bill is out of order, as dealing with crown rights without the assent of the crown having first been obtained. The Chairman wished to refer this point to the Speaker for decision, and the Speaker taking it into consideration until to-morrow the committee rose and reported progress.

MR. BAKER asked the mover to take this opportunity to inform the house of the letter received this afternoon from the surveyor in charge of the Norwegian colony recently established at Bella Coola. Out of 80 heads of families who went in there a few months ago, already known, had returned, but four of these informed him as they passed through Victoria that they intended to come back from Dakota in the spring. The letter mentioned informed him that the 44 who had chosen their lands are now coming in to settle on their houses, and they are exceedingly pleased with the climate of Bella Coola. It having been said that the climate of Bella Coola is not what it ought to be, he had great pleasure in reading the report made to him on the state of the weather. A record having been carefully kept from the 1st of November to the 13th of December, the result showed a total of 29 days, out of the 43, altogether fine. "Splendid" it was described; six days "half fine," and only 11 days of wet. (Heard, hear.) It would be highly satisfactory to the house, he was sure, to find that these settlers are well pleased and are "getting on" as well as they can. He would refer to the Norwegian who had been settled in the valley for some time previously to the advent of the colony now seeks leave to come into it. (Applause.)

PROVINCIAL LOAN.

MR. SWORD continued his remarks on the motion for the loan bill. He had in the loan bill, he criticized the computations of the Finance Minister, as reported in the COLONIST, with respect to the capitalization of the annual payments by the Dominion government, and the interest on the loan, arrived at as an asset of the province. He wondered that the Minister did not see as a matter of privilege to-day and repudiate the report. He expressed regret that the Finance Minister should have been so careless in the way of salaries especially, and he pointed to the appropriation for a government agent at London as one which might be a matter of privilege to-day and repudiate the report. He pointed to the appropriation for the remark of the Finance Minister with respect to the mining development, that the mines worked upon their present large scale would not only pay but pay handsomely in good money to the company which they were to the investors. He thought this a fit opportunity to call the attention of the house to the manner in which the anti-Chinese resolution passed in a former session has been put into effect. He had in mind the vote against the second reading.

MR. PRENTICE had no doubt the bill would be passed, and that anything he could say would not have any effect, but he proposed to say a few words to the house, and he would move the adjournment of the debate.

HON. MR. DAVIE could see no reason why the hon. gentleman should not continue his remarks, indeed he said that anything he said would be of no use. He had in mind the vote against the second reading.

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events the hon. member (Mr. Prentice) should have finished his sentence before breaking off with a motion for adjournment. He for one would be better satisfied if his sentence were finished. (Laughter.)

MR. PRENTICE asked if the hon. member (Mr. Hunter) could tell him what the sentence was. (Laughter.)

MR. HUNTER—Certainly; I have it down here. The hon. gentleman was speaking of capitalizing the debts of the province, and he said, "for—for—for—for," and then glanced apprehensively at the clock and moved the adjournment. (Great laughter.)

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was put and lost on division.

MR. PRENTICE then proceeded with his remarks. He declared that the debt of the province is accumulating with alarming rapidity, and that there is every reason to believe that it will be materially increased in the next few years. He said this because the calculation done by the Finance Minister have been in the past so wide of the mark, for several years the expenditure having largely exceeded the estimate, and the revenue each year having been correspondingly less than the expected year he has been as expressed to the house. He had nothing further to say (heard, hear), except that having no confidence in the financial policy of the government he would oppose the bill.

HON. MR. DAVIE remarked upon the admission of the hon. member that he had nothing further to say, as a justification of the refusal of the house a few moments ago to adjourn the debate as requested.

(Mr. Prentice) had, however, in his remarks made a statement greatly at variance with the fact when he said that every year for a long time past the revenue has fallen far below the estimate made by the Finance Minister. That hon. gentleman is not only a liar, but if he is sincere in his remarks he must have a very short memory indeed. Not long ago he (Mr. Dwyer) met the hon. gentleman in the Cariboo road—at the 150 Mile house, and he then said that he was a supporter of the government. That was less than two years ago. If he (Mr. Prentice) was then a supporter of the government, he was then a badly managed horse, how was it that he declared himself a supporter of the government, and what has led him to change his opinion? It must be something which has happened between that time and the present. So far from the estimates of revenue having been for several years in excess of receipts, the reverse has been the case until the altogether exceptional year which has just passed. He had no need then to look up the figures, but he had beside him the Speeches from the Throne delivered at the opening of each session. That delivered in January 1894, contained the following words: "Although the estimates of revenue for the year have been exceeded, the revenue of the province has closely approximated the estimate, notwithstanding the diversion of considerable sums to newly formed municipalities." (There was no considerable falling off upon that occasion, as alleged, it would be remarked. He had intended to read from other speeches, but there had just been put into his hands the figures applicable to the case, from which it appeared that the revenue as estimated and as actually received has been as follows:

Actual Receipts.

1893-94.....\$1,033,000 \$ 831,600

1894-95.....1,035,404 1,018,226

1895-96.....90,801 1,032,337

1896-97.....91,850 984,443

1897-98.....60,384 708,779

It would be seen from these figures that until the last two years—until the hard time came upon this province in common with the rest of the world—the actual receipts were year by year in excess of the estimates, instead of below as declared by the hon. gentleman, who should bear this fact in mind and be more careful in his statements when next he has occasion to speak upon financial matters. The hon. member for Dwyer had dealt upon the statement that for several years the expenditure has exceeded the revenue, but that of argument is not new. The government has by authority of the house, borrowed money with that express intention, and when the charge of the deficits was made against it, it was thoroughly repudiated, before the country and the people. The policy, has been deliberately adopted, and it has been admitted to be just and right, that the government should borrow money to be expended now upon improvements, leaving it to be repaid in part by future generations who will share in the benefit of its expenditure. When the hon. gentleman (Mr. SWORD) says the money borrowed has been used in paying salaries he says something which is entirely wrong. From 1886 to 1894 the 30th of June last, the expenditures upon public improvements in this province have been approximately as follows:—

Public works, \$995,000; roads, streets, bridges and ferries, \$1,000,000; surveys, \$225,000; miscellaneous, \$722,000; a total of \$3,705,000. Was anything like that amount borrowed? He would like to ask. The loans fall very far short of it, to say nothing of the loan of \$1,077,000 expended for educational purposes during the same time, making a grand total of \$4,782,000, spent upon public works and education in this province in the eight years to the 30th of June last, while the total of the loan out of which part of this expenditure had been made was less than \$2,000,000 net. He would have something further to say with respect to statements and criticism made during this debate, which he would now move should be adjourned until Monday next.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. DAVIE introduced a bill to amend the provincial voters act. Read a first time.

The house adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

THE DOMINION SUBSIDY.

TO THE EDITOR: An error has inadvertently crept into the figures in my speech on the loan act as reported in to-day's COLONIST, by which I am made to say that the capital value of the Dominion subsidy to the province is eighteen million dollars. Possibly in speaking I may have named that amount, but what I intended saying was somewhat as follows:—

"The capital value of the whole of this Dominion subsidy is valued in a similar way to that in which a portion of it is valued would perhaps, if for only 50 years, be six million, but the whole of the subsidy is in perpetuity and consequently worth much more. I confess I don't know just what it should be valued at, but possibly eight million."

J. H. TURNER.

A Madrid dispatch asserts that as a result of the recent negotiations, a munition treaty has been concluded between the United States and Spain, by which the United States, by the Spanish government upon export from the United States into Cuba and Porto Rico.

SORBY VS. THE CORPORATION.

Mr. J. Keith-Wilson being asked by a COLONIST reporter, for particulars of the Sorby claim on the city for James Bay lands, referred the inquirer to his letter in the evening paper, which is herewith reproduced:

TO THE EDITOR:—The plaintiff is going to appeal the above case. That is what he says in last Saturday's Times.

The apparent object of that communication was to prejudice the defendants' case in the eyes of the public; perhaps you will therefore allow me space in your columns to deal with the matter.

The facts of the case are simple enough. The city advertised for plans for a general "main" roadway across James Bay, a