

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS.

Mr. DOWSE spoke nearly as follows: Mr. Chairman, it appears by the remarks of the Governor, respecting illicit trading, that some is carried on. I ask if any thing has been done on that subject. I have understood that there was some illicit trade going on in different parts of the Island. If this is the case, I think we ought to be informed of it. Again, there has been some accounts that goods have been landed at Georgetown. I should like to know if any information has been received on the matter. I have been a supporter to the Government; and I care not who he is, he must not cheat the Government. I ask Mr. Coles and Mr. Wightman whether any information has come within their knowledge respecting the matter.

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—The only reason, I believe, that the Government have to call the attention of the House to the matter, has arisen from the honorable member's own district. The Collector called upon me and said that it was impossible for him to get any revenue from that district. It is well known that there has been very little revenue collected there formerly; but there has been a little more last year. But there was another case with reference to an American vessel which was seized here, and with reference to which the laws were found insufficient. The facts of the case are pretty well known to every one here. But, Sir, there is another thing that I may mention. Our Revenue Laws are scattered all over the Statute Book, and it completely puzzles the Collectors to find them.

Mr. DOWSE.—In reply to the hon. gentleman, I may inform him, that if he would make better appointments perhaps not so much illicit trading would be done. But, Sir, I do complain, and I have a right to complain, that the revenue has not been protected. What is the purpose of our Revenue Collectors? The fact is, there are no persons worth talking about to protect the revenue. This is not the first time that I have complained on this floor. Whoever is in office, I would be the last one to shut my eyes to dealings of that kind.

Hon. Col. TREASURER.—I suppose he would wish the Government to appoint such officers as he recommended for Road Commissioners when his party was in power.

Mr. COOPER.—The laws ought to be consolidated. I am perfectly agreed on that part of the Address; that is, to consolidate the laws.

The paragraph was then agreed to.

The next paragraph passed without observation.

On the reading of the seventh paragraph,

Mr. COOPER remarked.—I believe that hardly any thing should be said on this, till we have the documents before us. Even some of the Bills brought before the House last year did not receive the Royal Assent; and I think we had better defer the consideration of the subject till we get the documents. I have said nothing for or against it. I have made a small amendment, and I therefore move that the clause be struck out, and the following amendment inserted:—

“As the Act of last Session, to impose a Tax upon the Rent Roll of Proprietors, and the Act to secure a Compensation to Tenants, have not received the Royal Assent, when the reasons assigned by Her Majesty's Government for such disallowance are communicated to us, they shall receive our deliberate consideration.”

Mr. LAIRD seconded the motion.

Mr. HAVILAND.—Mr. Chairman, I was under the impression, when this debate first commenced, that this Address was going to pass smoothly; but I see this is not to be the case, and therefore I shall say a few words myself. The hon. member who moved this address stated that never a Speech before was so plain in its style, and I think this is the case. I think that those members who prepared it have met the expression, “words were given us to conceal our ideas.” The hon. gentleman has changed his opinion this Session. Well may it be said that the men of yesterday are not the men of to-day. For we well remember that one of the advantages of Responsible Government, which he proposed, would be that four-and-twenty members would not have to put their heads together, and that such measures would be recommended by the Speech from the Throne; but now he has laid down another rule of government—and the fewer the government measures the better—just the very reverse. I have never seen such pleadings in the Law Courts as I have seen on the floor of this House. I am at a great disadvantage in giving my views on this Address, not having the statistical information which they possess. It stated that there was a great increase in the Post Office revenue; that a great many more letters have passed through the Post Office than heretofore. The principal cause assigned for this increase was the mental improvement of the people. Now I believe it is owing to the cheapness of the postage. As regards the Revenue Laws being patched up, I believe it to be the case. There has another change come over the spirit of the hon. gentleman's dream, as regards the Rent Bill. Some of the members of that Government made a very fiery speech in consequence of the British Government refusing its sanction to some measures. I am afraid we shall never have our constitution settled if we are to trust to the Queen's Printer. The hon. member has found great fault with the Imperial Government for refusing its sanction to this Bill and to another one; and has found great fault with the influence of proprietors for putting a stop to these Bills. Now, I think that they acted properly in doing so. Why, the right of petition is a right that we had a long time since. If we had here a rule or law, the same as in England, then there might be something in the argument. The proprietors have either a right, or none, to the land which they possess; but Her Majesty's Government decided last year that they had a right. We know it is contrary to the principles of the British Government to impose taxes on a few; therefore, I contend that the whole of Her Majesty's subjects should equally have borne the burden. Let every man contribute his quota to the support of the state, and not throw the burden on one part of the people.

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—Mr. Chairman, some of those petitioners were here themselves, and did not vote against that Bill. True, the hon. member for Charlottetown voted against it. Sir, the proprietors, I think, are very well re-

presented in this Colony; and it is not true that they were the only persons called on to support these troops. The balance would have been paid out of the Treasury of the Colony. At present, I contend that the inhabitants of this Island have been taxed quite as much as the proprietors. It is true that a few proprietors that have some wilderness land may have to pay towards the support of education. The inhabitants of the Island are taxed in many ways; they are taxed for articles of consumption for which the proprietors are not taxed. They petitioned against it, and also against the One-ninth Bill. But I think the hon. member for Charlottetown need not complain. If they were taxed for education, there are ways by which they might get rid of their lands; but there appears to be a dogged determination to oppose the Government. They are selling the best portion of their lands for less than the Government would give. Then they say, “Oh, we have offered it to the Government!” and then complain that it will not purchase. Sir, I think the Government has shown a disposition to meet the proprietors fairly, if they will only meet it in a fair way. I believe if they had only offered their lands in writing, that they might have been accepted; but I believe there is a combination among some parties to get their lands at a lower price than the Government. Now, the hon. member, Mr. Cooper has moved an amendment to this clause, and I think it is a very singular one. He seeks information. That gentleman has given information himself. Why, Sir, I think he ought to be the last to come forward and object to that paragraph; and there is one thing, when we get the reasons I am afraid we will not get his advice respecting them. But, Sir, the amendment is only something to show a little opposition to the Government.

Mr. COOPER.—Mr. Chairman, there is nothing before the House on the subject, and here we are bringing in the consideration of the matter. I certainly think we will have to take another course.

Mr. DOWSE.—Mr. Chairman, I think it is unfair to treat the amendment in this way. I take the view that Mr. Cooper does. How can we go into the consideration of that paragraph when we know nothing about it?

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—I would ask the hon. member if he has put his name to any of those petitions.

Mr. CLARK.—Mr. Chairman, I would make some remarks in reply to those of Mr. Haviland respecting the statistical statements made by Mr. Whelan. I find, on referring to the documents, that his statements are correct. The decrease on liquors alone, imported into Charlottetown, is £2,263; on molasses, £163; and on tobacco, £783. Liquor and other articles were imported in less quantities. Also on the two per cent. articles there has been a heavy falling off. Less ship-building has been carried on than formerly. There has been no less than £2,000 decrease in the value of the imports of two per cent. articles, as cordage, &c., causing a deficiency of £400; but there has been a small increase in the port of Charlottetown on tea, and also an increase from the United States on the articles of general merchandise. In corroboration of what fell from Mr. Whelan, I give these figures. Respecting the Reciprocity Treaty, there is a very small falling off.

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—Mr. Chairman, I cannot but remark on the inconsistencies of hon. members in speaking on this subject. When Mr. Whelan first brought the matter before us, he produced Free Trade as one reason of the decrease. Now, it would have been the boast of that hon. member a few years ago that Free Trade would be an advantage. Still, Sir, I am sorry that there has been a decrease; but if a law took place on one article it was gained on others. With respect to what fell from Mr. Clark, we have a passage in His Excellency's Speech respecting consolidating the Laws for the collection of the Revenue. Now, Mr. Clark gives us to understand that there has been a falling off in the importation of liquor, and I take it for granted that there must have been £2,000 worth of liquor smuggled into the country last year. I would merely conclude by saying that I hope the hon. and learned member, Mr. Cooper, will not find fault with me if he find me supporting him. I do not know what curious matter may have been sent out in the documents, but I think, for regularity's sake, we ought not to pass any opinion on them before they have come before us. But certainly I must agree with him in saying that we are going to work in a very unparliamentary manner, if we decide on them before we have heard them.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Mr. Chairman, I will not pronounce any opinion respecting Her Majesty's decision on these Bills, but respecting secret influence, it is not known that memorials have gone home on this subject?

Mr. DOWSE.—Mr. Chairman, there is one remark which I would make respecting what Mr. Coles said about purchasing lands, at less than the Government. Now, I have not done this. It is true that Mr. Whelan has made some allusions to me, and has published statements in his paper concerning my purchases; but if he says I have combined with others to make purchases against the Government, I can say I have not.

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—I say the documents that Mr. DOWSE has placed in the Registrar's office, show what he has given, which is less than the government was authorized to give by the Land Purchase Bill.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Mr. DOWSE has made reference to me, and has stated that I noticed his purchases in my paper. Now, I stated as a matter of general information, that he had purchased a portion of Lord Selkirk's estate at 44. 9d. per acre.

Mr. YEO.—I recollect I called at this building, and offered him 13 for sale to the Government; I mentioned it to Mr. Swadlow, who answered that they had no money to pay for it. I do not deny that I may have mentioned his reply to other persons. I was not in the House, when that famous Bill for taxing the Rent Roll passed the Legislature; if I had, I would certainly have voted against such a measure.

Mr. McLEOD.—I believe it is hard to say who are Proprietors, and who are not; and I believe, if the truth was known, there are no Proprietors; and if the Titles were tried, as they ought to be, there would be none found. I think before the end of the Session, we will do something respecting this matter. Every one of the Proprietors, that knows the nature of the business, is eager to get clear of his land as soon as possible.

Mr. YEO.—I have been speculating in land for some time, and I am sure it will be very much against the Government if we have had some time back. Would you wish to see the people for their land? It is a pity that they have never paid a penny for their land. It will be ruinous to the country, if Government were to purchase these lands.

Mr. McLEOD.—He could take pork, wheat, &c., for Rent. I wonder where the money comes from, if not from these articles; but I do not care what it is paid in, as long as people pay what they have a right to pay.

The House then divided on the motion of amendment.

Yeas—Messrs. Cooper, Laird, Macintosh, Yeo, DOWSE, Hoots, Messrs. Palmer, Longworth, Montgomery, and Mr. Haviland.—9.

Nays—Hon. Mr. Whelan, Messrs. Muirhead, McGill, McDonald, Dingwall, Munro, Hoots, Col. Secretary, Col. Treasurer, Wightman, Mooney, the Speaker, and Mr. Clark.—13.

So it passed in the negative.

On motion that the eighth paragraph do pass:—

Mr. LAIRD.—I do not exactly agree with that paragraph; and therefore move the following amendment:—

“As it is most desirable that the Tenantry who reclaimed the Land should obtain the freehold interest of their farms on equitable terms, we shall be happy to receive any information from your Excellency to show that the settlement of a portion of the Tenantry, in freehold, under the purchase Act, has given them general satisfaction.”

The Hon. Mr. Palmer moved, as an amendment to the said proposed amendment, to insert, immediately before the word “equitable,” in the fourth line thereof, the words “just and.”

And the motion being seconded, and the question put thereon, it was agreed to by the House.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—I presume that, in consideration of the support which he gave the former resolution, he expects support now. Where is the necessity of this amendment, which is no answer to the Speech of the Governor? The Governor says if a larger amount of money had been at the disposal of the Government, there would have been a greater number of Freeholders. Now, here we have a new proposition altogether, which is an answer at all to it.

Mr. COOPER.—All that is implied in the Governor's Speech, he says, “I am happy to inform you that the transactions respecting the sale of Public Lands, which will, in due course, be submitted to you, have, in their progress, fully justified the expectations formed of the efforts to be derived from the Land Purchase Bill, in the desired conversion of Leaseholders into independent Freeholders, advantages which are only limited by the small amount placed by that measure at the disposal of the Government.”

Why, the amendment is a good answer to it.

Mr. McLEOD.—Mr. Chairman, is it not a singular thing that a person cannot stand up without being charged that he has no opinion of his own? I think all come here free, and can stand up and express themselves as they choose. It is not fair, or gentlemanly to charge people with a desire to leave one party, and to unite with another.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Mr. McLEOD evidently misapprehends that paragraph. It does not contemplate any additional sum, but only says, if a larger appropriation had been made for the public interest, that a greater advantage would have been the result.

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—This is another question respecting which I do not wish to compromise myself. I suppose the returns will come down in due time; and no doubt will call forth the opinions of this House, for or against that measure; and I was reserving myself until that time. I find there is a great diversity of opinion respecting that Bill. Some time has now passed, and I see no great prospect, and I think they are made less every day, as to any increase in the Public Lands. I think the passage is introduced as a feeler for this House. The people have been given to understand, from time to time, and year to year, that their lands would be taken from the heavy Leasehold tenure, to Freehold tenure, and that every man should sit down under his own vine, and enjoy himself. Now I think this measure has not turned out to realize these promises to the Tenantry of the Island. I would not commit myself by expressing an opinion, until the matter is specially gone into; and I begin to agree with the opinion that it is not good or sound policy that eleven twelfths of the Island should be taxed for a benefit, real, or imaginary, to the other twelfth; and, therefore, without at all having prepared any amendment on that part of the Speech, I am not prepared to go into any improvement on the amendment; but I shall give my support to it.

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—This is a great deal of flattery for the Tenantry. Now, I suppose the hon. member, has been reading the calculations in the *Islander*, which tried to show that the inhabitants of the Island will be taxed for the benefit of the settlers on the Worrel Estate; but if the Tenantry were taxed a little, it would be for their own benefit. Why, since the purchase of the Worrel Estate, the price of land has fallen from 30s to 20s per acre, in some cases.

Mr. DOWSE.—Name them.

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—Will that gentleman sell at the same price as the Government? But, Sir, the hon. member for Charlottetown, seems to be of the opinion of the *Islander*. The 60,000 acres which remain unsold, would more than pay the amount which the Government will be in debt by the purchase. If the Proprietors go on the way they are doing, throwing obstacles in the way of the Government purchasing land, I think the whole Government will give their sanction to severer measures against them, than they have yet done. The whole matter is such a milk and water affair, that I am surprised that my hon. colleague would propose it. I would wish to know, if he intends to carry out that view. Perhaps a few, who have their ears filled with a notion of Freehold, may be dissatisfied; but I am glad to find that a great many of the Tenantry on that Estate, are getting their eyes opened. The amendment will, I presume, meet with the same fate as the other. It is, indeed, an amendment; but if there is nothing objectionable in that part of the Address, I would wish to ask my hon. colleague, why he would wish to make a division in the camp of the Liberals; would he upset the Government?

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