The Herald.

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SATURDAY, March 18th.

OYSTER FISHERY BILL.

(Committee resumed.)

First, second, and third clauses agreed to.

The fourth clause, authorising the Government to grant a portion of Schemedie River, Richmond Bay, which would be bounded by a line drawn from Cameron's Island to Henry Compton's Creek, and from Ramsay's Creek on the North to John Ramsay's Point, for the purpose of planting and cultivating oysters, was then read.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: That clause is similar to one in the bill which was before your honors last year, and I objected to it on the ground that there were already some oyster beds within the bounds described, and to which exclusive right is proposed to be granted. However, the hon. member who introduced the bill says that he consulted the member for that district (Mr. Green), who told him there were no oysters there at present. I know there were oysters there at one time, though there may be none now. I do not think it would be any great trouble to renew those old beds; if they were even left alone I am of opinion that oysters would grow upon them again. I would rather see new ground taken up than old oyster beds granted to which the public consider that they have a right.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I do not know much about cultivating oysters, but I have seen too that old oyster beds are not adapted to their cultivation; and if there are no oysters on the old beds. I do not see any objection to granting them. There is a clause in the bill which permits farmers to take up mud for manure wherever they think proper, even from the portions of the Rivers which will have been granted to private parties, and no person would go to the trouble and expense of planting oysters where they would be likely to be taken up by farmers lifting mud. And if a person wishes to embark in the cultivation of oysters, I do not see why he should not obtain a grant of suitable ground for that purpose. It is a source of wealth in other countries, not only to the persons who enter into the speculation, but to the community at large; and why should it not be so here? We should not throw any obstacle in the way; but should afford every facility in our power to those who desire to engage in the enterprise.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not sufficiently acquainted with the locality in question to enable me to speak on that subject. I cannot say whether or not there are oysters existing there at present to any extent. If there are, we may infer that they would increase if they were left alone; but unless there is some certainty that oysters do exist there, and in considerable quantities, I do not know that it would be worth our while to oppose the bill. I approve of the principle of the bill. I think we should try the experiment of cultivating those shell fish; and unless we allow some privilege or advantage to the parties who are willing to engage in the business it will not be done. At the same time we should be very careful to guard against throwing any obstacle in the way of persons taking up manure or oyster mud, as people are beginning to find out the value of that species of manure, and if they continue taking it up we will soon see our exports swelled to a great extent. I hope no impediment will be thrown in their way by this or any other bill. However, the locality is best known to your honors who reside in that part of the country, and if you are satisfied that there are no oysters there at present to any material extent, I would not be very scrupulous about acceding to the proposition.

Hon. Mr. BEER: I do not think we need object to that clause for I find that it passed in the House of Assembly by a large majority. The members who represent that district, one of whom lives near the place proposed to be granted, supported the bill, and if they considered that it would conflict with the interests of their constituencies they would have given it their most strenuous opposition.

Hon. Mr. LORD: We have an opinion of our own and we have a right to express it. I for one feel bound to oppose that clause on account of what has been said by his honor from the second district of Prince County, (Mr. Ramsay). I believe it is the intention of a certain party to get a monopoly of the oyster trade of the Island. If not what do they want of such a large extent of ground, in Richmond Bay—200 or 300 acres? I do not think they have any right to interfere with old oyster beds. I have heard something about the cultivation of oysters in the United States. They do not plant oysters on the old beds as they are not suitable. At the same time I would not oppose the bill if I thought it would be a benefit to the Colony, particularly as it provides that the right of the grantees shall not interfere with farmers taking up mud for manure wherever they think proper. I believe the bill will lead to a great deal of litigation, but at the same time, as it was passed by the House of Assembly without opposition, or by a very large majority, as one of your honors has said, I do not know that we should oppose it here. I would like to hear my Hon. Colleague express his opinion upon it as he is well acquainted with those places.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I do not think that any injury can be done to the inhabitants of the Island by this bill. The object of it is to encourage the cultivation of oysters, not to create a monopoly, or to give possession of old oyster beds. If the bill would prevent farmers from taking up mud for manure, I would not support it.

Hon. Mr. YEO: If anything could be done to encourage the cultivation of oysters it would be a great benefit to the Island; but still, if I thought this bill was designed to create a monopoly I would oppose it. I do not think it would be very difficult to cultivate oysters. New beds can be formed and they will bear oysters in two or three years. New beds are often formed in Bideford River.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: A similar bill was before this House last year, and the reason that I voted against it was that I thought it seemed to come too hastily before us. It was also thought by some of your honors that the localities proposed to be granted would include some oyster beds already in existence, and that the privileges of the people would therefore be encroached upon. It was thought better for these reasons to defer the bill till the session, and I voted accordingly. I do not think, however, that it is intended to monopolize any old oyster beds, though I would not be against granting a portion of the old beds for the purpose of taking oyster beds down to plant new beds. I think it would be wrong to try the experiment, and will therefore oppose the bill.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: I do not object at all to the principle of the bill; the only question on my mind is respecting the ground proposed to be granted. His honor from the first district of Prince County, (Mr. Lord) said that the portion of Schemedie River proposed to be granted would extend over 200 or 300 acres, but I do not think there are more than 15 or 20 acres included in the boundaries described, and that would be sufficient to try the experiment.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: The public must have been aware that this bill was before the Legislature last year, and if they considered it an encroachment upon their privileges they should have petitioned against it; but there is nothing before us to show that they viewed it in that light.

Hon. Mr. BEER: The bill passed the other House by a majority of 16 to 5. Messrs. McLennan and Green, the representatives of that district, voted for it.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: I do not see any serious objection to passing a bill of this kind. The ground which is proposed to be granted is not, I understand, of any value at present for oyster fishing. The oysters have all been taken away or have died out. I am only sorry that the bill did not go further and appropriate a portion of ground in King's County as well as in the other two. I believe there are no oysters there at present, but there were large beds in several parts of the County at one time. This has been proved by parties who have been taking up mud this year. At Brudenell River Bridge, after going down two feet, they came to a solid bed of oyster shells, so thick and solid that they could not get their shovel through them. It must have been a long time ago for I believe no person living can remember when there were oysters there. I believe they have been killed by the mud being brought down the River by the current and deposited on the bed. At Panmure Island there was also an oyster bed, but the mussels grew over it and the oysters died out.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: In addition to the provisions contained in the bill to encourage the cultivation of oysters, with due security to the public interests in regard to the dredging of Channels, taking up mud &c., I think there should be something to prevent our neighbours from the United States and other places from taking up oysters in the Bays and Rivers of this Island as I understand they are in the habit of doing every Summer. We derive more or less revenue from the oyster fisheries every year, and I therefore think they should be protected as well as other fisheries. I am willing to let the bill go into operation, though I would not support it if I thought it would have the effect of giving a monopoly of our oyster fisheries to any person or company. If the bill is found defective it can be amended at a future time by rescinding portions of it or adding their clauses as circumstances may demand.

Hon. Mr. LORD: As to preventing persons from other countries from coming here for oysters, I would rather encourage them.

Hon. Mr. BEER: I called attention to the circumstance a few days ago when the House was in committee on this bill that parties were in the habit of coming here from other countries and taking away oysters in large quantities from our Bays and Rivers without paying a shilling for them, and I think we should have some clause in this bill to prevent them from doing so.

Hon. Mr. YEO: I never heard of people from other countries coming here and fishing oysters themselves, but they often come and purchase their cargoes and I would not prevent them from doing that.

Hon. Mr. McLAREN: I cannot see any injury that can be done by the bill as it will not prevent persons from taking up mud whenever they please. Old beds are not suitable for planting oysters upon as the water is in general too shallow upon them, but after it is deepened by the mud being taken up they may become suitable. Deep water is required because when it is too shallow the oysters are killed by the ice. The mud from these old beds is being extensively taken up for manure, and it is a very profitable employment. I think it would be well to try the experiment of cultivating oysters, and I would be willing to adopt the suggestion of his honor from Georgetown (Mr. McDonald) to extend the provisions of the bill to King's County.

Clause agreed to—next clause read.

Hon. Mr. LORD: That clause includes the whole space from Heard's Point which is Indian Point, and from McDonald's Point to Wilmot Creek Point. It seems there is an inclination on the part of the House to pass this bill, and I am satisfied that giving ownership to private parties over such a large space of water will lead to a great deal of litigation. I will move at a future time that the bill be read this day three months.

Hon. the President: It is not supposed that the Government will grant a lease of the whole of that ground to one man. No one man would apply for the whole of it when he could not hold it unless he planted oysters upon it.

Hon. Mr. LORD: I do not feel inclined to trust the Government. I shall not put my faith to the sleeve of this or any other Government, but will exercise my own judgment, and will vote against the bill, for I consider that they have a right to grant one fourth of the ground described by that clause. I know the intention of the bill. I can see as far into a millstone as any person. The poor man will be prevented from getting an oyster. I know there are oysters in Bedeque, and I am confident that I have seen boats fishing oysters within the bounds described by that clause.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: If your honors think it is necessary a clause might be inserted in the bill to prevent the whole of the ground from being given to one man. It is admitted that the principle of the bill is good, and oysters cannot be cultivated without granting a little ground for that purpose.

Hon. Mr. LORD: I have no objection to granting ground to cultivate oysters upon, but I would not give the old beds. They do not intend to plant them upon the old beds and why then should they be granted? The ground in Bedeque will include the principal part of the old oyster beds.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I suppose the object of granting such a large space in Bedeque is that, as it is near Summerside, the capital of the County, and not far from Charlottetown, parties might be induced to attempt the cultivation of oysters there. Perhaps 100 men might apply for a piece of ground there and unless the bill merely gives the Government power to lease the ground described

Hon. Mr. LORD: We are not to know what the Government intend to do. We have a bill before us and we must take it as it is. There has been nothing said to convince me that it is not the intention to give a monopoly of the oyster trade to a few individuals.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: I do not see that it makes any difference whether it is granted to one man or fifty if there are no oysters on the ground now, as I believe there are not. No man would take the ground unless he intended to plant oysters upon it, and if he took a large piece of ground he would have to lay out a large amount of capital.

Hon. Mr. WALKER: I am not acquainted with the other localities, but I know there are no oysters in the places in the Hillsborough which are proposed to be let. Some of your honors object to the leases being granted for so long a time, 20 years with a renewable term of 40 years. No doubt the idea is that before a man could make it a profitable speculation he would have to lay out a large amount of capital, and therefore it is considered that he should have a lease extending over that period of time.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: I see his honor from Prince County (Mr. Lord) is not inclined to take the Government for more than they are worth, and I agree with him that our enactments should be made as clear and explicit as possible—made so that they would be clear and intelligible twenty years hence; and if I thought it was intended to give a monopoly, I would wish to see the clause amended or modified so as fully to secure the interests of the people.

Clause agreed to.

A clause authorizing the Government to grant certain portions of the Hillsborough River was then read, and, after a few remarks it was agreed to.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. McDonald a clause was added to the bill authorizing the Government to grant certain portions of Rivers in King's County.

The House was then resumed and progress reported.

Hon. Mr. Yeo, a member of the Executive Council, by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, laid before the House the Accounts of the Collector of Imposts and Excise for Charlottetown, the Accounts of Imposts and Excise for the several Outports of this Island, Light Duty Accounts &c., for the year ending 31st December, 1864. Also, the Public Accounts as arranged and classified by the Auditors for the year ending 31st January, 1865.

All the above documents were ordered to be laid on the table.

Adjourned till Monday next, at eleven o'clock.

MONDAY, March 20.

FISH INSPECTION BILL.

A Bill to regulate the inspection of Pickled Fish was read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the whole House—Hon. Mr. Walker in the Chair.

Hon. Mr. LORD said he thought the inspectors should be allowed salaries.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I think it would be difficult to get a person to accept the office, as there are no emoluments attached to it except a very small fee for inspecting each barrel of fish. However, I will not offer any opposition to the Bill, though I think there will be some difficulty experienced in the working of it.

Hon Mr McDONALD: I think the portion of fees allowed to the chief inspectors is very small They are entitled to a fifth part of the fees received by the deputy inspectors; but still, it is as large, I believe a little larger, than what is allowed by the Nova Scotia Act, and they find plenty of persons who are willing to accept the office. I think it would pay very well where there are large quantities of fish to inspect. The amount allowed is 4d. per barrel, which would be £1 13s. 4d. for 100 barrels. A person could surely get through 100 barrels in two days. I do not think there can be any doubt about the necessity for an Act of this kind. Persons engaged in the business see the necessity for it more and more every year. It is very expensive to have fish inspected in the Nova Scotian or American market when they have to employ laborers there, while it would only cost four pence per barrel to have them inspected here. It is the same as the Nova Scotia Act with only some slight alterations to make it suitable to our local wants. Those who are largely engaged in the business are the only persons who can be affected by the Act, as a man may export 10 barrels where he pleases without inspection.

Hon. Mr. LORD: I think it will be something like the Act which was passed last year for the inspection of flour, which remains a dead letter. However, I dare say an Act of this kind is necessary now, as we are exporting considerable quantities of fish.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: This is similar to the Bill which was before the House last year, and I objected to it because it would prevent small fishermen from taking four, or five, or ten barrels to Nova Scotia, or Miramichi, and selling them, unless they were put up in a certain manner, inspected and branded. I thought it would interfere with small fishermen, and would compel them to sell their fish to the merchants here, but I understand these restrictions are left out of this Bill. It is an important Bill. Fish sent to market should be sent in as good condition as possible. We know that a great deal of the fish brought here are of very inferior quality though they are branded, and it must be for want of proper inspection. If such an Act as this were in operation, and well carried out, it would establish the character of our fish in foreign markets. I see nothing objectionable in the principle of the Bill, and am, therefore, disposed to support it.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: I had the same objection to the Bill which was before us last year as his honor who has just spoken. Another objection which I had was, that no fish could be branded unless they were packed in rock salt, which, it is well known, could not be obtained in many parts of the country without great inconvenience; but I have no objection to this Bill, as I understand that the clauses to which I allude have been greatly modified.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: I have no particular objection to this Bill. I suppose it is necessary to have a law of this kind, as large quantities of fish are now exported; but I do not understand how it is that, when we already have a law on our Statute Book for the inspection of fish, this Bill should be required. It appears that the Act in operation does not answer the purpose. If fish which are inspected under the present Act by a properly qualified and sworn inspector, have to be turned out and inspected again when they are sent to a foreign market, what is the use to pass another law to provide for their inspection?

Hon. Mr. LORD: They might be taken under one brand in Halifax or any of the Colonial markets, but not in a foreign market, unless the person who shipped them was well known and his fish had a good character.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: Then, I cannot see the use of the Bill, if fish will not be taken under our brand. I know a gentleman who brands his fish and exports them to the American market, where they are taken without any more inspection. No doubt he has got the name of putting up his fish in good order, and if others, who are engaged in business, could raise their name in the same way, there would be no need for this Bill.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: That person is an American, and holds an appointment as a Fish Inspector in the United States; that is the reason his fish pass without any more inspection; but this bill would be a benefit to others who are largely engaged in the fish trade. We cannot compel purchasers in the United States to take fish under our inspection.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: If the Inspector is not capable of inspecting fish properly, the Act will be very little use; but if they are properly branded, according to the quality, it may be some use after a time, when the character of the fish is well established.

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON: If a lot of fish were sent to a foreign market, all branded alike, and as the Act requires; if the purchaser would open a few barrels, and find them to correspond with the brand, he would surely take them without opening them all. That would save a great deal of trouble.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: I presume it will be just like other branches of trade, when the name of the manufacturer is attached to the article. When it is found that a man's name is a guarantee that the article is what it is represented to be, it will be taken without further examination. If we get our name up for exporting good fish, they will be taken under our brand as long as we keep up our credit.

Hon. Mr. LORD: Before we get our name up, our fish will have to be inspected by a different class of men than those at present employed for that purpose. I would sooner take fish from Nova Scotia without a brand, than take the brand of inspectors here. Last year, I bought some fish inspected on the wharf here, and I never was more deceived in my life. A few on the tops of the barrels were good, and all the rest were bad. I have purchased Nova Scotia fish without inspection, and found them good. It is no use to appoint inspectors, unless they do their duty. However, as the Bill is to provide for the inspection of fish for exportation, I will not oppose it.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: If the law, at the time his honor bought those fish, had been similar to the Bill now before us, he would have his redress against the inspector, who would forfeit his bonds. His honor from Prince County (Mr. Ramsay) says what is the use to have an inspection here when the fish will not be bought under our inspection in other markets. Well, it would only make a difference of four-pence per barrel to have them inspected, and if our brands were found to be a true index to the quality of the fish they might be taken after a time without any further inspection. On the other hand, if they did not turn out to be what they were branded for, we would have our remedy against the inspector.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: I have not much confidence in the inspection of fish, and when I buy any for my own use, I set no value upon it. I believe the inspectors do not always see the fish when they brand them. In fact, some of the barrels might contain codfish in place of herring, for all they know. However, I dare say the principle of the Bill is good, and as they have a law of this kind in all the neighboring Colonies, I suppose there cannot be any great objection to it here. At the same time it will be our duty to see that no just right of the people is infringed upon. Notwithstanding this Bill, the character of our fish will still mainly depend upon the person who puts them up. I have bought fish from Nova Scotia, and found those which were branded worse than those which were not.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: I had about one hundred barrels of mackerel inspected last year. They were turned out upon a table, and every fish was fled by the inspector. I think they were inspected in just the same way as this Bill proposes to carry out.

Clause agreed to—fourth clause read.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: That clause allows a man to ship ten barrels without inspection. Now, while I would give large dealers the benefit of the Act, I would not put the small fishermen to any unnecessary trouble or inconvenience. A man might have more than ten barrels to ship, but the barrels might not be of the description required by the Act, and I do not see why he should not be allowed to ship twenty barrels without inspection as well as ten.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: I think there is the very best reason for not doing so. If we allow ten barrels to be exported without inspection, there would be very little use in the Act. I do not object to ten barrels, but, at the same time, I would rather that every barrel sent from the Island were inspected. The provision to allow ten barrels to be exported without inspection, is a very liberal one indeed, and a man who has ten or eleven barrels will find no difficulty in finding money to pay for their inspection. The inspector's charge for ten barrels would only be 3s. 4d., and he is not bound to go more than a certain distance to inspect fish.

Hon. Mr. GOFF: Then, if a man has eleven barrels, he must have them inspected. Now, a man might go out in his boat to catch a few fish, and might be more fortunate than he expected; suppose he caught fifteen barrels, he might not have the description of barrels required by the Act, perhaps he would have none at all, and would go and borrow a few old ones from his neighbors. He would put up his fish with the intention of sending them to Miramichi or Shediac, but a man comes along and tells him he must have his fish inspected, and that he could not get them inspected unless they were put in a certain description of barrels. What would the man do with his fish? Therefore, I think the tendency of the Act will be to drive the fish trade all into the hands of a few individuals, and it is for us to see that there is no infringement upon the rights of the fishermen.

Hon. Mr. YEO: There might not be an inspector within twenty miles; and small fishermen might have great difficulty in obtaining suitable barrels. When fish are sent to the United States they will be inspected again, and the person who exports them will have to pay the expense. But, still, if the Bill is any benefit, it will be in favor of the large exporter, and I do not see why a small fisherman should be prohibited from sending twenty barrels to Miramichi or Shediac, without inspection, if he thought proper to do so.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: The object of the Bill is to improve the character of our fish, and if a man were allowed to export twenty barrels without inspection, that object would be frustrated; for one man might have twenty barrels in a vessel, and another fifteen or twenty, and so on, till they would make up a whole cargo. I would have the clause as it is. A vessel can run to Miramichi, Pictou, the Gut of Canso, or any port round these Colonies, and dispose of her fish under her fishing pass. It is only when the fish are landed that they will require to be inspected.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY: If we are to have fish inspected at all, I would not let a man export more than ten barrels without inspection, and even then, the Act may be evaded, for a man may have a number of sons, and might export ten barrels in the name of each, without inspection.

Hon. Mr. McLAREN: I do not see any danger in passing the Bill as it is. I would like to raise the character of our fish. The Bill is for the benefit of the merchants, and if they get a better price for their fish, the country at large will participate in the advantages.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON: The stringent character of the Bill, which was before us last year, made the majority of us pretty sensitive, and I think some of that feeling remains with us still. To allow ten barrels to be exported, without inspection, was thought last year to be quite liberal. This Bill, however, is stringent in regard to the size and quality of the barrels, but still, I think the permission to export ten barrels, without inspection, will be sufficient to protect the small fishermen.

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON: I was of opinion, last year, that we should allow ten barrels to be exported without inspection, and, as I am of the same opinion still, I will support that clause as it is.

Clause agreed to.

After some desultory debate, relative to the size and quality of fish barrels, the House was resumed, and progress reported.

Hon. Mr. Yeo, a member of the Executive Council, by command of His Excellency, presented to the House the Accounts of the Volunteer Force for the past year. Ordered to be laid on the table.

Adjourned till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

TUESDAY, March 21.

A Bill to regulate the inspection of pickled fish was again committed to a Committee of the whole House, and reported agreed to without any amendment.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

By Hon. Mr. McDonald, a petition of certain inhabitants of Georgetown and Royalty, praying for an Act to enable them to lease certain portions of Georgetown Common, and to apply the money arising therefrom to the purposes of local improvement.

By Hon. Mr. Beer, a petition of certain inhabitants of Charlottetown, praying for an alteration in the duties on confectionery.

Both petitions were ordered to be laid on the table.

OYSTER FISHERY BILL.

(Committee resumed.)

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON moved that the clause authorizing the Government to lease certain portions of the Bays and Rivers for a certain term of twenty years, at the option of the grantee, be reconsidered for the purpose of reducing that term.

Hon. the PRESIDENT said that if a man should go to the trouble and expense of planting oysters, and had a bed in a flourishing condition at the end of twenty years, it would be very unfair to deprive him of it and allow another to step in and receive the benefit of his labor and outlay. It was only a small portion of ground that was proposed to be granted, and no man would engage in the business unless he were afforded some encouragement and protection.

Hon. Mr. BEER thought it was something like hoeing tobacco twice. It would take a number of years before anything had would be made productive, and it would be the same with the oyster beds. He thought the man who went to the trouble and expense of making them productive should receive the benefit.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD said he felt it to be his duty to oppose the motion for the reconsideration of the clause. The clause had been agreed to by the whole House, with the exception of his honor who had made the motion, and perhaps one or two more who were absent at the time, and he did not see how they could consistently reconsider what they had already agreed to. It was just on the same principle as the leases of farms in the country, and if the clause even gave a longer time, he would support it. He did not see why the grantees, who would have made the oyster beds valuable, at large expense, should be deprived of them at the end of twenty years, just when they would begin to reap them.

The question of concurrence was then put on the Hon. Mr. Anderson's motion, and it passed in the negative.

Hon. Mr. Beer moved that the Bill be amended by inserting a clause to prevent parties from other countries from taking and taking away oysters without permission from the Government.

Hon. the PRESIDENT said as bad from trade, and was, therefore, unfavorable to the clause which had been read being inserted. Vessels could go to Shediac and load with oysters without any permission from the authorities. It was well to protect private rights, but the oyster beds were public property. In Richmond Bay, three or four vessels had loaded with oysters last year, but they were purchased from the inhabitants.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL said he agreed with the honor who had introduced the clause. Where no would leave the oyster beds open to the inhabitants of the Island, as strangers should not be allowed to come and take away tons of stone from our shores without permission. It was merely legislating against a trespass. The oysters belonged either to the people, or to private individuals, the future, it was a trespass against either one or another for strangers to take them away. It is quite open to them to engage persons belonging to the Island to supply them with oysters.

Hon. Mr. LORD did not think it could be exactly called free trade, but he supposed that when the Union of the Colonies would be consummated, a clause of this kind would not be required.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL said it would be something new to prevent parties from other countries from taking away fish of any kind. The neighboring Colonies might have something which we required, and would be disposed to retaliate.

The question of concurrence was then put on the clause proposed by the Hon. Mr. Beer, and the committee divided:—

Contents—Hons. Messrs. Beer, Kennedy, McLaren, Anderson, Lord, Attorney General, McDonald and Walker—8.

Non-Contents—Hon. the President, and Hon. Mr. Dingwell—2.

So it passed in the affirmative.

Hon. Mr. McLaren, a member of the Government, by command of His Excellency the Lieut. Governor, presented a copy of the Warrant Book for the year ending 31st January, 1865.

Adjourned till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, March 22.

A message was brought from the House of Assembly, by Mr McLennan, with a Bill to incorporate Summerside Bank.

By the Hon. Mr. Davies, with a Bill to make provision for the regulation of Seamen on board of any ship or vessel owned in, or belonging to, Prince Edward Island, when such ship or vessel shall be within the precincts of the said Island.

By the Hon. Mr. Haviland, with a Bill to regulate the salaries of the Collectors of Impost and Excise for the Districts of Bedeque and Georgetown. Also, with a Bill to amend the Act to promote Vaccination.

The said Bills were read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Hon. Mr. Beer moved, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Henderson, that a Bill to repeal the Act relating to the Oyster Fishery, and to make other provisions in lieu thereof, be now read a third time.

Hon. Mr. Lord moved as amendment that the said Bill be read a third time that day three months, and on doing so, said: I stated the grounds of my opposition to this Bill when the House was in Committee. I believe it will be an injury, rather than a benefit to the country. The principal objection which I have to the Bill is, that it will deprive the people of the privilege of taking oysters from beds already in existence—a privilege which they have hitherto enjoyed. If the Bill go into operation, it will soon be seen whether it will be a benefit or not.

The Hon. Mr. Lord's motion of amendment was not seconded. The question of concurrence was then put on the original motion, and it passed in the affirmative.

The Bill was then read a third time and passed.

Adjourned till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, March 21.

The Bill to incorporate the Summerside Bank, was read a third time and passed.

The Bill relating to Merchant Seamen was read a third time and passed.

The Bill to regulate the salaries of the Collectors of Customs at Georgetown and Bedeque was read a second time; committed and reported agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Coles suggested that the Clerk be directed to have a few extra copies of the Parliamentary Reporter, from its first publication, bound up in volumes for the use of the House. The suggestion was generally concurred in by hon. members.

Hon. Mr. Warburton, pursuant to notice on the Order Book, asked for a copy of the agreement entered into between the Government and the Professors of Prince of Wales College, and also for a report of certain proceedings which had recently taken place, resulting, as he understood, in certain expulsions from the College.

Hon. Leader of the Government replied that no written agreement had been entered into with the Professors of the Prince Wales College, and with respect to the latter question, he might state that there had been no expulsions from the Institution.

Hon. Mr. Hensley moved the second reading of the Bill to regulate the rate of Interest, and to repeal the Usury Laws. The hon. member explained the principles of the Bill, and was supported by the hon. Solicitor General and several other hon. members, all of whom concurred in the opinion that there existed a necessity for the adoption of the principles of the Bill, which was similar to a Bill passed by the British Parliament in the year 18 4, when the remaining laws in that country on the same subject were repealed. The Bill before the House was therefore a mere transcript of the British Statute, and a similar law also obtained in Canada. The Bill provided that where no rate of interest was named, the rate should still be 6 per cent; if any other rate was fixed upon, it must be expressly stated in the agreement. Existing contracts would not in any way be interfered with by the provisions of the Bill. It was argued by the supporters of the Bill that the present law on this subject was evaded every day, by which the borrower had to pay, frequently, from 15 to 25 per cent for borrowed money; whereas, by abolishing the restrictions of the law, those who would not violate its provisions, would throw their capital into the market, as land, money, like any other article of merchandise, would find its own level. In a new country like this, free scope should be given to trade, and money should be as free from restriction as any other goods or chattels, so that men of enterprise, who would not evade the law, might be allowed to go into the market and compete with those who constantly evaded its provisions.

Mr Howat said he had the same objections to the Bill as when it was introduced at the last Session of this House, and he saw no reason why he should change his opinion on the subject. He was suspicious of the quarter from whence the Bill emanated, and thought its principal object was to afford facilities to the money lenders of Charlottetown. He was of opinion the Bill would tend to increase rather than lessen the rate of interest that would be charged under its provisions; he would, therefore, move that it be read a second time this day three months.

Hon. Mr. Laird seconded the motion of the hon member, and also spoke against the Bill. He said he was not aware that any petition or application of any kind had come from the people in favor of passing such a Bill, and would, therefore, oppose it.