

HOUSE SAT LATE  
ON MANY BILLS  
PUBLIC SERVICE ACT  
GOT A SECOND READING

Government Working on a  
Pension Scheme for  
Teachers.

Legislative Press Gallery, March 1.

Although the House worked hard through two sittings today the prospects of prorogation this week are not so bright as they were a few days ago. The government have three or four bills which will take some little time, in addition to the Water Act, which is good for a couple of days to all appearances.

It was a patchwork of business which was done today, some twenty bills, public and private, being discussed in one shape or another, and some of these will call for more discussion in their later stages. Hon. Dr. Young, in moving the second reading of the Public Service Act, said the service was now what might be called unbalanced. There were too many in the service who were not doing their duty. There were too many there for their party allegiance or some such reason. There was in the Dominion and the older provinces, as well as here, a class of men in the public service who, while they were not doing their duty, were unwilling to perform their duties. More particularly in British Columbia the public service was overworked with old men, country, Chinese, and others, who had so many old men in its service as this province, where there are 87 per cent. over forty, 11 per cent. over sixty and only 3 per cent. under 20. This condition was one that had to be met in view of the increased responsibility of office and the fact that although they were doing their best the men over sixty could be counted on as diminishing in efficiency by 10 or 15 per cent.

Old Men in the Service.  
Too many old men in the service had been placed there under the patronage system, and the object of the bill was to substitute for this a system founded upon efficiency and merit. While last year's bill had been placed on the statute book to get the principle there and provide for regrading the staff, the government desired to take advantage of the experience of the Ottawa government and of the reports of the civil service commissions and the debates in the Commons. Upon regrading a great deal depended for the efficiency of the service and the government intended to appoint not more than three persons to carry out. If any clerk found his salary reduced by this or was dissatisfied with the grade he was given he could appeal to the civil service commission.

It was the desire of the government to pay the service a fair remuneration and encourage young men to join the service as a career. The increases in the various classes would work automatically, conditional upon the merits. Merit would be the test throughout. By means of the civil service commission much annoying opportunity would be saved ministers and members. In the bill, he believed, would be found a broad and comprehensive basis for the best service the government could devise. It is sound education, keen intelligence and loyal service would ensure a man a splendid career.

Superannuation.  
In regard to superannuation the provincial secretary said he would lay the proposed bill on the table for the consideration of members. The government could not afford to extend the present system materially without some contribution from the members of the service. The present system was costing more than a system of superannuation, and it would go on increasing very rapidly with the number of old men in the service. In the matter of superannuation for teachers it was mentioned by the member for Chilliwack, the government had been endeavoring to arrive at some conclusion but found many difficulties. One was the indifference of teachers. There were 850 in the schools of the province, to all of whom he had sent a card, but only had a return from 47 per cent. Twelve to fifteen per cent at the outside remained in the profession as a life-work. The average term of the service was four years, the women leaving to marry as a rule and the men to get into other walks of life. The government was now trying to arrive at a basis for an educational pension system. The education he thought most feasible was following out the English system of an independent pension fund.

Still Unworkable.  
John Oliver said that if any justification was needed of the act of the opposition in opposing the superannuation bill last year, it was furnished by Dr. Young's speech. It was not that there was a technical objection to it; the truth was that the government was not ready yet. The scheme last year, nor was it ready yet. An expert from Yorkshire had been brought over—there was \$500 in the estimates last year to meet the cost of his services were still in requisition by the government. The superannuation bill last year had been withdrawn because it was unworkable and because the provincial secretary himself did not understand it. Parker Williams insisted that teachers would have to be better paid than they are now if the ranks are to be kept filled. At the present rates of educational salaries it was no wonder that teachers got out. Good teachers in the country was thought lucky to get \$50 a month while a girl of far less ability or training could get \$500 a year or more as a stenographer in the government service. As for the present superannuation system there was no reason why the province should retain it or pay any superannuation. Civil servants were no more, and no less, entitled to old-age pensions than any workers in the body politic. It was noticeable that the men who got the largest salaries in the service and were best able to make provision for

themselves were the ones who got the biggest superannuation plums. J. H. Hawthornthwaite had no objection to a man who had spent his life in the public service receiving a superannuation allowance, but only if workers in every other line were superannuated also. He was certain, he said, that there were many men in the public service of British Columbia who should have been got rid of years ago. One reason the province had not advanced more rapidly was that these men were in office, men with moss-grown ideas who did not carry out the intention of the legislation passed by the House. Mr. Hawthornthwaite championed the cause of the teachers, and remarked that the fact that so few replies were received by the minister of education was an unpleasant vote of want of confidence in the government.

"However, it is wise for the teachers to hold their tongues in view of Agnes Deans Cameron's case; the less they have to say in these matters the better," he added.

The bill was read a second time.

Clearing Land by Fire.

Debating the bill to provide greater safeguards against bush fires, Mr. Williams, speaking out the necessity of a settler would have in getting a permit to set out a fire in some parts of British Columbia from any of the officials mentioned in the act. He, himself, would like to take such a restful holiday. There should be some arrangement whereby five wardens could get sufficient assistance to watch these fires when it was necessary to set them out. And certainly there was no way of clearing the land in much of Vancouver Island except by a liberal application of fire.

H. C. Brewer spoke along the same lines. He urged that those who would not improve their holdings otherwise should at least be compelled to keep them from becoming fire traps.

J. H. Hawthornthwaite asked for sympathy and help for the settler who had to clear bush land, and suggested that the government should provide powerful engines to assist them. Mr. H. Hayward agreed with the member for Nanaimo, and expressed his doubt whether any good would be accomplished by the bill. People getting a permit, and next thing some one would drop a match and set fire to the bush they wanted cleared.

John Oliver advised the House to confine itself to a common-sense proposition, whether it was better to let settlers go on clearing the land in the best way they could, as they had done for years, or whether the interests of preserving the timber was greater and the settlers be prevented from clearing in dry seasons. He had yet to learn that the government or the House was able to devise any means of overcoming wether conditions.

The bill was given its second reading.

Fortnightly Pay Days.

A fortnightly pay day for underground employees of coal mines was advocated by J. H. Hawthornthwaite. He said that a bill of this kind, Premier's amending the Coal Mines Regulation Act which was up for third reading. He referred to the fact that for several sessions he and the member for Newcastle had endeavored to get a similar bill adopted, and he saw no reason why it should not become law. Another amendment he wished to see made called for an inquest on the bodies of all men killed by explosion or other accidents in mines.

The Premier raised the point of order that the amendment was not within the scope of the bill, which was intended to make less expensive the examinations for certificates of competency, and the further point that the first-named matter was dealt with in another bill before the House.

The bill referred to by the Premier is one introduced by W. R. Ross (Fernie) to give a fortnightly pay day to men receiving \$4 a day or under in industrial work and a monthly pay of \$50.00 or more.

The Speaker took the matter into consideration and will give a decision tomorrow.

Kingston Street Fire Hall Site.

The commissioner of lands, on the second reading of the bill to authorize the granting of lot 22, the site of Kingston street fire hall, to the city of Victoria, stated that an order in council had been passed some years ago allowing the city to erect a fire hall there. Now that the city has taken up the permanent building it desired a surer title to the lot.

John Oliver asked if the lot was to be conveyed in fee simple or only for fire hall purposes.

Hon. Mr. Fulton replied that it was to be for municipal purposes only.

Mr. Oliver inquired if it would have any power to sell the lot.

Mr. Fulton said that was not the idea, but the conveyance was to be on terms and conditions.

Mr. Oliver inquired if the government intended to give the land.

The bill passed second reading.

The bills amending the Municipal Act and Municipal Election Act, which have passed the municipal committee, were advanced a stage.

John Oliver pointed out that some sections of the former purported to amend the New Westminster act of incorporation, which was a private act. He did not think it good policy to amend a private act by a public act.

The attorney-general agreed that this was right, but excused the breach in this case by stating that next year, he was informed, New Westminster intended to come under the general act.

"I would suggest to the attorney-general that he have every municipal act come under the general act," replied Mr. Oliver as a sly dig at "Billy Bowser's Kids," the only other city in the province with a special act. A Midnight Breeze.

When a bill containing some amendments to that special act came up in committee, Mr. H. Macdonald, in charge of it, wanted the committee to give the city of Vancouver the right to operate a telephone system.

W. R. Ross, chairman of the private bills committee, pointed out that the committee had thrown out this proposition. It did not think it was wise to have two systems in one city, and anyway government ownership of telephones would probably come up some day.

C. W. Munro, who supported Mr. Macdonald's motion, asked if the House was to understand that govern-

ment telephones were likely to come soon. Although it was after midnight and members were jaded, quite a lively argument sprang up. Mr. Macdonald led in an attack upon the amendment, and was followed by several members on both sides. Mr. Macdonald and Mr. McGuire, with the aid of the Socialist members, upheld Vancouver's right to a telephone system if it wished. Both sides cited the case of Seattle, with its two systems, as proving either the advantage or disadvantage of dual systems.

John Oliver pointed out that if the rates of the B. C. Telephone Co. in Vancouver were too high they should be got at by way of a body similar to the railway commission, rather than in this way.

Mr. McGuire replied that the rates were not particularly out of the way, but the citizens were not satisfied with the way it treated the public.

Hon. F. L. Carter-Cotton told the House that the business men of Vancouver did not want the city given this power. Personally, as a large ratepayer, he did not believe in giving the council power to run a telephone system.

The amendment was defeated, the only members voting for it being Mr. Macdonald, Mr. McGuire, Dr. Kergin, John M. Yorton, C. W. Munro, J. H. Hawthornthwaite and John McInnis.

Bills Advanced.

Several small amending acts were advanced a stage. That to the Jurors' Act stands for third reading. That to the Ditching and Watercourses Act was considered in committee. Dr. King in the chair. With Thomas Gifford in the chair a bill to simplify titles was taken up. It provides that in the completion of any contract of sale of land the rights and obligations of vendors and purchasers shall, subject to any stipulations in the contract to the contrary, be regulated by the rule that recitals of twenty-year-old facts shall be taken as prima facie evidence of their truth, and that inability of the vendor to produce and furnish copies of documents of title shall not be an objection to the title in case the purchaser will, on the completion of the contract, have an equitable right to the production of such documents.

Second readings, in addition to those mentioned, were given to a bill to amend the Metalliferous Mines Act, a bill to provide for the inspection of hospitals, a bill respecting the official map of Alberni townsite, a bill to incorporate the Portland Canal Short Line Railway Co., a bill to incorporate the B. C. Permanent Loan Co.

Bills incorporating the Prince Rupert and Hazelton Railway Co., incorporating the Graham Island Railway Co., and amalgamating the water rights of the Coldstream Estate Co. and the White Valley Irrigation & Power Co. were reported.

The Vancouver & Northern railway bill was put through committee.

The resolutions adopted in committee of supply on February 24-25-26 were read a first time at the afternoon sitting, and a second time in the evening.

J. H. Hawthornthwaite moved that the third reading be taken until tomorrow.

The House rose at 1:05 a.m., after John Oliver had protested two or three times against being forced to stay so long unseemly hours, far removed from those observed by the inhabitants of Delta.

H. B. Thomson to-night gave notice of the amendment to the city water works bill to carry out the city's desire.

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WATER ACT WILL  
TAKE MUCH TIME  
HOST OF AMENDMENTS  
ON THE ORDER PAPER

Opposition Leader and Commissioner of Lands Discuss Clauses.

Legislative Press Gallery, March 1.

That the Water Act, the most important item in the sessional programme, is not going to get through the committee stage as quickly as was expected, is apparent from the first go at it. The commissioner of lands, who is not the author of the draft measure—that is the work of Charles Wilson, K. C.—has a batch of fifty-five amendments which he thinks are necessary to make the bill as perfect as the members all wish to make it.

On both sides are understood to have a great many more to bring on as the bill progresses.

To-day only one-half of the sections taken up were finally disposed of, the Ditching and Watercourses Act being considered. Some of the sections, and proposed amendments, will provoke a good deal of discussion. The sections taken up to-day dealt with the board of investigation, the appointment of members to the board, and the duties of the board.

On the third reading of the premier's bill, the Water Act, the member for Nanaimo had two amendments on the order paper, one providing for fortnightly pay of men employed underground in coal mines and another making it compulsory to hold an inquest on the bodies of all persons whose deaths may have been caused by explosion or accident in any mine. The bill was allowed to stand over.

The premier introduced a bill to amend the Inspection of Metalliferous Mines Act in the direction of providing for an alteration of the code of mine signals to suit conditions which may arise. Any amendments made by the government will be brought forward before the bill is passed.

The bill was allowed to stand over.

The Water Act.

An hour and a half was spent in committee on the Water Act. Out of the thirty clauses read, half stand over, one was dropped as being redundant, and of the fourteen passed five were amended and several of the others were followed by a motion to amend.

As the commissioner of lands has some amendments to propose he consented to the interpretation clause standing over.

Board of Investigation.

Regarding the board of investigation, the leader of the opposition pointed out that the section setting forth its duties and powers contained a surplusage of words and would be much better if more simply phrased. He considered that the legislature should fix the number of members of the board instead of leaving it to the lieutenant-governor-in-council, should fix their remuneration, how many should form a quorum, and so on. He did not think board of investigation was a happy title for a body with such powers as this tribunal.

Hon. Mr. Fulton admitted there was something in some of these points and allowed the clause to stand.

Section 18 provides for the board having measurements made of water on every stream, which Mr. Macdonald remarked would be a most costly business. He objected to giving the board power, after making a personal examination, of any streams or works, to determine rights and claims upon that examination, to the exclusion of any evidence that might be brought before them. This was a power given to no other court nor to a jury.

This defect was remedied.

The amount of notice the board is to give, not less than ten clear days of hearing claims and determining rights, was denounced by the leader of the opposition as less than a debtor owing \$50 would get, whereas here most important water rights, affecting the value of a man's land, were to be dealt with absolutely.

The section stands over.

Stuart Henderson pointed out that, as the bill stands, while licenses are to be issued after the board begins to deal with a stream nothing will prevent the issue of one of the

publication of notice of the sitting and the opening of the sitting. The section was amended so as to preclude this.

Not Governed by Forms.

Section 29 declares that "no special or particular form shall be necessary in the conduct of proceedings, antecedent to the hearing, on or before the board, or in the conduct or management of the board business."

Mr. Macdonald thought it strange that any court should be constituted without being surrounded with the forms which centuries of experience had shown to be necessary. This board would be handling the most important problem British Columbia had, dealing with interests of vital concern and clothed with powers greater than any existing courts. It was very necessary that its proceedings should take place in proper form, and that in the taking of evidence, for instance, the board should not be able to take it any way, perhaps admitting illegal evidence.

At the request of the leader of the opposition the committee rose and reported progress, to give him an opportunity to go into some of the clauses.

Some time was spent in committee on the commissioner of lands' bill to amend the Coal Mines Act in certain particulars as to the holding of land in this province. Hon. Dr. Young declared himself strongly in favor of placing British Columbia abreast of the best, and the Conservatives as well as the Liberals up behind the bill. Two of the Socialist members who were in the House materially helped out the attorney-general's corporal's guard.

The amendments which Dr. King has prepared to the bill have met all objections from other sections of the healing profession, and with the exception of Mr. Bowser's protest the bill went through committee with little trouble. It will be finished up at next sitting of the committee.

The Water Act develops new difficulties as it progresses in committee. While it was prepared by a leading lawyer and a former member of the provincial government, members find innumerable points of objection in it. In three sittings of the committee 109 sections out of the 311 in the bill have been gone through. Of these 46 have been passed, 60 stand for further discussion, 2 have been struck out, one has been superseded by an amendment and two new sections have been added.

Whole Divisions Stand Over.

Taking up Part VI of the act, which deals with the procedure necessary to obtain approval of works, there was some discussion as to the procedure by licensees taking and using small quantities of water on their own land for other than power purposes, ending in the holding over of eight sections.

These provide that after receiving a license under the act for construction is already under way.

The cost of the house, its furnishing and maintenance will be \$15,000. It will be of the bungalow type covering a ground space of 7,500 sq. ft. Special features of the building will be the rooms for ladies and smoking rooms for gentlemen, with a musician balcony on the second floor and a broad verandah surrounding the house on three sides.

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BOWSER BEATEN  
ON MEDICAL BILL  
PROPOSED KEEPING  
DOWN THE STANDARD

Water Act Keeps on Developing Difficulties as it Advances.

Legislative Press Gallery, March 2.

The young Napoleon of the provincial Conservatives, Attorney General Bowser, essayed to strike out a provision in the medical bill to-night against the opinion of the only medical man in the cabinet and other university men on the government side. He was defeated in this and, while only a skirmish, he appeared to be nettled at the result.

It was a clause designed to raise the standard of medical training in British Columbia in line with the five-year course now being adopted as a necessity by the important universities on this continent. Hon. Dr. Young declared himself strongly in favor of placing British Columbia abreast of the best, and the Conservatives as well as the Liberals up behind the bill. Two of the Socialist members who were in the House materially helped out the attorney-general's corporal's guard.

The amendments which Dr. King has prepared to the bill have met all objections from other sections of the healing profession, and with the exception of Mr. Bowser's protest the bill went through committee with little trouble. It will be finished up at next sitting of the committee.

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