

201 x 241 1/2

Provincial Parliament.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

BILL TO TAX UNIMPROVED GRANTED LANDS.

Hon. Mr. Smith. They must get a licence for the Mines. Mr. Lawrence—The licence is a mere matter of form. York must be one of the finest Agricultural Counties of the Province judging from the eagerness with which its lands were seized.—Hon. members must be satisfied that the time had come to apply a remedy to this crying evil. He should not get into the details of the measure which he proposed, nor speak now of the application of the proposed tax; but would consider the principle of the remedy: Professor Johnston, at page 70 of his Report, speaks of the remedy proposed by this Bill. "I have had occasion to observe in many parts of the Province," he says, "that the best portions of land which are made accessible by means of the existing roads are held by persons who have no intention to cultivate or improve them. However much it may be for the advantage of individuals to invest money in land, which though it yield no present revenue, is daily rising in value as the population increases and settlement extend, it cannot be for the general interest of the Province that such should be the case." And on page 71: "In Canada West, where the evil of large unimproved grants were more felt even than in New Brunswick, they have been met by the imposition of a tax. It has been proposed to levy such a tax in New Brunswick." In 1856 a commission was appointed by the government of this Province to consider the means best adapted to promote the Agricultural improvements of the Country. They issued a series of queries. Three gentlemen in the county of Westmorland in reply, recommended a tax upon the wild lands. In the reports of the Debates of last session he found the same suggestion from the hon. member from Gloucester (Mr. End.) That hon. member was reported to have used the following language:—

"Another means of promoting settlement was by laying a tax on those unimproved tracts of private lands which were the bane of the country. He would like to have seen a paragraph in the Speech to the following effect:

"My attention has been turned to the large tracts of unimproved wilderness lands held by unimproving non-resident individuals, and the evil effects which they have in retarding settlement, and I have directed a measure to be prepared to abate this evil." Such a paragraph he would have been happy to see; but he found none such in the speech." From the length of time the hon. member had been in that House, and the opportunities he had enjoyed of obtaining information on this subject, he was a very high and valuable authority. He would ask hon. members also to look at the policy pursued in Illinois, by the Illinois Central Railroad Corporation, which on account of the great public works which it was constructing received a grant from the State of over two million acres, of which they have already sold more than one half. From the advertisements of the corporation it appeared that the conditions of the sale were one year interest in advance, at six per cent., payable respectively in one, two, three, four, five and six years, from date of sale; and four notes of principal, payable in four, five, six and seven years from sale—the contract stipulating that one tenth of the tract purchased shall be fenced and cultivated, each and every year, for five years from the date of sale, so that at the end of five years one half shall be fenced and under cultivation. Looking at all these facts, and arguments, and looking at the fact that the House had often by large majorities, affirmed the principle of this bill, he did not think it necessary to take up any more time in urging it upon them. If in 1840 the Attorney General, looking around him at the condition of this Country and its prospects of its advance in settlement and industry, came to the conclusion that this evil was of such a magnitude as to require the interposition of the Legislature, after twenty years more of growth and expansion of that evil, surely the time has arrived at which it became the bounden duty of that House to set about its removal. This measure might now be said to have reached its maturity, for this session it was twenty years of age. He trusted that it would no longer meet with opposition from any quarter, but would be sent forth on its mission of merry, reclaiming the forest, promoting the prosperity and comfort of the laborer, and filling the wilderness with fruitful fields and happy homes. It was a measure whose benefits would be conferred on no one class; for while it would be a peculiar boon to those of limited means, those who owned the largest properties could not but participate in the general benefits which its effects upon the industry of the Province would assuredly produce. He should say no more at present, but if the principle of the bill was sustained, should be prepared to go into its details.

Mr. End said that when Mr. Lawrence at the beginning of his speech alluded to the Surveyor General standing beside the Chairman to hear the Bill read, he could not decide whether the hon. member spoke seriously or sarcastically; but as he proceeded in his address it became evident he was sincere in his remarks, as indeed that hon. gentleman rarely indulged in sarcasm on any subject. He believed the House would be unanimous in favor of this Bill. He was happy to find that his own county (Gloucester) did not appear in the Black List from which the hon. member had read, "Nor Northumberland"—from a member. It was highly to the credit of the north-

ern counties to be thus excepted. Hon. Mr. SMITH.—Perhaps some of the land held in other counties is owned by the residents of Gloucester.

Mr. END continued.—If the hon. member of the Government would assert that, of his own knowledge, he should believe him; but if not he should beg to doubt it. Yes, he doubted that there were any of those *funguses*, (laughter) owned in Gloucester. But, nevertheless, Gloucester had some *funguses* of this kind. Indeed, no county in the Province had suffered more severely from them than Gloucester. In the interesting Parish of New Brandon, a name well known in that House, of which Prof. Johnston spoke particularly in his work, it was remarkable what the exertions of civilized man had done in the way of subduing nature and introducing comfort and progress into what had been a wilderness. But it was with absolute horror that he had ascertained that the rear of the front lots which a gentleman in England. He imputed nothing wrong to him; he was doing only what the law of the country allowed. But the act was exceedingly injurious to the people of New Brandon; for these rear lots formed the place into which the young hives of the settlement should naturally swarm. Now the young men and women of the settlement had no convenient place in which to settle; the rear lands were gone; and in return the Province had nothing but the filthy lazar for which they were sold; and which was no consideration; for what the country wanted was not a few pounds in the Treasury, but men and women to settle its lands and carry into the wilderness arts and comforts of civilized life. Other counties had even worse than this to tell; a man could stand on the Town Hall in F'ron and pitch a biscuit into the lands thus blocked up from settlement. For this condition of things money was no consideration. Let honorable members put their shoulders to the wheel, and put an end to this great evil. There could be no party in this question; nothing in which the feelings of the two houses—the house of "Have" and the house of "Want,"—could be stirred up. Let them devise a plan by which these lands should be severally taxed. The hon. member's Bill appeared to be a very good plan; they wanted a simple measure, without much machinery. No injustice would be done these landholders; for their lands were becoming valuable by the labours of the settlers—of those who were obliged to penetrate into the forest beyond these blocks, carrying their provisions on their backs, to make themselves farms and homes. These landjobbers were not entitled to consideration at our hands, and should be made to bear a portion of the burdens which we imposed on ourselves. He should support the bill most warmly. The Surveyor General would remember when they stood shoulder to shoulder in that House in efforts to secure such a measure as this, and did get it through the house only to fail elsewhere. He hoped that by the infusion of the popular element into the other branch the passage of the Bill could now be secured. This was his thirty-first winter in the House; and during all that time he had never entertained but one opinion on the subject. The evil was increasing; from the statement of the hon. mover it appears that for the last five years forty thousand acres had been bought up in large blocks, and that by twelve persons. Such things must be stopped; if hon. members went home without devising some means they would be met on all sides with taunts; even, as he had heard it said, the very pine trees would point at them with scorn.

Mr. McLEOD said that the Bill was a very important one, and would, no doubt, receive the support of the House. He hoped that it would become law as the evil was notorious, and it was high time that it was stopped. But he thought that they had better at present report progress, and have the Bill printed.

Mr. TIBBETS said that he perfectly coincided with the last speaker. Such a measure was much needed. When new settlements were opened these speculators immediately stepped in and bought up the land in such quantities that settlement was retarded, if not altogether stopped. A tax of the kind was much needed in Victoria County.

HON. MR. SMITH said that the principle, no doubt, was correct; the difficulty heretofore experienced was to find some mode to carry out the details. He thought it was important to have the Bill printed, that it might be well examined and considered. He trusted that they would be able to prevent what was acknowledged evil, without doing any injury to the persons who had been able by industry to purchase a few hundred acres of wilderness lands to make farms for their children. Progress was then reported; and two hundred copies of the Bill ordered to be printed.

THE SPEAKERS LAST.—Everybody who knows His Honour the Speaker knows his wit and humor. His Honour is reported to have said on Saturday evening—"While the country has been going to ruin by Inches, the Government has been done—BROWN.

A large number of moose and cariboo have been killed in the Province of Nova Scotia during the present winter. In one week in the county of Digby no less than ten Moose and three Bears were killed.

The people of Nova Scotia are talking about establishing museums throughout that Province, for the collection of minerals and curiosities found in the country.

To the Editor of the Woodstock Journal.

WILLIAMSTOWN, Feb. 27th, 1861. SIR.—In the Carleton Sentinel of the 16th inst. I observe a communication signed "Rate Payer," and dated Williamstown, evidently intended to cast the odium of its troublesome tendency upon some other than the real author. I am quite certain no person in Williamstown knew anything of the communication until it appeared in the Sentinel; yet a resident of Williamstown was unjustly accused of being the author, (as was no doubt the design and intention of the writer). "Let every ass bear its own burden," is my motto. I have no difficulty in guessing the party who got up and presented the petition. Of course it is the work of the Buttermilk Creek faction. I suppose I ought to call it Flour-mo-ville, the new cognomen for that beautiful little embryo city that some seasons ago exported 2,000,000 of Yankee shingles. I am not at all surprised at the Council rejecting the petition, as they have been troubled too often already by the same concern; and probably some of that body have read or heard of the fable of the shepherd boy and the wolves; but in the present case it is the wolves and not the boy that raise the cry.—The facts of the matter are these: the eastern or river section of the parish were allowed to appoint the Parish Clerk; I say allowed; because the back settlements can, if they choose, out-vote them on any question. Well, their own man, in the spirit of Buttermilk Creek equity, no doubt, appointed the parish meeting at their own favorite place, the north-east corner of the parish, which rendered it almost impossible for over one third of the rate-payers (as the travelling was on Christmas Day) to attend. Whether the notice was legally given or not I cannot say, nor do I care, because I believe they were all, or nearly so, apprised of it. But some objected to the day and some to the weather; consequently, the folks of the churn had it almost, but not quite all, their own way. But even that did not suit them, as nothing short of the most arbitrary, selfish partisan measures will suit them.

Their pompous threats against the Council, are quite in character with the party, and quite as innocuous as characteristic. I think I am safe in saying that if the gentlemen had gained their point, and put us to the trouble, inconvenience and expense of another election (which is their wont for very trifling causes), that Mr. John Perkins would have received at least two-thirds of the votes in the parish. I believe that a large majority of the people in the parish are quite satisfied with Mr. P.'s services so far. If the sayings and doings of the body are true as reported, Mr. Perkins has and is proving himself a good working member, always in the harness, with his shoulder to the collar and his traces tight.

Please give this badly written communication insertion in your next issue, or as soon as convenient, and oblige.

Yours, with respect, THRASHER.

The Woodstock Journal.

Thursday, Feb. 28, 1861.

MILITARY FUNERAL.

During the present season our town has been called to witness the burial of a more than usually large number of its citizens. On Sunday last, a funeral ceremony of a rare, rather uncommon kind, passed through our streets, on the occasion of the death of Mr. Robert Campbell, a young man of very estimable character, who died suddenly during the week. As he was a member of the Woodstock Volunteer Rifles, he was buried with military honors by the Company.

The procession was a large one, led by the twelve men who had been told off for firing "the farewell shot" over the grave of their departed comrade. Then came the Band, with solemn step and slow, playing soft mournful airs, which added much to the solemnity of the scene.

Next came the coffin, adorned with the accoutrements of the departed, and borne on the shoulders of four members of the Company, and followed by the remaining members, wearing on their arms the military mourning emblem. The procession was closed by a large majority of the male inhabitants of the town, who came to do their part in the last sad rites.

An occasion like this is not one in which it is fitting to dilate on matters of minor importance, but we cannot refrain from expressing our opinion of the admirable manner in which the whole ceremony was arranged. Everything was decorous and in order, and the scene was an exceedingly impressive and solemn one. The music from the Band sounded in the distance more like the voices of a congregation, mingling in melancholy cadence, than the mere effect of instrumental performance.

The pieces chosen were, the Sicilian Hymn, Pleyel's Hymn, and the Portuguese Hymn.

FIRE.—We regret to have to state, that on Wednesday morning, about 2 o'clock, a fire broke out in the mill in this town owned jointly by Messrs. McLean and Beardsey, which laid the building in ruins, also consuming a considerable quantity of sawed lumber.

It seems difficult to account for the occurrence of the fire, as there had been no fire in use on the premises for sometimes previous to the accident. The loss will we fear be heavy, as we understand that Mr. Beardsey, had no insurances, at all, and Mr. McLean only two thousand dollars.

EVIDENCE OF MR. INCHEB ON "LAND JOBBING."

We have laid by a considerable quantity of other matter, that we might publish in to-day's issue the startling developments of Land Jobbing, made by Mr. Inches, the Chief Draughtsman of the Crown Land Office, in his evidence before the Investigating Committee of the House of Assembly.

We make no comments upon it as the whole thing speaks for itself.

We copy this from the Colonial Empire, and shall continue to give all the evidence of interest in the matter, either from our own correspondents or by copies from our exchanges.

THE DEVELOPMENTS OF LAND JOBBING IN NEW BRUNSWICK.

In our issue of last Monday, we gave some developments of Land Jobbing in this Province, seriously implicating the Chief Clerk in the Crown Land Office, as well as others, and we gave full and specific information in every case, and would justify any Court in New Brunswick in taking up the matter.

The result of our article was, that on Tuesday morning last, a meeting of the Executive Council was held hastily in Fredericton, at an unusual early hour; and that while the Council was sitting, a motion was made in the House by Mr. Tibbets for a Committee to investigate the whole affair. No man pretended to deny that every man stated by the Colonial Empire was not true to the letter and figure, and there was every reason to suppose that on an investigation much more would be divulged.—This supposition has proved correct; a more astounding "revelation" has never before been presented to the people of New Brunswick, and we proceed to state exactly what has taken place before the Committee, up to their adjournment on Saturday evening.

The Committee, as we have heretofore said, was nominated by the Speaker on Tuesday, and consists of Messrs. Tibbets, (Chairman) McLeod, Kerr, Wilnot, and McClellan. On Wednesday, this Committee was invested by the House with power to swear witnesses, to summon persons to appear before them, and to send for books, papers, and records, under Mr. Gray's Act. On Thursday, the Committee met, and having appointed Mr. J. Richards, their Secretary, to take minutes of their proceedings, they commenced business.

The Surveyor General was the first witness sworn, and he stated as follows:—

"The subordinates in my office have each their particular duty. When petitions are received Mr. Lockwood examines the Map to see if the land applied for is vacant. If so, he marks the lots, and the names are sent to the Printing Office; the lands are advertised to be sold by the Local Deputies, in the several Counties of the Province, except York and Sunbury. The sales in those two Counties take place at the Crown Land Office.

"The commission of Mr. Inches in the Crown Land Office, constitutes him Chief Draughtsman in his absence, Mr. Gowan takes charge. Mr. Inches holds no other office; he acts as auctioneer at the sales for York and Sunbury. He is not a Local Deputy, nor does he act as a Deputy Surveyor.

"I know nothing of what the subordinates do as agents for other persons. I think parties have sent money to Mr. Inches, with reference to sales but cannot say to what extent Mr. Inches ever made application for land.

"When Local Deputies make their returns they all enter-d, and Mr. Gowan marks on the back of each return the amount paid. When lands are sold by Local Deputies, or at Crown Land Office, the names of purchasers are returned and entered. A transfer is required, if the name of the purchaser is altered before the Grant issues. The purchaser must send a written order to me, wishing the transfer made. The Grant is then made out in the name of the party to whom transferred. It frequently happens that a number of small lots are sold, and the grant issues to one person, by request of purchasers. I do not think any change is made, or any transfer, without my authority. If no change is made, the Grant issues to the purchaser in due course.

"I am not sure that the regulations for disposing of Crown Lands, published in the Gazette, December 31st, 1856, page 7755, and the notices of lands reserved in the various Counties of the Province, for actual settlement, was an Order of Council, in force when I took office, in 1857; but I do not know when they were abrogated.

"Those rules and regulations were in the Gazette, and I suppose they were in the Office, but not acted upon. The Gazette is filed in the Office. I think the several Tracts published 31st Dec. 1856, were marked upon the working plans in the Office as "Reserved." At all events, I think they were marked so, when I took office in 1857. These Tracts have been thrown open to general application, under the regulations but there was no applicant. There were applications under the Labor Act, and those were complied with. I have not confined applications on the reserved lands, to the Labor Act. The special rules and regulations as to those "reserved" Tracts were set aside entirely and they were opened to general applications. I cannot tell by what authority they were thrown open; but I think by the Governor.

ment. I do not know of from the Government, direct applications for "reserved." "I believe Mr. Inches was the purchase of Crown lands, until the commencement of Mr. Inches' purchase of the Office for purchasers resumed he was doing it. "I know nothing of the bid for Jerome, then and by him transferred to The Surveyor General. The Committee applied to the Crown Land Office, and went to the subject under the Committee and the Crown until Friday morning. It was pointed out by the Surveyor General, and the management of his office was so great as his high office, and although I am more fully, in the office.

On Thursday evening, whether Mr. Inches would sit to give testimony. Mr. Inches would be asked questions which might criminate him or pending, Mr. Inches, Chairman of the Committee, addressed by the Attorney Charles Fisher, the first lot to make any disclosure could only be sent to the House was proposed liberty, and all would have done no fancy going to the Chairman that morning, on Friday morning evidence.

The Committee met at morning, in one of the committee rooms of the House. There was a doubt expressed, whether Mr. Inches had done, and he was greatly agitated; he was hurried, so as to reach his morning. But upon his subject his manner was so uttered with considerable pauses, to take down every word; he proceeded, the anxious and excited listener suspended in both branches. Mr. Inches first explained a desire to be heard in a variety of reasons, one of which he could throw away, and present position with the Crown Land Office. He said he had the subjects he wished to of the Committee, and would proceed to make a whole matter.

The Chairman, Mr. Tibbets, before going into his statement, advised on any part, the course he should pursue. Mr. Inches replied, that his brother upon this subject, had given him a hint, equal to advice, to direct advice on another part of the Attorney General; he giving evidence before the Committee, that under the Act (Mr. Gray's Act) the Committee might inflict, in connection with, to come to the session of fact of which were. This was on the that time, he had had the Attorney General respect interviews had taken place in the Office, in Mr. Inches' private streets. They were opened by the Attorney General. The Attorney General, on occasions, press upon him, advised, but desired his statements. His answer promise.

At this stage of the Kerr, a member of the that is a matter so deep General, he should be the Attorney General directly behind the witness, and take notes. Then Mr. Inches proceeded as follows:—

"When I thought ofposal, that I should propose him (the Attorney) and I replied, that I Committee all I knew of, from first to last, that I intended to lay a public all I knew about was stung by the cooler's proposal; by his sympathy; by his all he could—when the Attorney General, and not the