

NOT YET CONCLUDED.

The Debate on the Speech from the Throne in the Local Legislature.

Mr. Hunter Arraigns the Opposition—An Abstract Resolution Promised.

Yesterday's proceedings in the local legislature were comparatively uneventful, the debate on the speech from the throne continuing, with Messrs. Macpherson, Hunter, Hume, Vedder, Bryden and Sword as the speakers, Mr. Sword having the floor at adjournment. The discussion throughout the afternoon was punctuated by no passages at arms such as enlivened the Wednesday session, and the comparatively large number of visitors in the galleries appeared correspondingly disappointed. The chair was taken by Mr. Speaker at two o'clock, and prayers were read by Rev. Canon Beaudry.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

Petitions were presented as follows: By Mr. Rogers—From C. W. D. Clifford and others, for power to construct a railway from the Skeena river to the northern boundary of the province. Mr. Hunter—From John Cobeldick, for the incorporation of a company to build and operate blast furnaces and other industrial concerns in the Skeena valley. Mr. Hunter—From John Cobeldick, for the incorporation of a company to encourage invention and application with a view to the discovery of better mechanical means or processes for the recovery of gold or other precious metals from the submerged glacial or other gravel deposits of the province. Mr. Williams—From the city of Vancouver, asking for certain amendments to the city's charter.

PETITIONS RECEIVED.

Petitions were read and received as below: Leopold Hirsch and others—Re. incorporation of the Kootenay and North-west Railway Co. E. T. Gall and others—Re. incorporation of the Arrowhead and Kootenay Railway Co. Cowichan Lumber Co.—For power to construct a dam and tramway.

PRESIDENTS A RETURN.

Hon. Mr. Eberts presented the twenty-fourth annual report of the registrar of births, deaths and marriages.

THE DEBATE CONTINUED.

Prior to the continuation of the adjourned debate on the speech from the throne, Mr. Turner (to a question of privilege) said that he had on the previous afternoon failed to comprehend the second member for Vancouver in his remarks as to the administration of the agent general of the province. He had caught him as using the word "hearing," where he saw by the morning paper "harem" was said, and could not understand the context. As to the argument of the member for Vancouver, he was still a little at sea—if that hon. member could inform the house how harem was supposed to be conducted, he (the Premier) might be in a better position to understand whether or not his observations were intended in the nature of compliment or otherwise.

Mr. Williams also had a question of privilege. He wished to take the first opportunity, he said, to answer the remarks of the member for Vancouver, who had referred to a statement credited to him in the Mining Critic, to the effect that he had been treated with discourtesy by the mining committee of the house. On the contrary, he had always been treated with the utmost courtesy by this committee, and all other committees of the house. Had the member for West Lillooet read the full reports of the committee, as published in the World and News-Advertiser at the time of the meeting of the Mining Engineers' Association, he would have seen how the critic had misrepresented his observations, and the necessity for the resolution which was always attributed to him would not have arisen.

Agreeable to his promise, Mr. Speaker presented the following ruling on the point that presented itself in connection with the discussion of the connection of ministers of the crown with the promotion of business organizations:

"Objection having been made by the chair to the discussion by the hon. second member for Vancouver on a matter which is the subject of judicial action, I have been asked by the hon. third member for Vancouver (Mr. Cotton) to furnish a written decision in support of my ruling.

"May, tenth edition, page 264, says: 'A matter whilst under adjudication by a court of law should not be brought before the house, by a motion or otherwise.'

"Same authority, page 308: 'A member who speaks to a question, may not refer to matters pending a judicial decision.'

"Same authority, page 319: 'Matters awaiting the adjudication of a court of law should not be brought under discussion.' This rule was observed by Sir R. Peel and Lord J. Russell, both by the wording of the speech from the throne and by their procedure in the house, regarding Mr. O'Connell's resolutions.

"I think that the object of the practice as laid down in May is to prevent the undue influencing of the public mind for or against the parties to an action pending litigation. It is, however, open to any hon. member to move, on notice, a substantive resolution expressive, in general terms, of the opinion of the house as to the advisability of ministers of the crown connecting their names with public companies. This resolution may be discussed and disposed of without referring to the matter awaiting judicial action, or prejudicing the public mind in either direction."

Mr. Kennedy did not object to the ruling, but took exception to the application. Mr. Macpherson, resuming his discussion of the speech, admitted that in the consideration of the previous afternoon, the names of the ministers allowing their names to be used in the promotion of companies, he had used language that was perhaps too strong. He regretted that he should have done so, and conceded that Mr. Speaker had been quite right in calling him to order for his use of the word "dishonorable"—an expression which he now withdrew with apologies to the house. (Applause.)

In reference to the maladministration of the agent general's office, he had made the statement to which exceptions had been taken, on the authority of persons who had visited the office; and all that he could now say was that if these statements were correct, the office was a disgrace to the province and the abuse in question, if it had not already been immediately terminated by those in charge of the government.

Dr. Walkem—Are the parties who in these statements to you in the province, in the name of the province, to be brought within the jurisdiction of this house?

Mr. Macpherson did not reply, but proceeded to the consideration of the resolution in relation to the East Kootenay, arguing that large holdings had been granted in most desirable localities, to the advantage of corporations and the exclusion of practical settlers. He also mentioned the maps of roads and trails which should be a guide to settlers were at the present time in need of correction, this matter being one which he brought to the attention of the chief commissioner in the hope that it would be remedied. He also mentioned that he objected strongly to its collection through employers, as it was not fair that the working man should pay five per cent. back to his employer, after the government had received out of a provincial impost. The Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Mr. Macpherson continued, had said that he would "refuse to give him any information in future which he might ask for." He would like to be informed if the house would support the hon. gentleman in this position. Had not a member the right of access to information in the departments without putting the country to the cost and the officials of the departments to the trouble of preparing formally asked for returns? This little incident, as well as the whole record of the administration led him to the conclusion that the government was little else than an organized hypocrisy.

Voices from the right—"That's excellent." "What's that?" "Organized hypocrisy is good."

Mr. Cotton's question of the ministerial connection with company promotion, the second member for Vancouver said he would bow to the ruling of the chair while holding to his own opinion as to the legitimacy of the discussion he was about to make. He had no objection whatever to the president of the council or the premier or any other member of the cabinet using his name as promoter of private companies, but he did not agree, even make use of the titles that had been given them as a sacred trust; by the people of the province thus to further their private ends. As soon as objection had been raised to their association with the promotion of companies, he would be according to his view of the matter, have withdrawn their names from the objectionable prospectus. He desired an expression of opinion from the house on the subject of the promotion of companies, moved as an amendment to the resolution before the house the following:

"To add after the word 'thoughtfulness' on the 5th line, the following: 'And that it is a still greater source of regret that the hon. members of the British Columbia and in giving due credit to the government for the honest, economy and judgment exercised in the construction of the steadily building in which the members were assembled. The hon. member for Vancouver it appeared that in these latter days become quite a financial critic, and had proceeded to prove the extravagance of the government in connection with the present buildings by attempting to show that New Westminster or Vancouver, and not Victoria, would have been the proper place for their location. This, it would have to be admitted, was a queer kind of logic. That hon. member a gentleman appeared very much mortified that the revenue of the province had exceeded the estimate, and one could easily imagine how much better he would have been satisfied had he been able to make the attempt of placing on the shoulders of the government the responsibility involved in a falling revenue. But unfortunately for the hon. gentleman opposite, this glorious and progressive province would not stand still to meet their political exigencies, and it was to be hoped we would have for many years to come a great and ever increasing prosperity despite the blue ruin projected by the hon. member for Vancouver who would no doubt keep pegging away in the same old rut year after year, deriving no pleasure from the present, with little hope for the future.' The hon. member for Vancouver, in his next made the random statement that the province was groaning under an immense weight of debt, but had taken very great care not to enter into figures or attempt in any way to demonstrate his wild and unjustifiable proposition. The house had then had the usual threadbare reference to the coal barons. There were coal barons and coal barons, and the hon. member for Vancouver would inform the senior member for Vancouver that there were certain coal barons not very antagonistic to Her Majesty's loyal opposition in their political leanings who were successfully operating a magnificent coal property from which was extracted during the year 1896 no less than 320,575 tons of the best bituminous coal. The hon. gentleman had next suggested the possibility of living the polluting elements of the electorate during redistribution. The honorable member for Comox earnestly hoped that the government would do nothing in the direction indicated—nothing in any way calculated to interfere with the free and accurate expression of public opinion at the polls.

"And now, Mr. Speaker," Mr. Hunter continued, "I am about to enter upon the consideration of the speech from the throne in the speech, and before I get through I may astonish the honorable gentlemen opposite not a little. I intend in fact to carry the war into Africa. But before entering upon the main points of my speech, I should like to refer to a much-discussed question of government policy road until surveys had demonstrated its practicability. Immediate arrangements had then been made for this survey, a written request for the same being necessary under these circumstances. Had Mr. Macpherson read the extract which he had referred to, the position of the case would have been clearly shown, and no explanation would have been necessary.

Mr. Cotton having withdrawn his motion to adjourn, Mr. Hunter (Comox) continued the debate. Although he felt that it was quite impossible for him to do anything of interest to the debate, which, more especially on the right side of the house, had been of an able and exhaustive character, it seemed to him eminently proper that every hon. gentleman on so important an occasion as the present, and in consideration of the present and propitious circumstances by which the country was surrounded, should at least contribute something, however little, to the discussion of the important matters referred to in the speech from the throne. Before proceeding to deal with the resolution before the house, he too felicitated the gentlemen who, in so able, plain and straightforward a manner had moved and seconded the address, their practical and honest expressions of opinion commending strongly with the frothy and meaningless statements of some honorable gentlemen opposite. Dealing with the second clause of the resolution in reply, it was impossible for him to refrain from pausing for a moment to reflect on the stupendous changes which are taking place, sometimes suddenly and often slowly, in this age of wonders. Who, for example, would have thought when the members of the first legislature met for the first time that there would be twenty-seven years ago—feeling a just and pardonable pride in the beautiful and commodious buildings which they then occupied; in the expansive revenue from all sources, and to meet all the necessities of the country of \$300,000; in having to deal with twenty-five school districts, and to provide for the educational wants of 1,028 scholars, giving the average daily attendance of 376, and involving an outlay of nearly \$37,000 per annum. Who would have thought at the meeting of that legislature, of whom the hon. leader of the opposition had been a member, the hon. member for North Victoria and the hon. member, and himself a third, that today would see the legislature assembled in one of the handsomest, most modern and most conveniently appointed buildings on the North American continent, a structure in which the practical, the scientific and the artistic were blended in one harmonious whole—engaged in the consideration of ways and means with a revenue of \$3,350,000. Or who in that day would have thought that today the legislature would have to deal with two hundred school districts with an aggregate enrollment of over 15,738 scholars, a daily attendance of 4,930, and an expenditure for school purposes of \$238,680. This certainly was an example of progressive advancement which no other province in the Dominion could approach, and the signs were not wanting of still greater and more unexampled prosperity in the not distant future. (Applause.)

Under these circumstances he (the member for Comox), regretted exceedingly that the hon. leader of the opposition had not risen to the occasion—that he and his followers had not for a moment abandoned their cynical, sullen, gloomy, cheerless attitude in respect to the present buildings by attempting to show that New Westminster or Vancouver, and not Victoria, would have been the proper place for their location. This, it would have to be admitted, was a queer kind of logic. That hon. member a gentleman appeared very much mortified that the revenue of the province had exceeded the estimate, and one could easily imagine how much better he would have been satisfied had he been able to make the attempt of placing on the shoulders of the government the responsibility involved in a falling revenue. But unfortunately for the hon. gentleman opposite, this glorious and progressive province would not stand still to meet their political exigencies, and it was to be hoped we would have for many years to come a great and ever increasing prosperity despite the blue ruin projected by the hon. member for Vancouver who would no doubt keep pegging away in the same old rut year after year, deriving no pleasure from the present, with little hope for the future.

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The chartering and land grant of the Cassiar Central railway. The grant of a charter and land grant for a railway has been profitable of much consequence to the province, and it is a matter of regret that the honorable member for the throne itself, and slurred the sacred and ancient traditions of our greatest commoner. The gentlemen opposite have carefully studied the evidence in denouncing the Cassiar Central charter in terms both abusive and insincere. For an entire year it has been the theme of universal condemnation by the party in the small party—in this province who are opposed to the government and who erstwhile have seemingly resisted the policy of encouraging the building of a railway by grants of public lands. Yet when we come to examine the conditions upon which the land grant is given to the Cassiar Central, we find that the interests of the public have been abandoned to the private interests of the honorable third member for Vancouver, before he abandoned his much-cherished idea of coming over to this side of the house, spoke in respect to the railway in terms of commendation and praise."

Mr. Cotton—A word of explanation, Mr. Speaker. I said that I favored the principle, and that certain amendments were made in the bill. I do not mean to say that the promoters of the company would not accept it, I would support it. A voice from the right—You stood pat and voted for it, any way. He also mentioned the maps of roads and trails which should be a guide to settlers were at the present time in need of correction, this matter being one which he brought to the attention of the chief commissioner in the hope that it would be remedied. He also mentioned that he objected strongly to its collection through employers, as it was not fair that the working man should pay five per cent. back to his employer, after the government had received out of a provincial impost. The Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Mr. Macpherson continued, had said that he would "refuse to give him any information in future which he might ask for." He would like to be informed if the house would support the hon. gentleman in this position. Had not a member the right of access to information in the departments without putting the country to the cost and the officials of the departments to the trouble of preparing formally asked for returns? This little incident, as well as the whole record of the administration led him to the conclusion that the government was little else than an organized hypocrisy.

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The Attorney-General on Wednesday, the member for Chilliwack pointing out that the information he sought was not so much with regard to the death of the man, but rather to the manner in which the inquest was conducted. An amendment to clause 29 of the Municipalities act was proposed necessary, and the government was closed by a feeling entirely in accord with the promotion of dairying throughout the districts, inasmuch as it was the federal government that had sent out instructors and by them given the residents practical pointers in the making of better butter than they had before produced. As to road construction, the new member for Chilliwack held that the present government was less efficient than that in charge of affairs from 1861 to 1876, Governor Douglas being in his opinion the great road builder and the Grand Old Man of British Columbia. The hon. gentleman held that the government of the day, sustained by the district of Chilliwack and the province in the death of his predecessor in the seat the late Mr. Kitchen.

Mr. Bryden (North Nanaimo) continued himself a feeling entirely in accord with the promotion of dairying throughout the districts, inasmuch as it was the federal government that had sent out instructors and by them given the residents practical pointers in the making of better butter than they had before produced. As to road construction, the new member for Chilliwack held that the present government was less efficient than that in charge of affairs from 1861 to 1876, Governor Douglas being in his opinion the great road builder and the Grand Old Man of British Columbia. The hon. gentleman held that the government of the day, sustained by the district of Chilliwack and the province in the death of his predecessor in the seat the late Mr. Kitchen.

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Under these circumstances he (the member for Comox), regretted exceedingly that the hon. leader of the opposition had not risen to the occasion—that he and his followers had not for a moment abandoned their cynical, sullen, gloomy, cheerless attitude in respect to the present buildings by attempting to show that New Westminster or Vancouver, and not Victoria, would have been the proper place for their location. This, it would have to be admitted, was a queer kind of logic. That hon. member a gentleman appeared very much mortified that the revenue of the province had exceeded the estimate, and one could easily imagine how much better he would have been satisfied had he been able to make the attempt of placing on the shoulders of the government the responsibility involved in a falling revenue. But unfortunately for the hon. gentleman opposite, this glorious and progressive province would not stand still to meet their political exigencies, and it was to be hoped we would have for many years to come a great and ever increasing prosperity despite the blue ruin projected by the hon. member for Vancouver who would no doubt keep pegging away in the same old rut year after year, deriving no pleasure from the present, with little hope for the future.

The Attorney-General on Wednesday, the member for Chilliwack pointing out that the information he sought was not so much with regard to the death of the man, but rather to the manner in which the inquest was conducted. An amendment to clause 29 of the Municipalities act was proposed necessary, and the government was closed by a feeling entirely in accord with the promotion of dairying throughout the districts, inasmuch as it was the federal government that had sent out instructors and by them given the residents practical pointers in the making of better butter than they had before produced. As to road construction, the new member for Chilliwack held that the present government was less efficient than that in charge of affairs from 1861 to 1876, Governor Douglas being in his opinion the great road builder and the Grand Old Man of British Columbia. The hon. gentleman held that the government of the day, sustained by the district of Chilliwack and the province in the death of his predecessor in the seat the late Mr. Kitchen.

Mr. Bryden (North Nanaimo) continued himself a feeling entirely in accord with the promotion of dairying throughout the districts, inasmuch as it was the federal government that had sent out instructors and by them given the residents practical pointers in the making of better butter than they had before produced. As to road construction, the new member for Chilliwack held that the present government was less efficient than that in charge of affairs from 1861 to 1876, Governor Douglas being in his opinion the great road builder and the Grand Old Man of British Columbia. The hon. gentleman held that the government of the day, sustained by the district of Chilliwack and the province in the death of his predecessor in the seat the late Mr. Kitchen.

Mr. Cotton—A word of explanation, Mr. Speaker. I said that I favored the principle, and that certain amendments were made in the bill. I do not mean to say that the promoters of the company would not accept it, I would support it. A voice from the right—You stood pat and voted for it, any way. He also mentioned the maps of roads and trails which should be a guide to settlers were at the present time in need of correction, this matter being one which he brought to the attention of the chief commissioner in the hope that it would be remedied. He also mentioned that he objected strongly to its collection through employers, as it was not fair that the working man should pay five per cent. back to his employer, after the government had received out of a provincial impost. The Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Mr. Macpherson continued, had said that he would "refuse to give him any information in future which he might ask for." He would like to be informed if the house would support the hon. gentleman in this position. Had not a member the right of access to information in the departments without putting the country to the cost and the officials of the departments to the trouble of preparing formally asked for returns? This little incident, as well as the whole record of the administration led him to the conclusion that the government was little else than an organized hypocrisy.

Voices from the right—"That's excellent." "What's that?" "Organized hypocrisy is good."

Mr. Cotton's question of the ministerial connection with company promotion, the second member for Vancouver said he would bow to the ruling of the chair while holding to his own opinion as to the legitimacy of the discussion he was about to make. He had no objection whatever to the president of the council or the premier or any other member of the cabinet using his name as promoter of private companies, but he did not agree, even make use of the titles that had been given them as a sacred trust; by the people of the province thus to further their private ends. As soon as objection had been raised to their association with the promotion of companies, he would be according to his view of the matter, have withdrawn their names from the objectionable prospectus. He desired an expression of opinion from the house on the subject of the promotion of companies, moved as an amendment to the resolution before the house the following:

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