

The St. John Standard

OUR SECOND FRONT PAGE

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A PAGE OF NEWS ABOUT THE MARITIME

TIMBER SURVEYS, MINERAL RIGHTS AND BOOKS FOR THE SCHOOLS ARE HOUSE THEMES

Government Promises An Investigation Into the Soil and Mineral Rights of the Province Within the Next Year—Pensions for Widows Favored by Mr. A. C. Fawcett.

Fredericton, N. B., April 7.—The House met at 3 o'clock this afternoon when Mr. Robichaud presented the report of the Committee on Corporations and Mr. Wetmore presented the report of the Committee on Agriculture. Hon. Mr. Hynes introduced a bill to enable the Hon. the Catholic Bishop of Chatham to sell certain lands in the County of Gloucester and Mr. Curran introduced a bill to regulate the practice of Opium.

Mr. John L. Peck, pursuant to notice, moved the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Young: Resolved—That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Government will take such action as will make it clear that the legislation enacted in the year 1915, shall not be deemed to interfere with the existing rights of the owners of the soil under grants from the Crown.

It is assumed that when the question was before the House in 1915, it was decided that the oil belonged to one company and the shale to another. Mr. Hynes and Mr. Wetmore expressed their views on the question, and Hon. Mr. Pugsley who had framed the original Bill, was quoted as saying that one company was to have a lease of oil lands and the other a lease of the land containing shale deposits. The New Brunswick Petroleum Company had had its rights nullified by subsequent legislation. Its interests were now in the hands of the Maritime Oil Fields, Ltd., while the Anglo-Peruvian Oil Company was developing the shale deposit. The latter company had expended about \$400,000 in a plant at Rosedale for the purpose of testing as to whether oil could be extracted from the shale.

Some Work Performed The Maritime Oil Fields Ltd., had expended about \$1,000,000 in development work, and was receiving some returns from the sale of gas and oil. As to the shale deposits he was informed that these in this province, were the finest in the world. They exist in great quantities and are found to a depth of 3,000 feet. The oil is said to range from thirty to fifty gallons to the ton of shale.

Referring to the operations of the Maritime Oil Fields, Ltd., he said that the company's operations were steadily increasing and it had paid in royalties to the province so far, the sum of \$33,374.

A Question of Law Experts were at work in connection with the shale deposits and borings had been made in different parts of the province under the direction of the company. He did not think it could be said that the companies had not fulfilled their agreements; in fact he thought they had done a good deal more than they had agreed to do. The principle of the law placed on the statute books in 1915 had been accepted and the question was to ascertain if anybody had suffered loss or injustice by that law. Frankly he would say that he thought a mistake had been made in giving so much territory to any one company. Capitalists who went to Ottawa for information were told that it would be a waste of time to attempt anything in the way of development in New Brunswick. He hoped that the House would decide upon a full investigation of the whole matter.

He suggested an investigation by a legislative committee, an independent



The Terrible Tempered Mr. Bang

tribunal or by the Department of Lands and Mines.

Albert Deeply Interested Mr. Smith (Albert) said the people of his county were deeply interested in this matter. Albert and Westmorland were well situated in the matter of attracting capital. Careful consideration of this point on the part of the House was demanded. He called the attention of the House to remarks made by the Premier at Hillsboro, in October last, to the effect that he would ask his Minister of Lands and Mines to investigate the claim that owners of land had rights to oil and gas, and to restore those rights if they existed. That was what the people of Albert and Westmorland wanted. He was against the hasty passing of the resolution, but wanted an investigation held and the people satisfied.

Hon. Mr. Foster said the Government would investigate the matter, as there was no desire to deprive any person of rights. However, it seemed to him remarkable that in all these years nothing had been done by all these people to have their rights restored. No great delegations had appeared before the House to press this matter. The delegation which had appeared in giving so much territory to any one company. Capitalists who went to Ottawa for information were told that it would be a waste of time to attempt anything in the way of development in New Brunswick. He hoped that the House would decide upon a full investigation of the whole matter.

Resolution Withdrawn After more discussion, the resolution was withdrawn when the Hon. Mr. Foster announced an investigation and a report to be placed before the House.

Mr. Baxter said he had understood the Premier to say that if a wrong had been committed it would be righted.

Hon. Mr. Foster said that an investigation would show whether a wrong had been committed. He would expect that the leader of the opposition would be in accord with the government in readiness to right any wrong.

Trade With West Indies Mr. Magee, pursuant to notice, seconded by Mr. Baxter, moved: Resolved, whereas a preferential trade agreement between the British West Indies and Canada is about to be completed by the Federal House; and whereas such agreement is of vital interest to the people of the Maritime Provinces.

Therefore, be it resolved, that this House express itself as being favorable to such preferential tariff being limited as soon as possible, only to imports as come through Canadian ports.

Mr. Magee said that in June, 1920, a trade agreement had been drawn up between nine colonies of the British West Indies and the Dominion of Canada. By that agreement a preference of fifty per cent. was offered by Canada and a preference varying from ten to fifty per cent. was offered by the West Indian colonies. The agreement was for a period of ten years and could be terminated on one year's notice. Each year Canada bought tropical products to the value of \$100,000, 000, but of those only \$7,000,000 worth came from British colonies.

Funds From Canada In 1920 Canada had supplied only

thirteen per cent. of the cocones consumed in the British West Indies, twenty per cent. of the paper, five per cent. of the coal, and three-quarters of one per cent. of the meat. But in fish, Canada supplied sixty-two per cent. The bulk of that went from the Maritime Provinces. The fishing industry of the provinces was well organized, and the preference would not be likely to assist it. There were two million British subjects in the West Indies and eight or ten million in Canada. The idea of inter-colonial preference was not new. Great Britain had recognized it by giving a preference to West Indian sugar. France and Spain also had applied the principle to their colonies. Although Canada at the present time consumed fruit from the British West Indies, it was imported by way of Boston and New York. Direct importation through Canadian ports was wanted. A preference would mean more trade, more steamers at Canadian ports, particularly St. John and Halifax, more freight for the railways, more employment, wider markets and addition a marked sentimental value.

Hon. Mr. Baxter said the trade agreement between Canada and the British West Indies looked towards the establishment of an excellent passenger service and a fortnightly freight service on a larger scale. The introduction of a resolution before the legislature and others in the Maritime Provinces would assist in creating a spirit not hostile to Canadian nationalities, but in support of the knowledge that the Maritime Provinces contained one-third of the population of the Dominion of Canada, and should have their reasonable demands recognized and granted. Provision was made in the treaty to have a limitation of the preference applied to imports through Canadian ports as soon as possible.

Resolution Adopted. Mr. Hayes of St. John recognized the importance of trade within the Empire but said that in past years from one to two thirds of the trade passing through St. John port had originated in the United States. He was disposed to be cautious about anything that might start a trade war.

After Mr. Fawcett had spoken the resolution was adopted. Then the House went into committee with Mr. Hayes in the chair. Hon. Mr. Baxter asked for an explanation of \$50,000 for public wharves. Hon. Mr. Veniot replied that it was in connection with repairs of wharves in tidal waters of the province. Negotiations had been in progress since 1915 to have these taken over by the Federal Government but they had been delayed until money was needed for necessary repairs. When they are handed over to the Dominion the money will be refunded.

Mr. Veniot told Mr. Richards that the D. J. Puddy on the St. John-Rosedale route had been subsidized last year to the extent of \$1,500 and \$800 had been paid for another steamer of the same company belonging to Mr. Baxter. Mr. Veniot said that an investigation was under way to see what aid should be given a ferry between Chatham and Douglastown.

Southampton Railway. Mr. Pinder, speaking on an item of \$175,000 for ordinary bridges, asked for explanation. He wished to make reference to another matter, and that was a reference by the Premier to the

had been as unsuccessful as that of the Southampton Railway, the proportion of earnings payable to the province would have been \$120,000 instead of \$59,552. He believed that the Southampton Railway compared very favorably with the Valley Railway. Through the action of a friend the Premier had been able to get rid of his railway and the Dominion Government had been the victim.

Hon. Mr. Veniot said that his friend had asked for an explanation on the estimate of \$175,000 for ordinary bridges. It was hard to tell where it would be spent, as repairs would have to be made on wooden bridges wherever needed. He could say, however, that last year one-twelfth of the expenditure on ordinary bridges had been made in York county.

Land Surveys. Mr. Fawcett said that he understood that an admission had been made that the company was in possession of 50,000 acres of land to which it was not entitled. Mr. Robichaud said that it was only a rumor.

Mr. Fawcett said that the impression prevailed in the country that the company had more property than belonged to them.

Mr. Baxter said that he had sympathy with the government, believing that it had plenty to do without following up the fairy story about the chain. He had been shown a map where the shaded area denoting the company's lands seemed to indicate that the company was in possession of more land than was intended they should have. It might be good business for the government to have a survey made and take over the excess if any. The question was one which cast no reflections on past administrations as in the early days an acre of land was not valued such as it was today.

Hon. Mr. Robichaud said that as was quite willing, with the support of the government, to have a survey made of a portion of the land.

The Committee rose and reported progress and supply was made the order of the day for Monday evening at 9 o'clock.

Hon. Mr. Baxter moved that the bill incorporating the St. Martin Mach Company, be referred to the Law committee.

Hon. Mr. Foster moved that the time for introducing bills be extended until Monday next.

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