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PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Mr. Neill of Alberni Ably Exposes a Timber Lease Scandal in the Cowichan-Alberni District.

New Westminster City Relief Bill Passed Second Reading—Will Defend the Province's Rights.

Monday, Jan. 30, 1899.

The Speaker took the chair at 2 o'clock, and prayers were read by Rev. J. C. Speer.

MEMOIRS OF COMMITTEES. Mr. Higgins presented the eighth report of the Committee on Standing Orders and Private Bills, which reported the preamble of the bill to incorporate the Chartered Commercial Company of Vancouver approved.

PETITIONS. Mr. Green (Slocan, gov't) presented a petition from A. H. Pitt and others of Sandon relative to the mineralogical exhibit for the Earl's Court exhibition, but Mr. Speaker ruled it out of order.

MOTIONS. Mr. Kellie offered to introduce an "act to amend the Trust Act, 1887," and read a first time and the second reading set for next sitting of the house.

Mr. Helmecken had the following motion on the order paper: "An act relating to the employment of Chinese and Japanese persons on works carried on under franchises granted by private acts," was passed by the assembly of the province of British Columbia, which said bill was reserved for the consideration of His Excellency on Council by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of this province.

And whereas the said act was duly considered by the Honorable the Minister of Justice for the Dominion of Canada, who by his report dated 15th October, 1897, was not prepared to recommend that the said bill should come into effect by reason of any action on the part of His Excellency the Governor-General:

And whereas the legislative assembly of this province passed an act in relation to the said act, of 1897, which act is known as the "Labor Regulation Act, 1897,"

And whereas the Emperor of Japan has protested against the said act to the government of Great Britain, which said protest has been forwarded to the Governor-General of Canada for consideration:

And whereas, in and by a report of the committee of the Honorable Privy Council, December, 1898, it is suggested that the provincial government might be prepared to recommend the repeal of the said act:

And whereas, under and by virtue of the terms of the "British North America Act," the said province has exclusive authority to deal, inter alia, with property and civil rights in the province:

Therefore, be it resolved, that in the opinion of this house, that as the said act is conceived to be in the best interests of this province, this house is not prepared to pass an act to repeal the said act.

Hon. Mr. Semlin asked the hon. gentleman to allow the matter to stand over for a day or two, the government not having had time to go fully into the matter. Mr. Helmecken had no objection to this, and it was so agreed.

Mr. Macpherson moved that an order of the house be passed, that the agreement between the late government and MacKenzie & Mann, in connection with the Vancouver, Victoria & Eastern Railway, also the Stikine-Teslin Railway.

Mr. Helmecken had a suggestion to make to the effect that there should be a request "for copies of all correspondence relative to said agreement and to another agreement between the late government and MacKenzie & Mann relative to the acquisition of crown lands at Kitimat."

Hon. Mr. Semlin thought the hon. member was making a mistake in including the question of the acquisition of crown lands. Mr. Helmecken said he was willing to amend it as suggested, and leave the land part of it for a subsequent motion. Agreed.

A TIMBER LEASE SCANDAL.

Mr. Neill moved the following resolution: "That a select committee of this house, to consist of Messrs. Macpherson, R. Smith, Robertson, Clifford and the mover, be appointed to enquire into the circumstances attending the granting of the lease No. 7 and No. 8, Cowichan-Alberni district, to the Toronto & British Columbia Lumber Company, Limited, the company having the said company not having built a mill in connection with lease No. 7, and to enquire into the payment by the company on 9th June, 1898, of the sum of \$15,000, in alleged satisfaction of arrears of rental previously stated to amount to \$17,748.85; with power to send for persons and papers and to examine witnesses under oath."

In doing so the hon. member for Alberni cited a vast collection of facts in support of the motion. He said that the lease had been granted in a district which had existed in his district regarding these leases. This state of things had been brought about by the members of the late government being such able exponents of the art of how not to do it. Leases of timber were for 30 years, when the term was reduced to 21 years. He wanted to know how it was that this particular company got a lease for 30 years so late as August 1, 1893. Then the mill had never been built, and in consideration thereof the company was allowed to pay an additional rental of but 5 cents an acre, which was a distinct violation of the provisions of the lease. They had been allowed to make a payment of \$15,000 in full discharge of an indebtedness of \$17,748.85, whereas any poor man would have been compelled to pay in full.

Mr. Neill was asked during the time of the late government, and it had been asked on a public platform, and he knew the motion would be opposed by the member for Southeast Kootenay—General Nelson, and the late administration had done so much to encourage enterprise and to encourage this particular company that the motion was adopted.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS. Mr. Robertson asked the Hon. the Attorney-General:

1. What is the total amount of fees paid by the government since the

August last to F. B. Gregory, barrister, Victoria?

2. In respect of what matters?

3. What are the amounts of the various bills for services rendered in each matter, and what amount allowed by the department?

Hon. Mr. Martin replied: (1) \$720. (2) In connection with the prosecution of Belle Adams, Knowles, Sleur and Morell. (3) Belle Adams's case, amount charged, \$750; amount allowed, \$600; other cases in lump, amount charged, \$200; allowed, \$120.

Mr. Higgins asked the Hon. the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works the following questions:

1. What action, if any, was taken by the late government to bring to the notice of the Dominion government a resolution of this house of the 14th April, 1898, protesting against the granting of any charters for railways in British Columbia, unless such railway companies have first severally obtained a charter from the provincial legislature?

2. And if the notice of the Dominion government was drawn to the protest, what answer, if any, was received from said government?

Hon. Mr. Semlin said in reply that a copy of the said resolution had been forwarded for the inspection of the Dominion government, and the receipt of the same was duly acknowledged.

BILLS IN FINAL STAGES. The following bills were then passed through the third reading: Bill regulating appointments to boards (No. 22), Power of Attorney Bill (No. 23), Bills of Sale Bill (No. 25), and Partnership Bill (No. 25), the bills being finally passed and now await only the formal assent of His Honor.

THE TORRENS SYSTEM. The house went into committee on the Bill respecting the Torrens System, member for New Westminster, Mr. Henderson, in the chair. Commencing at No. 10, the second section was inserted in the bill by the railway committee, and which reads as follows:

24. In case at any time the said railway is not constructed, the payment of Canada to be a work for the general advantage of Canada, then all powers and privileges granted by this act or by the "British Columbia Railway Act" shall thereupon cease and determine.

Hon. the Attorney-General was strongly in favor of the clause, believing that it was absurd for a company to come to the province, obtain a charter, and then go to the Dominion and obtain another which freed them from any control, even legislative, of the province.

Hon. Mr. Martin said the government would always be ready to give any interference with provincial rights by the Dominion authorities, and the present system simply amounted to that.

Colonel Baker and Mr. D. Helmecken were opposed to the clause very bitterly, and Mr. Eberts put in a few words against it, but the bill was finally reported complete with amendments the report to be considered to-morrow.

The house rose at 6 o'clock.

Tuesday, January 31, 1899.

The most important and the most interesting subject engaged the attention of the legislators of British Columbia to-day was the bill to afford relief to the city of New Westminster, which passed through the committee stage, the third reading was finally passed.

There was a very lively discussion upon one section, the others being agreed to with little or no comment, the point at variance in the case referred to being section 22.

The speaker took the chair at 2 o'clock, and prayers were read by Rev. J. C. Speer.

MOTIONS. Mr. Robertson (Cowichan, opposition) moved that an humble address be presented to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, requesting him to send down to the House a return showing—

1. What officials, since the 8th August, 1898, have been dismissed, and from what office.

2. Names of such officials.

3. Length of service by each such official.

4. Length of notice of dismissal in each case.

5. Reason for dismissal in each case.

6. What appointments have been made by the government since August 8th, 1898.

7. Names of the appointees and to what office appointed.

Hon. Mr. Semlin said that while the government had no objection to giving the whole of the information, he thought that perhaps if the hon. member thought it over he would agree that section 5 had better be eliminated. Of course while the government will bring the information down if the House asks for it, it is public what it publishes, and the members now outstanding in the years 1899 to 1903 inclusive, the balance, three-fifths, being paid in interest debentures.

Mr. Robertson asked if the government would approve of such a measure and put it through as a government measure, or if the government would agree to the purpose of avoiding any unnecessary delay and of saving the city of New Westminster undue expense.

Mr. Robertson said that the corporation of New Westminster to issue two new kinds of debentures. Quoting section 4, the Councillors explained the meaning fully; the provision is made that not more than two-fifths of the interest which may fall upon the debentures now outstanding in the years 1899 to 1903 inclusive, the balance, three-fifths, being paid in interest debentures.

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ber of the house would join most heartily in the attempt to provide relief for the city of New Westminster.

The second reading was agreed to, and Mr. McBride, Dewdney, rose to discuss the matter, but was informed that the third reading was passed. Mr. Speaker pointed out that the usual practice had been adopted, and if it was necessary for Mr. McBride to speak the bill would have to be rung. Hon. Mr. Martin objected to the Speaker's ruling being disregarded. Colonel Baker wanted a motion to be put to test the feeling of the house as to whether the member for Dewdney should be heard. Mr. Speaker said if any member objected to the hon. member for Dewdney speaking he should be compelled to refuse him permission to do so; Hon. Joseph Martin promptly objected, and Mr. McBride equally promptly withdrew.

ASHCROFT WATER, ETC., BILL. When the report of the committee on the bill entitled "an act to incorporate the Ashcroft Water, Electric & Improvement Company," was presented, it was moved to amend section 26 of the bill by adding to the said section the words "and shall also have the power of supplying water to consumers for domestic, mining, manufacturing and irrigation purposes within the said area."

The amendment was agreed to, the report of the committee adopted, and the third reading set for the next sitting of the house.

RAILWAY CHARTERS. The house went into committee on the Bill respecting the Railway Charters, member for East Yale (Mr. Price Ellison) in the chair. For the purpose of reconsidering clause 22, the section inserted in the bill by the railway committee, and which reads as follows:

24. In case at any time the said railway is not constructed, the payment of Canada to be a work for the general advantage of Canada, then all powers and privileges granted by this act or by the "British Columbia Railway Act" shall thereupon cease and determine.

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of General Kinchank (Cariboo, government), who reminded Colonel Baker that it was quite useless for information relating to the discharge of employees in other branches of the public service to be withheld from the committee.

REAL PROPERTY BILL. The adjourned committee stage on the Torrens system of registration was postponed at the request of Hon. the Attorney-General.

STEAM BOILERS INSPECTION. The adjourned committee stage on the Steam Boiler Inspection Bill was also postponed.

CARIBOO-OMINECA CO. The house went into committee on the Cariboo-Omineca Chartered Co.'s Bill, with the hon. member for Alberni (Mr. Neill) in the chair. The bill passed through committee without amendment, the committee rose and reported, the report was adopted and the third reading of the bill was set for the next sitting of the House.

NEW WESTMINSTER RELIEF. The House went into committee on the bill to afford relief to the Municipal Corporation of New Westminster, with Mr. Deane (N. Yale) in the chair.

The various sections went through with remarkable celerity, there being absolutely no criticism of any of them being made until the last but one was reached. On section 15 Hon. Mr. Neill explained that the debenture holders had expressed their willingness to coincide with the wishes of the corporation and he had received a letter from the clerk of New Westminster corporation enclosing a certified copy of a telegram received from Mr. Neill, who stated that he represented \$500,000 of debentures, expressing satisfaction with the proposals contained in the bill.

There was a very lively discussion upon one section, the others being agreed to with little or no comment, the point at variance in the case referred to being section 22.

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