

No Custom House officer clerk or other person engaged in the collection of the revenue, shall take or receive any fee, reward, or remuneration for any services performed by him or them as broker, or otherwise for or on account of any master, or shipmaster, entering or clearing from the Custom House, in which such person shall be employed.

After a few remarks from Mr. Coffin and Mr. Blanchard the clause was passed 25 to 20 and the Bill as amended was read a third time.

THE EDUCATION BILL.

Hon. PROV. SEC., in introducing a bill entitled, "An Act for the better encouragement of Education," said—When on the opposition benches, two years ago, I called the attention of the Legislature to the highly important facts disclosed by the census which had then been compiled. I pointed out that the returns disclosed a very large amount of ignorance in this country, and I took the opportunity of stating that I considered the question of Education of such importance and interest to all classes that gentlemen of all parties in this House should unite with the common purpose of improving it. Those views commended themselves to the candid consideration and judgment of this house and of this country, and it is now my intention, first reminding the house of the evidence we have of the necessity of dealing with the question, to state the outlines of the bill which I now have the honor of introducing.

It is many years since any improvement has been made in the educational system of the country. It is well known that since the Legislature first dealt with this question, the population and revenue of the country have very largely increased. It therefore requires no argument to prove to intelligent men the propriety of taking measures for the amendment of our law, and give increased facilities to such an important public service as that of Education.

I am quite aware that the bill which I have the honour now to introduce will probably disappoint many members of the House, and many people in this country who are sincerely desirous that something important should be done to advance our educational status, and to cause a wider diffusion of knowledge among all classes of the people. I know that the public mind has been directed very much to one especial means—that of compulsory assessment for the support of common schools. This bill does not purpose, however, to take that course. I confess that my views have undergone no change on this subject since the first session I had the honour of a seat in this House, when I voted for a resolution approving of a system of compulsory assessment for the support of the common schools of this Province. But after a careful examination of the whole subject, looking at it with a sincere desire to come to such conclusions as would best advance the wide diffusion of education among the people, I have come to the belief that in the present condition of this country, it would not be either wise or politic to carry immediately into effect a system of compulsory assessment. Whilst I have thus hesitated to provide for compulsory taxation, the bill which I now introduce is framed with a

view to render that system as gradually acceptable to the people as it is possible. Whenever there is a disposition to introduce the system, greater facilities than heretofore are offered, and in addition to that it provides inducements to all such sections of our country as shall establish schools open to all. It also provides for the construction of school-houses where it may be found necessary by that system, and that without being adopted by any vote of the inhabitants. The system will therefore be introduced in such a way as to render it as acceptable as is possible. At present, there are some sections of this country where compulsory assessment could be introduced without difficulty, but there are also many sections where, in consequence of want of markets, and the absence of a circulating medium, and facilities for travel, etc., it would be found difficult to work out the system satisfactorily.

The first thing proposed in this Bill is the establishment of a Council of Public Instruction. Every one who is familiar with educational matters knows that cases arise, very frequently, when it is exceedingly desirable that there should be some body which is authoritatively clothed with power to act on all matters referred to them—to publish such regulations as may from time to time be found necessary, in order to introduce uniformity into the system of schools and provide for exigencies that will always arise in carrying out any system of education in this country. A good deal of difficulty arose as to who should form the Council. I considered it to be necessary that it should have the confidence of the country, and that it should be directly responsible to the Legislature. It was therefore thought advisable that the members of the Executive Council, for the time being, should form that Committee of Public Instruction. It is also known that in order to perfect the system of education there should be a Superintendent qualified to discharge the important duties of examining and reporting upon the educational state of every locality in this province, and to gain such information in these examinations as will enable him to suggest, from time to time, valuable improvements. I am aware we have long had such an officer, but everybody knows that he has been charged not only with the duties of Superintendent, but combines with these the laborious superintendence of the Normal School. With such a demand upon his time and talents, it is impossible that he can devote that amount of consideration to the superintendence of education that is absolutely necessary he should. I therefore propose to separate the duties of Superintendent from those connected with the Normal School, and to appoint him Secretary to the "Council of Public Instruction."

In order to give that efficiency to this question, which its importance demands, I have felt that it is absolutely necessary that the country should have the benefit of frequent visits from an accomplished Superintendent of Education, whose business it will be to examine the country, and report upon its condition, in connection with educational matters, from one end to the other. Looking, however, at the impossibility of any one individual being able by his sole personal exertions, to accomplish all that is desirable for