

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Yukon Railway Bill Passed Second Reading—Williams and Higgins Vote Aye.

Premier Turner Will Apply for a Royal Commission to Investigate Charges.

WEDNESDAY, May 11. The house was opened with prayer by Rev. W. Leslie Clay.

Holmeck introduced a bill to amend the Quenele Lake Dam Co. bill and the bill was read a first time.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

In answer to Mr. Graham Hon. Mr. Martin said the total cost of the wagon road between Enderby and Sicomaw was \$18,015.

In answer to Mr. Kidd the Attorney-General stated that no royalty was collected on lands for which the crown grants were issued previous to April 17, 1896.

Hon. Mr. Turner in answer to Mr. Macpherson stated that the rate of interest charged by the Bank of British Columbia on government overdrafts was in 1897 five per cent. and at the present time four per cent.

GAME BILL.

Mr. Helmeck obtained leave to introduce a game bill to take the place of one which had been introduced, as the new one was more complete and had met with the approval of the sportsmen and others interested on the subject.

THE YUKON RAILWAY.

Mr. Higgins before the debate was resumed on the Public Works Loan bill asked the Premier there was any more correspondence from the government.

Mr. Forster in continuing the debate on the second reading of the Public Works Loan bill had adopted in it the section which had been put in the bill last year making the Nelson-Boundary Creek line give a land grant if they took the subsidy.

Hon. Mr. Eberts—"There was not one word of objection to the introduction of the section last year. The section which I have then proposed is more complete than the one which was in the bill last year."

Mr. Forster went on to say that the government had straddled round in the borrowed plume of the opposition policy. The government railway policy had been had he argued and had only been improved from time to time as compelled by the opposition.

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Hon. Col. Baker replied that the provincial government knew nothing about the subject.

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answer, though it was not altogether satisfactory to him. The only reason he had in speaking against the bill was because the measure was not in his opinion in the public interest. All the arguments which he had heard only served to show him still further that the bill was not a good one. As an evil which he knew by personal experience of the Stikine country, Mr. Hunter produced a volume of Dominion sessional papers containing a report that he had made on the country. He recommended the perusal of the volume to the provincial secretary and also to the other members of the cabinet. As to a railway from the coast to the interior, proposed by Mr. Adams that he should oppose a road for which the people of the province had sent in a petition Mr. Hunter said that he would withdraw his opposition to the bill if it could be shown that a majority of the people of the province favored the road. Give him a few minutes to explain what he meant by his constituents, however, and he was sure that nine out of ten of the names on the petition would be withdrawn. He ventured to say that that was the condition of things in every constituency in the province. As to the demand for an all-Canadian road he would say that of the 820 miles to Glenora from Victoria only 24 miles was in United States territory. That was almost an all-Canadian road. The bill before the house was not a good bill in more ways than one. He thought it would be absurd to build a road from the coast on the south of the Fraser to the southern interior—that the province, paralleling the C. P. R. and the C. P. R. and then running a rival road was, he maintained, an absurdity. He presumed, however, that the measure would be carried and that it would be of no use to ask them to section of the Yukon railway. He would, however, ask the house to pause before the province of a million dollars. With a railway from Glenora to Teslin Lake there was adequate communication secured with the Yukon and he hoped that even yet the house would carry out the whole scheme to a finality. If it was resolved, however, to do so he would compact they intended to enter into and allow the house the opportunity of passing judgment upon it.

Mr. Higgins was surprised at Mr. Hunter saying that the bill was a scheme to plunder the country and that he should make such an insult to the government as to say that they were not to be entrusted to make the contract. If they were not, then the government was not entitled to the confidence of the province. If the agreement brought down was a binding one then the province stood to get a return from the operation of the road. He expressed himself in favor of the bill and said that he did not think that it would be wise to stop the construction at Glenora and it was through any United States territory that the government had brought down the bill. He suggested that some plan might be made to float the loan under more onomically than by going to London. Why should not the Coast have the opportunity of supplying goods to that northern country. The sum seemed a large one but not for the benefit to be had from the bill. He thought the government had made a blunder in consolidating this bill with the one of last year for many people seemed to labor under the mistake that the whole of the five millions was now this year instead of being half of it due to last year's bill. He had no doubt that the bill would pass and had no hesitation in saying he would vote for it.

Mr. Helmeck while he had much pleasure in attributing praise to Mr. Cotton and Mr. Forster for their speeches during the debate, thought that special praise was due to the attorney-general for his very able address of the previous evening. He was utterly surprised that such a master of words and parliament as Mr. Hunter should make use of such language as to say that the scheme was one of the most unwise of \$1,600,000. If that really was the case, if Mr. Hunter had in his possession facts that justified him in the use of that expression he should have stated the whole facts on the floor of the house. If Mr. Hunter had any information that justified him in his statements it was his duty to state anything he knew. It was a deliberate insult to say that the bill was part and parcel of a scheme to plunder the province of a million dollars.

Mr. Hunter: "I say so again." Mr. Helmeck: "If you accuse us who support the bill of anything, it is your duty to bring up." Mr. Helmeck proceeded to quote from May to show that any insulting language used by a member in debate was unpardonable. He would had this arisen earlier in the debate had asked for a ruling, for he considered that the language of Mr. Hunter was both unpardonable and uncalled for. As to his (Mr. Helmeck) was personally concerned he bore as good a reputation as any member of the house and he would not take over the ownership of railways that they assisted. With respect to the provision that the province should receive 4 per cent. of the gross proceeds of the railway, he held that this amount would not be a fair equivalent for what the province would have to give up. In referring to the correspondence on the Yukon railway, Mr. Forster believed that there was some still that had not been cleared up. He would like to see the government say that there was no correspondence between the Dominion government and the contractors on the subject.

Hon. Col. Baker replied that the provincial government knew nothing about the subject. Mr. Forster said while petitions had been sent to the house in favor of the bill and it had been claimed that the road would have been built there were a meeting at Delta a short time ago that condemned the project—though it was not a large meeting. He did not think that some of the members of the government say that there was no correspondence between the Dominion government and the contractors on the subject.

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to-day. What was being done by the government in bringing down this bill future events would justify. It was the duty of every citizen to assist the government by every legitimate means in this direction, and there could be no doubt that by the bill proposed to be carried out by the bill should be done. The opposition had taken a very unfair position on the bill. Anyone who had followed the course of the Yukon railway bill in the senate knew that the bill was not killed because it was considered the railway, but because the terms under which the road was to be built were not approved. The present bill was really for a provincial undertaking. The proposed line was within the borders of the province and only this session the house had been protesting against the Dominion chartering roads in the province without the roads first having the consent of this house. The province had arrived at a point when it was thought best to take up this road in the interests of the Province and the Dominion, of the Empire. It might perhaps have been better to have had terms from various contractors, but the exigencies of the moment and the suddenness of the opposition had prevented this. The opposition had said they were at one with the rest of the house as to the building of a portion of the road, but when it came to the southern section to be decided by the voters. He had listened to what had been said in the committee and he was not surprised to find that the opposition was going to get their heads out off at the coming elections, were still afraid of letting this bill go through and having the glorious privilege of spending the money themselves, after they had been writing for months and months perfectly satisfied that the second reading would be carried by a large majority as that by which the amendment of the leader of the opposition had been voted down, and in expressing disapproval with the expression of Mr. Hunter that the bill was a scheme to get away with the government on the agreement he was quite satisfied that in the preparation of the contract between the parties the government was not to be so safeguarded that there would not be room for a murmur of disappointment from the voters.

Mr. Bryden in supporting the second reading of the bill said that the railway was not only to give communication with the coast but it would open up a great area in the Northern portion of the province. He had from conversing with miners who knew the country, learned that in early days they had found a scarcity of food but the difficulties of getting in supplies had been the bar to success. He said that he had heard that a man told him he had made as much as \$30 and \$40 a day as it would not be businesslike to have a terminus at the river which was only navigable for a few months in each year. The railway would open up a large portion of the northern part of the province and was in the interests of the country. He felt sure too that there would be before long a road to connect at Teslin Lake with the Yukon country and he predicted a grand future for the country. He would have great pleasure in voting for the second reading of the bill.

Mr. Rogers considered the bill greatly in the interest of the country and if it was not now built in our own territory it would be built in the territory of the United States. He would like to see the building of a road that would take the trade from us. That was quite enough to justify the building of the road. It would run through a great part of the northern area of the province and give a feeder to Cariboo and Omineca districts. The immediate benefits to the province would be great. It would be the means of establishing trade for our cities and towns instead of for the American side and he was perfectly satisfied to go before his constituents and say that he voted for the bill. He certainly would have the greatest pleasure in voting for the bill.

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There is for the statement that if one wishes the slight information of the department the officials must be "seen beforehand." It is very evident from the way the article is written, continuing the Premier, "that the writer considers these statements well founded. A charge like this of such a serious nature, against an important department cannot be allowed to go over unexamined. I presume the writer would not have made the statements if he had considered that he had good reason to believe that what he wrote was a fact. For myself I believe the statements are utterly false, just as other articles that sometimes appear in the same paper. Such direct charges can only be met by having a commission to enquire into them, and I presume the writer in the article will be ready to produce what evidence he has to support these grave and serious accusations. To-morrow the committee will arrive at a point when it is thought best to take up this road in the interests of the Province and the Dominion, of the Empire. It might perhaps have been better to have had terms from various contractors, but the exigencies of the moment and the suddenness of the opposition had prevented this. The opposition had said they were at one with the rest of the house as to the building of a portion of the road, but when it came to the southern section to be decided by the voters. He had listened to what had been said in the committee and he was not surprised to find that the opposition was going to get their heads out off at the coming elections, were still afraid of letting this bill go through and having the glorious privilege of spending the money themselves, after they had been writing for months and months perfectly satisfied that the second reading would be carried by a large majority as that by which the amendment of the leader of the opposition had been voted down, and in expressing disapproval with the expression of Mr. Hunter that the bill was a scheme to get away with the government on the agreement he was quite satisfied that in the preparation of the contract between the parties the government was not to be so safeguarded that there would not be room for a murmur of disappointment from the voters.

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There is for the statement that if one wishes the slight information of the department the officials must be "seen beforehand." It is very evident from the way the article is written, continuing the Premier, "that the writer considers these statements well founded. A charge like this of such a serious nature, against an important department cannot be allowed to go over unexamined. I presume the writer would not have made the statements if he had considered that he had good reason to believe that what he wrote was a fact. For myself I believe the statements are utterly false, just as other articles that sometimes appear in the same paper. Such direct charges can only be met by having a commission to enquire into them, and I presume the writer in the article will be ready to produce what evidence he has to support these grave and serious accusations. To-morrow the committee will arrive at a point when it is thought best to take up this road in the interests of the Province and the Dominion, of the Empire. It might perhaps have been better to have had terms from various contractors, but the exigencies of the moment and the suddenness of the opposition had prevented this. The opposition had said they were at one with the rest of the house as to the building of a portion of the road, but when it came to the southern section to be decided by the voters. He had listened to what had been said in the committee and he was not surprised to find that the opposition was going to get their heads out off at the coming elections, were still afraid of letting this bill go through and having the glorious privilege of spending the money themselves, after they had been writing for months and months perfectly satisfied that the second reading would be carried by a large majority as that by which the amendment of the leader of the opposition had been voted down, and in expressing disapproval with the expression of Mr. Hunter that the bill was a scheme to get away with the government on the agreement he was quite satisfied that in the preparation of the contract between the parties the government was not to be so safeguarded that there would not be room for a murmur of disappointment from the voters.

Mr. Bryden in supporting the second reading of the bill said that the railway was not only to give communication with the coast but it would open up a great area in the Northern portion of the province. He had from conversing with miners who knew the country, learned that in early days they had found a scarcity of food but the difficulties of getting in supplies had been the bar to success. He said that he had heard that a man told him he had made as much as \$30 and \$40 a day as it would not be businesslike to have a terminus at the river which was only navigable for a few months in each year. The railway would open up a large portion of the northern part of the province and was in the interests of the country. He felt sure too that there would be before long a road to connect at Teslin Lake with the Yukon country and he predicted a grand future for the country. He would have great pleasure in voting for the second reading of the bill.

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