

POLITICAL NOTES.

A Glance at the Leading Measures Carried in the House of Assembly of New Brunswick, from the Year 1854.

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No. 22.

Choosing a Speaker—After Much Contention Hon. J. M. Johnson of Miramichi was elected—Employing Reporters—Amusing discussion on necessity of Reporters—Bill for Making the Legislative Council Elective—Interesting Discussion on Heads of Departments—The Old System and the New—Discussion on the Great Roads—The Provincial Secretary's Financial Statement.

SESSION OF 1859.

The House was called together on the 10th February, and the first business to be done was to choose a Speaker. On assembling in the Council Chamber His Excellency directed the members to return to their room for that purpose. Perhaps never before nor since, was there so much contention in making a choice. At the present day the Government are supposed to make the nomination and strong enough to carry their man, as the strength of the Government is a test question in this case. Several gentlemen were nominated from different parts of the House, representing diverse political views. Mr. D. Hanington was nominated by one party and Mr. J. M. Johnson (a member of the Government) by another. Mr. James Steadman by another. Mr. Bliss Botsford by another. Not that a distinct line had been drawn between the respective nominees by their friends, so much as that each in himself embodied certain views which were sympathetic and cogent. So far from the Government feeling that it was incumbent upon them and their friends uniting for a Speaker, some members of the Government voted against Mr. Johnson (one of their colleagues). As it was impossible for the house to agree upon a Speaker that day, His Excellency returned to Government House without delivering his speech; and after nominating and rejecting candidates for the office, the House adjourned until next day (11th), when on re-assembling the battle was renewed and kept up until a late hour, when the Hon. J. M. Johnson finally became the choice. But it was not until the day after (12th), that the Governor delivered his speech, when the work of the Session fairly began. A lengthy debate took place upon the subject of employing Reporters, which is only referred to here, to show the apathy or ignorance of the times on Constitutional matters, or the duty of Governments. Notwithstanding the initiation of all money votes had been surrendered by the House, and the Government were held responsible for the expenditure of every dollar, members moved according to their individual ideas of compensation to Reporters various amounts—one proposed fifty pounds to each Reporter—another seventy five—and so on, as if the House still held the purse strings; and yet the Government did not protest. £150 were voted, viz: £90 between two, and £60 to the one who reported most impartially.

The following remarks will convey an idea of the treatment of Reporters. Mr. Hanington wanted to know how the Committee were to decide on the merits of the different Reports furnished to the newspapers. He would like to hear from the Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Mitchell explained that it was the intention of the Committee to keep copies of the papers, and examine them as they are published, and by thus having a check upon them, at the end of the Session the Committee would be enabled to say which Reporter or Reporters would be entitled to the whole amount or a portion of it. Mr. Wilmot in a few humorous remarks about old foxes and young bears said he was glad to find that the Committee had taken upon them the onerous duty of judging as to the merits of these reports.

[The above simply signified—mind, and be good boys—you must report so as to please every member, be partial to all, and impartial to none at your risk! Reporting in those days was in its infancy, literally as well as figuratively.]

Feb. 19.—A Bill was introduced by Mr. M'Phelim for making the Legislative Council elective.

On the 22nd February a long discussion took place for the abolition of the Postmaster General as a Political officer. This office was provided for under the first Liberal Administration in 1855, but not to be filled up until the exigency of the public service demanded it. As soon as the Wilmot and Gray Administration was formed in less than a year afterwards, the "exigency" had arrived—for Mr. M'Phelim was appointed to the office. Now in 1859, a Bill was brought in for reversing the order of things, and going back to the old system. The discussion was a strictly party one. One gentleman on the Government side referred to the time when there was none of the Heads of Departments on the floors of the House, when there was no way of getting redress from the home Government but by delegation; and notwithstanding that under the present system of our constitution £800

was paid to the Provincial Secretary, who had charge of the department, an equivalent for that was obtained by the fact of there now being on the floors of the House, such an official to answer all questions—and he was sure that the work of the different departments was better done and cheaper—there was a greater desire to economize and to save the money of the country. He was in favor of having more of these departments upon the floors of the House, and would go for a measure to bring in the head of the Railway Department; for he felt satisfied that it would be beneficial to the country to have him here. He referred to the time when the Surveyor General counted his salary of thousands of pounds instead of hundreds as now. [The salaries paid to officials in the early days were enormously high, ranging from one thousand to two thousand pounds. The Surveyor General's office, it is said, virtually ate up all the revenues derivable from crown land sales—at all events there was very little left "after paying all expenses." No wonder that the old party and their hangers-on resisted Responsible Government—and that the classes disregarded the masses! If any office were abolished he would rather see that of the Solicitor General done away with than that of Postmaster General, but he would be guided more by the advice of his legal friends. He would go for having the Postmaster, Attorney General, Provincial Secretary and Chief Commissioner of Railways, above all others, upon the floors of the House, to give them an opportunity of explaining their conduct to the representatives of the people. He reiterated his belief in the principles of Constitutional Government. The Bill received "the three months' hoist." It took a long time to get the Constitution, beyond the reach of petty cavilling ere it could be reduced to practical working order, and the foregoing is an instance of it.]

On the 24th February, on motion of the Attorney General, a (Government) Bill was introduced relating to Great Roads. It provided to add 450 miles of bye roads to the great roads of the Province. This number was to be fairly portioned among the different Counties, with the exception of the two newest Counties—Restigouche and Victoria—which were to be considered more largely in the distribution. One of the members from St. John (Mr. John H. Gray) objected to the Bill because there was no information before the House justifying the passing of a measure involving an expenditure of \$50,000 (\$300,000). The Provincial Secretary said that he believed a great saving would be made to the country if all the bye roads were placed on the great road establishment. Mr. Lawrence (opposition) was opposed to proceeding or making any change this year, until the finances of the Province had been fully understood; he questioned if the condition of the Province was such that an expenditure of £50,000, or any great sum in the direction indicated, would be justifiable. It was Mr. Wilmot's (opposition) opinion that it was the introduction of a new system of log-rolling, under which the most corrupt practices were possible. Mr. Smith (Albert) waxed indignant at such an accusation. He defied any one on the floors of the House to put his finger upon any corruption or log-rolling on the part of the Government. Mr. Wilmot answered that he believed the corruption was in bringing all the roads in one Bill, instead of each coming up on its own merits. The debate was finally closed by Mr. Fisher; and on the question being taken there appeared six for Mr. Gray's amendment, and twenty eight against—so that the bill was sustained.

[NOTE.—Mr. Gray's amendment was to the effect that the road from St. John to Quaco should be included in the Government scheme. Enough is given from this debate to the reader quite sufficient for him to form a general idea of points raised.]

On the 28th, on motion of the Provincial Secretary, the House went into Supply. The mover having introduced a Revenue Bill and the Estimates for the current year, delivered quite an elaborate address. In order that the reader may have some idea of the financial condition of New Brunswick in 1859, as well as the items of indebtedness, an abstract of the hon. gentleman's statement is deemed to be worthy of the space it will here occupy. The estimated expenditures of the past year, ending 31st October, 1858, (said Mr. Tilley) were £129,319 18s. 5d., and the amount paid out £130,164 10s. 6d.; the excess of expenditure over receipts being £784 18s. 1d.; the receipts were something over £114,000 leaving a falling off of £115,000; the total liabilities of the Province at the close of the fiscal year were £264,364 15s. 9d., and the assets £737,657 3s. 10d. If this statement of the assets and liabilities was compared with that of last year, it would be found that notwithstanding the deficiency of £15,000, this amount has been made up, and there was an increase of £4,000. The Railway, of course, got the benefit of this; but he only mentioned it in rendering in the general account. Mr. Tilley referred to the great commercial depression of the past year, and said that had all the Banks in this Province suspended specie payments, the Government had made such arrangements with Messrs. Baring and Brothers, that they would have been able to pay all the demands against it in the Savings Bank, and they would, if paper money had been depreciated, paid the Railway Contractors in cash. He then referred to the position of New Brunswick debentures, and claimed credit for the exertion the Government had made to raise the character of New Brunswick debentures in the London Market. This had been done officially and semi-officially; gentlemen at home interested themselves in this; and he would mention with pleasure the name of Thos.

Daniel, Esq., a gentleman resident for many years in this Province. The presence of the Delegates at home from the different Colonies had had a good effect upon Provincial Securities; and he went on to compare the difference originally existing between Canadian and New Brunswick Debentures when Canadian were quoted at 110 and New Brunswick at 102; at the present time Canadian were quoted at 113 and New Brunswick at 111½; he entered into this detail to show that it was not the change in the money market, but rather the increased character of New Brunswick debentures that caused this. He referred to the arrangements with Messrs. Baring by which the Province obtained money at five per cent., when the Bank of England was charging 10 per cent. The estimated expenditure from the ordinary Revenue for the present year is estimated at £132,840; and the expenditure is set down at £132,337. The whole resources of the Province from every source is estimated at £156,961; and the whole expenditure, £155,940. Mr. Tilley proposes to raise a sum of £7,000 by an additional tax of 2½ per cent. on unenumerated articles. [A bill for this purpose was introduced.] £500 was asked for Emigration purposes in addition to a sum of £200 not drawn last year. He said that the Emigration Office in St. John had been put upon a good footing; and described an arrangement entered into between the Government and the Canadian News, published in England, by which a certain portion of that paper was to be devoted to furthering the interests of this Province, its title has been changed to the 'Canadian News and New Brunswick Herald.' £2,500 was asked for Steam Navigation; £1,000 extra to go for the establishment of a weekly line of Steamers between Shediac and Restigouche and P. E. Island. In the sum for Agriculture, Mr. Tilley said that the intention of the Government to make no provision for a model farm, but every year, commencing with 1860, an additional sum of £750 was contemplated for the purpose of a public exhibition of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts—to be held alternately in different parts of the Province. It was intended to place all the public buildings under the control of the Board of Works. Mr. Tilley's statement was very clear and explicit, and occupied an hour and twenty minutes in its delivery.

Youngest Dancer in the World. A little child—an almost baby—has, within a few months, danced herself into the hearts of the New York public. Ruby came into the world with the advantage of a long New England ancestry. It is, perhaps, needless to say that none of her ancestors ever danced. But when Ruby was only a year old she began inventing little steps, and when she was two she used to twirl herself up, in her own night-gown, and untwirl herself, with all the finish of a professional premiere de ballet. Dance she would, and dance she did, on every possible and on very many impossible occasions. A strain of music set her baby feet a-dancing as surely as a lighted match sets gas afire. After a little, common sense triumphed over puritanical prejudice. Ruby was no longer told not to dance. She was taken to New York and given the best possible training, and as thorough as her tender and soft little person made compatible with kindness. Baby Ruby is now three and a half years old. She is as tall of and as much photographed as any actress in New York—and perhaps more loved. Her two pictures show what a pretty little creature she is—but give no idea of the infantile aplomb with which the mite exercises the art she loves, and for which she has an almost unprecedented talent. This baby dancer is, to-day one of the most conspicuous figures in the New York amusement world. But she is never allowed to over-work.

At a banquet recently given by the New York Press Club, Ruby was the most applauded item of the entertainment. She was lifted onto the table where she danced, and was pelted with bon-bons and roses as Maria Teresa and the monarchs of other days used to pelt their favorite dwarfs.



M. Hammerly, a well-known business man of Hillsboro, Va., sends this testimony to the merits of Ayer's Sarsaparilla: "Several years ago, I hurt my leg, the injury leaving a sore which led to erysipelas. My sufferings were extreme, my leg, from the knee to the ankle, being a solid sore, which began to extend to other parts of the body. After trying various remedies, I began taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and before I had finished the first bottle, experienced great relief; the second bottle effected a complete cure."

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THE BIG KNIVES.

An Indian's First Impressions of Civilization.

I was scarcely old enough to know anything definite about the "Big Knives" as we called the white men, when the terrible Minnesota massacre occurred, and I was carried into British Columbia. I have already told how I was adopted into the family of my father's younger brother, when my father was betrayed and imprisoned. We all supposed that he had shared the fate of those who were executed at Mankato, Minnesota. Now, the savage philosophers looked upon vengeance in the field of battle as a lofty virtue. To avenge the death of a relative or a dear friend was considered a great deed. My uncle, accordingly, had spared no pains to instill into my young mind the obligation to avenge the death of my father and my brothers. Already I looked eagerly forward to the day when I should find an opportunity to carry out his teachings.

Meanwhile, he himself went upon the war-path and returned with scalps every summer. So it may be imagined how I felt toward the Big Knives. On the other hand, I had heard wonderful things of this people. A race whose power bordered upon the supernatural, they were almost wakan (mysterious). I learned that they had made a "Fire-Boat." I could not understand how they could convert fire into a boat, and thus unite two elements which cannot exist together. I thought the water would put out the fire and the fire would consume the boat, if it had but a shadow of a chance! This was to me a preposterous thing. But when I was told that the Big Knives had created a "Fire-Boat-Walks-on-Mountains" (a train), it was too much to believe.

"Why?" said my informant "those who saw this monster move said that it flew occasionally from mountain to mountain, when it seemed to be excited. They also said that they believed it carried a thunder-bird, for he frequently gave his usual war-whoop as he was swiftly borne along. Several warriors had seen, at a distance, one of the first trains on the Northern Pacific, and had gained too great an impression of the wonders of the pale-face. They had seen it go over a deep creek; hence they thought it jumped from one bank to the other. I confess that the story almost quenched my ardor and bravery.

Two or three young men were talking together about this fearful invention. "But," said one, "I understand that this Fire-Boat-Walks-on-Mountains cannot move except on its track."

Although a boy is not expected to join in the conversation of his elders, I ventured to ask, "Then it cannot chase us into any rough country?"

"No, it cannot," was the reply, which I heard with a great deal of relief.

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