

taining the portion which required to be put up to sale; and the owners of the different subdivisions, particularly where there happened to be several of the same name on the same Township, were also subjected to great inconvenience; because when they came to pay their Assessment, they were quite in the dark as to whether those who had paid were their tenants or not; and thus, rather than run the risk of their land being put up to sale, both they and their tenants paid for the same land. This he considered neither fair nor equitable, and might, he thought, be remedied. [The hon. gentlemen had, however, to withdraw his motion, as it was urged that to endeavour to legislate for those small divisions, would interfere so much with the general principle of the Bill, that in attempting to carry such a plan into effect, it would be found impracticable, the more particularly as these subdivisions were necessarily always undergoing changes from sales and family arrangements, and becoming smaller and smaller every day.]

29th APRIL.

The Bill was again recommitted.

The Hon. Mr. MACDONALD called the attention of the House to the propriety of following the same plan in the collection of the tax as was adopted in that of the Quit Rents. The present mode was both very expensive and tedious—much more so than that of the Quit Rents; for that was effected in 14 days by distraint on moveables—whereas, now it extends over a period of many months; besides, where moveables were to be had, it was surely fair that these should first be taken. But this was just another specimen of their mode of legislation. It had for its beginning the destruction of the rights of the proprietors, and for its end the spoliation of their property. In conclusion, he moved (having first read a portion of the Quit Rent Act) that the same system which was followed in the collection of the Quit Rents should be adopted in the collection of this tax, except in the case of Wilderness Lands.

The Hon. Mr. HENSLEY said that it was a pity the hon. gentleman who entertained such views did not, at an earlier period of the Session, bring them forward; but he was afraid he was too late now.

The Hon. Mr. PETERS. The attendance of his hon. friend (Mr. McD.) on his legislative duties was so pointedly punctual, that it was really surprising he had not brought his mind to bear on the subject before that time!! There was one thing in which, however, he by no means disagreed with him; no doubt it would have been more beneficial if a mode of collection similar to the Pump and Well Assessment had been pursued. This was the plan adopted in other places; but they had gone on so long in the present way, that it would not be convenient to depart from it now. Nobody would attempt to deny that there were not cases of hardship, for it had appeared sometimes that a person had to pay perhaps as much as 7l. for the paltry sum of 2s.; but by the present Bill a delinquent would not be called upon to pay more than 3l. at the utmost.

The Hon. D. MACDONALD. A few years ago a Bill was passed, by which the landlord was prevented from selling any property seized by him for rent, from the 1st of December to 1st of June. You first of all tie up the means he has of paying his tax, and then you make his freehold liable for it; that had been his own case before now. He had found every obstacle thrown in the way of his recovering his rents. Their mode of legislation was not praiseworthy, nor should justice be deferred hereby, because it was late in the Session. Because he did not happen to be able to attend here, did such a circumstance justify any one to consent to do that which was wrong? He apprehended not. His hon. friend (Mr. Peters) did, a few days ago, propose that the tax should be collected in the way he had suggested; [An hon. member here said, the House of Assembly was opposed to it.] and he took that opportunity of stating his conviction that that hon. gentleman had not done his duty.

The Hon. Mr. PETERS. Whether I have done mine or not, it does not become me to say; but your honours will admit that the hon. gentleman is exceedingly easily pleased with the manner in which he discharges his duty, if it be founded only on the slight foundation of the ten days—for that I believe to be the sum total of his attendance since the beginning of the Session—he has been pleased to grace this Board with his presence. If, however, my dereliction of duty consists in my having ventured to differ from his opinion—although, doubtless, this is an offence of no ordinary magnitude, it is devoutly to be wished that it is one not altogether beyond the pale of forgiveness;—but be this as it may, I am afraid we cannot legislate to the satisfaction of such improvident proprietors who did not provide themselves with the means of paying their taxes before they became due. And surely it was not to be supposed that every tenant required that a Distress should be issued against him, but if it were—if a proprietor happened to be placed in so singular a dilemma, as he knew that he would have to pay them, he should, he thought, reserve at least a sufficiency to do so. He hoped his hon. friend would see that it was not wise to legislate in the way he had seemed to wish; but when he said the mode of collection was wrong, in that he certainly did agree with him. Still he should be sorry, indeed, to oppose or lose the Bill merely on that account; and although the hon. gentleman had come forward with all the coolness so especially peculiar to himself, to throw the blame of his non-attendance on him; he thought, when he came to

reflect seriously on that part of his charge, he would see, and with his usual candour acknowledge that for once in his life, at all events, he had been a little unreasonable.

On another clause being brought forward—

The Hon. Mr. HOLL objected to the clause, as it would have the effect of imposing a duty upon the Treasurer, which would materially interfere with the business of his office, and at the same time occasion great public inconvenience. It was evidently intended to transfer to the office of the Treasury the receipt of a great portion of the tax heretofore received through the medium of the Deputy Collector for Charlottetown. He would, with their honours' permission, shew what the duty of the said Collector consisted in, and he felt convinced they would at once see the matter in its proper light. (Here Mr. H. gave a sketch of the onerous duties which devolved upon the Deputy.) His time was almost exclusively occupied for some months, and he was even obliged to call in assistance to enable him to get through the work assigned to him. How then, he would ask, could the Treasurer undertake the task? It would be impossible and unfair to expect it. He had been given to understand that the Hon. Mr. Haviland, when Treasurer, had found the duty so onerous and vexatious, that he was compelled to employ an Assistant at his own cost; and a Bill was passed the 2d year, by which he was enabled to appoint a Deputy. Now, why should his successor be called upon to perform a duty to which, on account of the inconvenience experienced by his predecessor, the Legislature had thought fit to apply a remedy in the manner referred to, particularly when their honours considered that a great increase of work had arisen out of the subdivision of property that had since that period taken place? He could not understand why a person should not be at liberty to pay his tax to any extent or to any Collector he pleased. If restricted by such a clause as that under their consideration, the Deputy Collector would have to perform the most arduous part of the duty, with the least amount of remuneration; and he thought it unjust that a faithful servant of the public should be deprived of that to which he was fairly entitled, provided the public service did not sustain injury or loss thereby. Independent of the arguments he had used, it was by no means clear that the clause would have the effect intended by the House of Assembly. What was to hinder a proprietor of 20,000 acres of land from paying his tax on 1000 acres at twenty different times, or through twenty different persons? It was clear this could be done without violating the law; and, therefore, the restriction was both absurd and unjust. He would, therefore, move that it be suggested to the House of Assembly, in conference, that the clause be struck out of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. ANDERSON would second the motion; for he was of opinion that it would be a grievous hardship that if a man held even one acre more than the quantity specified, he would be obliged to go to, perhaps, a great distance to pay the tax.

The Hon. Mr. HENSLEY could not see what difference it could make when the tax was paid, to whom it was paid. Some pressing evil should be shewn to exist before an alteration be made. If a man had 300l. or 400l. to pay, he should be allowed to pay where he thinks proper.

The clause was then disagreed to.

The Hon. Mr. HOLL proposed an amendment with regard to the Town and Pasture Lots, that the tax should be in relative proportion to that on other lands.

The Hon. Mr. ANDERSON said, he differed as regards Princetown. The lands there should be viewed and taxed precisely as if on Township Lands; because, although a Town, Jail, and Court House were contemplated at one time to be erected there, the plan was abandoned; and, therefore, that District was placed in no better situation than if such an idea had never once been entertained, although they ought not to be called upon to pay more, they in reality already did so. He was desirous no doubt to extent the means of education, but he could not consent to inflict an injury, even though the object in view had a laudable end.

The tax on the lands in this quarter and in Georgetown and Royalty were allowed to remain as heretofore.

APPROPRIATION TO THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR.

The Hon. Mr. HOLL observed, that it was with much satisfaction he viewed the Appropriation referred to in the clause which had just been read. He was always of opinion that the Colony was bound by every principle of propriety as well as policy, to apply a portion of its revenue to the support of the representative of Majesty. He supported the measure brought under the consideration of the Council by message, in consequence of a Despatch from the Imperial Government on the subject, during the administration of Sir Charles Fitz Roy, under the conviction that the amount of Salary attached to the office of Lieutenant Governor of this Colony was altogether inadequate to support the establishment he was called upon to maintain; and, moreover, as the country had erected so large a Government House, entailing on the Governor, for the time being, so unnecessarily large an expenditure for furniture and fuel (a portion only of the former being provided by the Colony) he thought it incumbent upon the Legislature to place the matter on a more just and liberal footing. He could never think it right that the Administrator of the Government should be called upon to furnish that building out of his own

private resources. In his opinion, the Colony ought to do so, and thus relieve the officer in question from the heavy expense as well as inconvenience to which he was thus subject. He was very glad to find that the Bill before their honours provided more suitably than heretofore, both for the present as well as for future Administrators of the Government.

The Hon. Mr. MACDONALD. He was highly pleased to find that the House of Assembly had at last felt disposed to do an act of justice. The representatives of Majesty had hitherto been obliged to put their hands into their own pockets, in order that they might dispense that hospitality their high station imposed upon them, in the way of entertaining the people of the Island, and transient visitors of distinction. It was not only an act of justice, but it was also good policy on their part to render the residence of the Governor comfortable and respectable, for unless they did so they had no right whatever to expect that gentlemen of influence and ability would accept of the situation; and it was very desirable, indeed, that their Governors should be gentlemen who had the ear and could command the influence of the heads of the Departments in the Imperial Government, and thereby obtain attention to the wants or complaints of the Colony. He repeated he was glad to find that the situation of the Lieutenant Governor of this Colony would be rendered more comfortable than it ever had been; although, at the same time, he could not refrain from remarking that this object was attained by an extravagant tax on the land; but that was of a piece with all former Prince Edward Island legislation, for when anything was wanted, nothing would satisfy their legislators but the full and unrestricted liberty of dipping their hands into the pockets of the proprietors. Witness the establishment of the Academy, and the erection of Government House.

The Hon. Mr. YOUNG would willingly accord his approbation of the Grant. It was no more than an act of tardy justice that should have been rendered years ago, in order to have enabled the Lieutenant Governors of this Colony to maintain that dignity and respectability their station demanded. It was very unfair to put a Governor on a stinted allowance unsuited to his station, into a splendid mansion which required, keeping out of view what the country had already supplied, a large income to furnish it, besides the ordinary daily expenses of the establishment, and a large retinue of servants. In this case a splendid mansion was even worse than a magnificent mockery—it was a cruel delusion. Therefore, he was glad the allowance had been granted, and the more glad that the expense would fall on the proprietors; because the more they tax them the more willing they would be to act justly towards their tenantry.

The clause referred to was then unanimously agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. SWABEY, in reporting the Bill agreed to, stated that he sincerely rejoiced that the time was now come when a Lieutenant Governor of this Colony was placed in a proper position. It was, no doubt, their duty to study his comfort and dignity; but a higher consideration, one more affecting the welfare of the people committed to his charge, rendered it absolutely necessary that his situation should be one of independence; and so far from hesitating with regard to the propriety of appropriating the sum in question, he most willingly consented to the increase, if their resources could afford it. He had at first heard that it was contemplated to make this provision for a limited period, to which he never could have given an assent; and he rejoiced that the vote had come up in the way it had, and that this might be said to be a beginning of the paying their own civil list. And he hoped the day was not far distant—perhaps he might himself live to see it—when this clause would become inoperative, and all the officers in the Government receive their remuneration under regulations emanating from the Colony itself, in return for the advantages of a constitutional and responsible system, which could not long be deferred.

The Bill was then agreed to, with several suggestions to be made to the House of Assembly.

Assessment on Wilderness Lands, 5s. per 100 acres.

Do. Cultivated do. 2s. 6d. do.

Improved Town and Water Lots in Charlottetown, 2s. 6d.; and the other Assessments as in the former Bill.

THE EXAMINER.

MONDAY, JUNE 26, 1843.

THE PUBLIC DISTRESS, AND THE PROSPECTS OF RELIEF.

SOME of the Streets of Charlottetown presented a somewhat novel scene on Wednesday last. Poor countrymen, to the number of 200 or 300—principally from the Scotch Settlement, Lot 67, where the prevailing scarcity of food appears to be more severely felt than in any other part of the Island—walked into Town at an early hour of the day, and strolled through the different streets for some hours, a bag-piper accompanying them in their movements. This "moral force" display was intended as an appeal to the sympathy and benevolence of the community; but though a little charity was eked out to some of them, the poor fellows did not profit as much by their weary pilgrimage as would enable them