

(Continued from first page.)

trof would have been given to it over the revenue and expenditure. But till the people think proper to extend to this house some little control over the revenue and appropriation bills, and it can only be done by an Act of the Legislature, it would be very little use for us to raise our voices against any particular items in them.

Hon. Mr. MacDONALD: His honor refers to the difference in the rate of duty upon imported and home manufactured whiskey; but it should be remembered that distillers here have to pay a license duty of £25, and when that is taken into account, the difference is not so great as would, at first sight, appear. As to the other point, I quite agree with him that we have very little control over the revenue bill, but the great difficulty is, how is this House to get greater privileges than it has at present? The question was tried time after time before it became an elective body, and the only results were unpleasant differences between the Council and House of Assembly; besides, the privileges of the former were rather curtailed than extended by the agitation of the question. The House of Assembly is very tenacious of its privileges, and if it does not choose to relax them and grant more privileges to this Council, I do not see that we have any remedy. I do not think that body would consent to anything that would have a tendency to narrow down the privileges it has always claimed.

Hon. Mr. WALKER: Why did not his honor, the member for Charlottetown, contend for more privileges for this House at the time the elective Council bill was being passed? That was the time to have secured greater privileges, but the opportunity was lost, and now we cannot obtain them without having an act passed for the purpose, which I think would not be very easily done.

Hon. Mr. PALMER: No doubt it would have been very well if it could have been done at the time the Elective Council Bill was carried, but we know very well that privileges of that kind cannot be obtained at once. We were very glad at that time to get the great principle of an elective Council carried, and perhaps it would have endangered the fate of that bill if we had introduced into it privileges much beyond what, as a nominative branch, we had previously enjoyed. But having once obtained the elective principle, it then became us to see that we had those privileges which, constitutionally, ought to belong to an elective branch, and we had a far better opportunity of agitating for that change when we had become an elective body. A great boon was supposed to be obtained when the Elective Council Bill was carried, but I do not see that the people have derived a single solitary advantage from it, while the members have to earn their seats at as much expense as the members of the House of Assembly, and I believe far more. I do not think, however, that there is much use in us agitating the question here now, but at the first election after the bill was passed, I was anxious that it should be brought to the hustings—that the people should be informed, and the matter explained. I was solitary and alone on that point. I believe the time will soon come when the people will feel the necessity of extending greater privileges to this House. Otherwise they will see that they have not gained anything by the principle of an elective Council. There might be a very proper law passed to have money grants come up simply, or properly classified, so as to give us some control over them; but what is our position now? The Appropriation Bill may come up with two or three items which we consider obnoxious to the public—forced, perhaps, by a combination of party interests—and what is our remedy? We may ask for a conference, and that may be granted, as a matter of courtesy, or we may reject the bill in toto. Then it will be said that the whole responsibility of the loss of the bill rests at the door of the Council, which threw it out. Therefore, we cannot exercise any control over the Appropriation Bill, without that onus being thrown upon us; but it is in the power of the people to place no man in either branch of the Legislature unless he pledges himself to support such a reasonable alteration as would allow the Council to be, in deed and in spirit, what it was supposed it would be when the great concession of the elective principle was made.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: I was not an advocate for the alteration in the constitution of the Council, and it has turned out just as I expected, for this House is more expensive to the country, and it is not of any more service; but still I agree with his honor who has just spoken, that some reasonable change should be effected on account of this branch of the Legislature being made elective. I do not think, however, that any change will take place till there is some greater disagreement than there has been here for the last few years. We are elected by the people—not an inferior class of the people either—and we have responsibilities which we cannot be reasonably expected to discharge unless there is some change from the present practice. I do not know that being chosen by the people or by the Government makes much difference to us, for I am happy to say that the greater number of those who were chosen by the Crown have seats here at present; and as long as the House of Assembly do not insist in pressing anything unreasonable upon us, perhaps there is not so much necessity for a change; but if they would do so, I would resist it to the utmost of my power.

Hon. Mr. BEE: I would fully endorse the views of his honor from the City, (Mr. Palmer) for I have complained, on more than one occasion, of the way

in which the appropriation bill comes before us. It comes up perhaps the last day of the session when committees of this House are engaged about various other matters, and it is expected that it will be passed in a few hours. I have known items to be in that bill which I would vote against, and I would almost risk the loss of the bill rather than pass them without a strong remonstrance. As the Council is now elective as well as the House of Assembly, we are responsible as well as that body for legislation, (Mr. Palmer—Hear) and we should have some control of the appropriation. The items should come up in separate resolutions, and be reviewed here, so that we might know what is in the bill before it comes before us, instead of having the whole appropriations sent up in one bill at the end of the Session when many of the Members have gone home.

Hon. Mr. WALKER remarked that he did not know how the Council could be held responsible for what it had no control over.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: Though I do not approve of changing the scale of duties year after year, yet I regret that the Government did not think proper to take the duty off flour and meal, for it is likely to be a very hard summer for many of the people. I remember that last session his honor from Prince County (Mr. Lord) joined with me in trying to get the duty taken off flour, though we did not accomplish much. There is nothing to which the people are so much opposed as taxing their bread. Give them cheap bread and cheap education, and they will be prosperous and happy. Though I do not approve of changing the tariff every year, as it has a tendency to destroy that stability which is the foundation of success in business, yet I would like to see the duty taken off flour and meal, and some change made in the differential duties on spirituous liquors; but I suppose it is little use for us to agitate any alteration in those respects.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: The objection urged against the duty on flour last year was on the ground that it was creating a differential duty, for while it was admitted free when it came direct from Canada, there was a duty imposed when it came through the United States. But your honors will remember that we passed an act last year to admit flour and meal free when it came through American Territory. It is true that there is a duty of 1s. 6d. per barrel continued on flour and meal which is not the production of the colonies, but I suppose your honors are aware that from that source last year the sum of £1410 was raised, and you are also aware that the expenditure this year will be very large. And when there is no change made in the tariff, we thought we could scarcely afford to do with the amount of revenue derived from that source. If that duty had been taken off it would have been necessary to make other changes which perhaps would not be approved of by your honors. It will depend very much on the state of trade whether a change in the tariff will be necessary next year or not. If trade is not prosperous, and if there is not a good revenue this year, it is most likely that whoever holds the reins of government next year will find it necessary to make very material changes.

Hon. Mr. LORD: If there is to be a change I hope it will be to reduce the taxes, but it is hardly worth while to discuss this matter now, as we cannot make any alteration. If the duty is raised on any article I hope it will be on spirituous liquors, for if there is an article imported on which we can afford to pay a heavy duty, it is ardent spirits. There is no compulsion in the use of it, and I believe we can do just as well without tasting it as with it, but if we must have something of that kind to drink we should pay for it. I would like to see the duty taken off flour and other breadstuffs, for there will be a large quantity required this summer, and of course the cheaper they are the better, for the poor man.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: There are two very urgent reasons why the duty should be taken off breadstuffs. It is certain that the approaching summer will be a hard one, and we see by late accounts from the corn growing States that there is a falling off of 35,000,000 bushels and consequently the price may be expected to be high. The second reason is that this system of taxing breadstuffs is contrary to the principles of commercial policy which Her Majesty's Government is using all its influence to induce the colonies to adopt.

Hon. Mr. BALDERSTON: I do not think there is much fault to be found with the scale of duties, neither do I see any great objection to the duty of 1s. 6d. per barrel on American flour, for there is not much flour comes from the United States. I would like to encourage home manufacture, and I would say, if we must have liquor, let us give the preference to the home manufactured article. I do not think it is a proper time to enter into a discussion on the privileges of the Council, though I value them as much as any person. I consider that we have gained a point by making the Council elective. Formerly the members of this House were merely the nominees of the ruling party, and that was not a desirable state of things. Therefore, I do not think, like his honor from Bay Fortune, (Mr. Dingwell), that all is lost, for we have gained some privileges.

Hon. Mr. WALKER: His honor from Prince County, (Mr. Lord), speaks about reducing the tariff, but I think it would be difficult to point out any article on which the duty could be reduced. There is no part of North America where the taxes are so low, and I believe the Government will find it necessary before

long, to increase the ad valorem duty to 12 1/2 per cent. Education alone takes one-third of the revenue.

Hon. Mr. HAYTHORNE: I sympathize with the remarks of his honor from Georgetown, (Mr. Gordon), and I must say that I think breadstuffs should be admitted free of duty. To tax food is a mistake. But I hope to see the day when the improved state of agriculture will enable us to do without importing breadstuffs. The Island is capable of producing everything of that kind that we require, and more scientific farming will enable us to do without importing flour from Canada or the United States. I believe the duty upon flour was imposed about the time the Reciprocity Treaty was abrogated, and when considerable acrimony existed against the Americans for putting an end to that treaty. I am certainly in favor of freedom in trade in breadstuffs, but the Government thought it was not advisable to make any change this year. It is not so easy to raise a revenue here as in the old country. There taxes are imposed on articles of general consumption. The malt tax of England produces a revenue of, I believe, £5,000,000; and the income tax enabled Sir Robert Peel to abandon the impost duties on some articles of consumption. But here, if any article produces £1200 or £1500 a year, however desirable it may be to remove the duty, it will be found difficult to impose it on anything else. Then with reference to the remarks of his honor from the City respecting the privileges of this House, I do not think he is the most suitable person to make such observations. He is an old legislator, and was a member of the Government which introduced the elective Council bill; and if it was possible to have secured greater privileges, that was the time to have sought for them. However, there is no doubt but the elective principle is some advantage, for there are gentlemen in this House who would not have had seats here if the Council had not been elective. Had that principle not been carried, the Tenant League organization would not have had a representative here.

Hon. the PRESIDENT: This year the Government is granting a sum of money to purchase seed grain for destitute farmers, and to impose a tax upon flour and meal at the same time looks like giving with one hand and taking from them with the other. I have always been opposed to taxing breadstuffs, for the cheaper they can be got the better. I would be pleased to see that tax dispensed with on account of the state of the country.

Hon. Mr. BEE: I would also like to see the revenue Bill passed without any duty upon breadstuffs, but I am satisfied that all the revenue that can be raised will be required for the service of the Colony, especially as about £3000 are being granted for the purchase of said grain. I do hope that the time is near when we will raise all the breadstuff we require, for, by a little more skill and improvement in our system of farming, we could do so. I believe there will be double the quantity of wheat sown this year more than last, and I hope that next year we will not require to import so much flour.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL: We are all anxious to see cheaper bread, but with all the duties imposed, our revenue is not likely to be larger than will be required. I would like to hear some of your honors who are so anxious to have the duty taken off flour, suggest some other article on which it could be imposed. I do not think the Government can be blamed for continuing the same tariff; if there was an increase, there might be some reason to complain.

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON: If the duty were taken off flour and put upon ardent spirits, I think it would be a less objectionable way of raising the revenue.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD: Your honors are aware that flour from the Dominion of Canada comes in under the reciprocity treaty with that province, and while the reciprocity with the United States existed, it came in free from there also; but when they have abrogated that treaty themselves, we have a right to impose a duty on their flour. There were 11450 barrels imported from Canada last year, and I believe a larger quantity will be imported from there this year if it is required; for it is found that Canadian flour is better and costs less than what is purchased in the United States. Therefore this duty of 1s. 6d. per barrel will not effect all flour imported, as Canadian flour will come in free.

Hon. Mr. BALDERSTON: I agree with his honor from Bequete (Mr. Anderson) that it would be better to take the tax off flour and put it on liquor. A gentleman in the Legislature once said that a poor man had a certain amount of money to spend for liquor, the less he got for it the better, and I think the remark was very just.

The House was then resumed and given the report.

CUSTOMS, ACCOUNTS.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD, a member of the Government, presented to the House the Customs Accounts for the past year, and on doing so, remarked that they indicated a favourable state of the trade of the Colony. The value of the ordinary exports was £260,470, sterling; and there were also 18,641 tons of shipping sent home for sale, valued at £111,846. Making the total value of exports for 1867, £372,316 sterling. While the imports for the same time were set down at £294,443; showing a sterling balance in favor of the Colony of £77,883. These figures showed that the trade of the Colony was in a very prosperous condition, more so than could have been expected.

Adjourned till Monday next at ten o'clock.

Monday, April 20th.

ALEWIVES, FISHERY BILL.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD said he intended to move for the second reading of a bill to

revive and continue certain sections of the Act for the preservation of the Alewives Fisheries, and to repeal a certain Act therein mentioned; but the 30th standing rule of the House had not been complied with, as it was a late period of the session, and as the bill was of considerable importance, he would move that the rule be suspended.

The thirty-sixth standing rule of the House is as follows:—

"No bill, resolution, or other proceeding, founded upon any application addressed to the House of Assembly, shall be sustained by the Council unless an application to the same effect, with such documents as may accompany the same, be also presented to the Council in General Assembly."

Hon. Mr. PALMER said he did not know what the proposed alterations in the Act were, but he did not think the Alewives Fisheries was a subject of any great importance to the Colony; and if the Council intended to maintain its position as a legislative body it should adhere to its rules. Therefore he would not feel himself justified in supporting the motion before the House.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL said the question to be considered was whether the bill was of more importance than the rules of the House. He thought the House should carefully guard its rights and not permit any encroachment upon them, though if the bill was of very great importance he would be inclined to give way.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD said he did not look upon it as an infringement of their privileges. The standing rules of the House had not been published this year, and he supposed that the parties who addressed a petition to the House of Assembly asking for the bill were not aware that a petition for the bill were not aware that a petition had also to be sent to the Council. The protection of the fisheries was one of the most important subjects that could come before the Legislature, and he thought the House would act wisely in suspending the rule.

Hon. Mr. BALDERSTON said the very fact that a petition had not been sent to this branch of the Legislature, showed that the subject was not one of great importance, and as he thought the privileges of the House were curtailed quite enough already, he would oppose the motion.

Hon. Mr. MURHEAD said the question before the House was not the importance of the Alewives Fisheries, but it was the necessity of adhering to their rules. He was not in favour of contracting their privileges, and would therefore oppose the motion.

Hon. Mr. BEE regretted that no petition had been presented to the Council. He felt himself rather awkwardly situated, for he would like to maintain the dignity of the House. However, as the bill was of some importance to a portion of his constituency, he would support the motion to suspend the rule.

Hon. Mr. HAYTHORNE said he thought there was more to be gained by the bill than lost by suspending the rule, and therefore he would support the proposition of his honor from Georgetown.

Hon. Mr. LORD said the gasperaux fishery was not of much importance. Perhaps as many might be caught as would keep half a dozen families for a week. Still, as the bill was passed by the House of Assembly, it would hardly be fair not to entertain it on account of no petition being presented to the Council.

Hon. Mr. PALMER was surprised that some of their honors should be so ready to allow an encroachment upon the privileges of the House. Their standing rules were not merely for the use of the members of the House, but for the benefit of those whom they represented. The House, in order to proceed with its business properly and with advantage to the people, should have all the information that could be brought to bear upon the subjects which came before it. The proposition made by his honor from Georgetown would have a tendency to encourage non-compliance with their rules, and therefore he opposed it.

Hon. Mr. GORDON said that as they had standing rules, they should abide by them. If they should pass the bill because the House of Assembly had passed it, as his honor from Prince County (Mr. Lord) had said, they were not a legislative body, but a chamber of record. They should stand fast by their rules except in a case of great emergency.

Hon. Mr. WALKER did not think it would be any disparagement of the dignity of the House to suspend the rule and therefore he would support the motion.

The House divided upon the motion that the rule be suspended:

CONTENTS—Hon. Messrs. McDonald, Walker, Lord, Beer and Haythorne—5.

NON-CONTENTS—Hon. Messrs. Palmer, Dingwell, Balderston, Muirhead and Gordon—5.

Thus the names were equal and the President gave the casting vote against the motion. On doing so he remarked that whichever way he would be disposed to vote under other circumstances considering his position, he must maintain the dignity of the House.

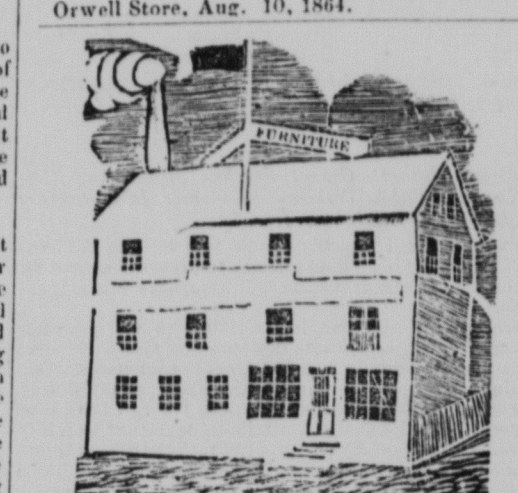
(To be continued.)

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