

THE DAILY EXAMINER.

MARCH 29, 1893.

Registry in Summerside.

In the course of his speech upon the bill providing a registry office in Summerside, Mr. Peters inveighed against the unwisdom of those who had, in the beginning, divided the Province into three counties. They ought, he declared, to have made but one county. Instead of three courts there should be one court. Instead of three jails, one jail, and so in respect to all the county institutions. The logical conclusion of his argument was that the number of County institutions ought to be reduced. That being so, the argument was decidedly against the establishment of a County Registry office at Summerside, though his bill was to provide one.

Moreover, Mr. Peters frankly pointed out the fact the Registry office at Summerside would not for years to come be of much practical value. It will still be necessary, when tracing titles, to refer to the Registry Office and the Land Office in Charlottetown. For instance, a man coming from Tignish to look into a title will first go to the Registry Office in Summerside, and pay his fee, and make his search. While there he will discover that he cannot be certain that he is right unless he come to Charlottetown. So he must needs come here and pay a second fee before he can conclude his examination.

Under these circumstances, the registry office at Summerside will be a great annoyance and a great expense; and it will be a means of harm rather than of good. At any rate, it is merely a sop for Mr. Bell who has been "kicking" and who has been "brought into line."

Legislative Dignity.

WHILE we have a Province, we ought to maintain the dignity of a Province. So long as we have a Legislature, the dignity of a Legislature ought to be maintained. It is greatly to be regretted that the dignity of a Legislature is not, at all times, preserved by all our legislators. A great deal, of course, depends upon the Leader, and Mr. Peters has not, either by his conduct or his measures, elevated the tone of the House of Assembly. We learn that he has threatened to have the galleries closed, because there have been certain emphatic expressions of the popular approval of the contentions and protests of Mr. Shaw and other Liberal Conservative members in respect to the illiberal and unpopular measures now before the Legislature. Mr. Peters cannot now have "closed doors" by way of "suggestions," so he threatens to have them because the popular voice in the gallery cannot be restrained. If that voice were in favor of his Government he would be ready to let it have vent. But it is against him, and he wants to shut it out.

It is undoubtedly requisite that order be maintained in the galleries, as on the floor of the House. But if honorable members always remembered their positions and responsibilities, and were always courteous and consistent in their behavior, the conduct of the crowd in the galleries would not, probably, be open to objection.

The Prohibition Plebiscite.

It is a well known fact that nine-tenths of the people of this Province are in favor of the abolition of the liquor traffic. A plebiscite vote upon that point is not needed. Even the drunkards would be delighted if intoxicants were placed beyond their reach. If everyone were sure that the suppression of the traffic would follow the application of prohibition, and the drink evil be done away, everyone would vote for it. It is the feeling that prohibition cannot be enforced which deters many persons. We have had demonstrated, clearly and beyond the shadow of a doubt, the fact that a prohibitory law which does not prohibit is worse than no law at all. Everything depends upon the effectiveness of the law. But the Government do not propose to obtain an expression of the people's opinion as to the effectiveness of prohibition. They intend to merely ask them to vote whether they are "For Prohibition" or "Against Prohibition." Thoughtful, practical temperance men cannot be satisfied with this. It may, perhaps, please some persons whose zeal is stronger than their good judgment. But it cannot please or satisfy sensible temperance men; for it will amount to nothing at all.

A return of refunds from the Land Office contains the following item: "John Welsh \$10.88, amount overpaid by the Public Works Department on account of Right of Way on Road." The inference from this is that John Welsh obtained \$10.88 more than he ought to have obtained from the Public Works office and was again paid the same amount out of the Land Office. However this may be, what had the Land Office to do with the purchase of a Right of Way? Matters seem to be "a little mixed."

Provincial Legislature.

House of Assembly.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS.

TUESDAY, March 28.

After recess, the House met at 3:45. Mr. Shaw asked the Provincial Secretary for a statement showing all amounts due by the Government in each department of the public service on the 31st Dec. 1892. Hon. Mr. McMillan said he would give all possible information on the subject as soon as he could get it from the different offices.

Mr. Bentley asked the Leader of the Government for a detailed statement of the cost of printing the debentures, whether by public sale or tender or private contract, the person or persons to whom the contract was awarded and to whom the money was paid; also copies of all vouchers connected with the printing and sale of said debentures.

Hon. Mr. Peters said the debentures had been printed here at as low a rate as they could be done for in any part of Canada; the other part of the question he had answered before.

Dr. Jenkins, in referring to his previous question concerning the breeding of cattle at the Stock Farm, commented upon the fact that no such record was kept there, although it was very necessary for those people who desired to know to which of the animals on the Farm stock cattle were bred.

House resumed committee on the bill respecting the selling and dispensing of opium and other drugs. After some time was spent in committee, and the clause moved in the forenoon by Dr. Jenkins had been rejected, the bill passed without amendment.

Mr. H. C. McDonald asked the Commissioner of Public Works to bring down all correspondence connected with the proposed bridge across the Hillsborough, and also for all information concerning a new steamer for the Southport ferry.

The Commissioner promised the information as soon as possible. Mr. McKay asked the Leader of the Government whether the Government had opened any correspondence or taken any action with a view to the purchase of the estate owned by Mrs. W. L. Smith and thereby place the tenants on said estate on an equality with their neighbors.

Mr. Peters said that negotiations had been commenced with Mrs. Smith for the purchase of the lands in question, and as soon as she returned from England the bargain would likely be closed.

The act respecting the legislation of deeds and writings in Prince County was read a second time in committee, with Mr. McWilliams in the chair.

The bill was agreed to without an amendment.

The House then went into committee on the bill to disfranchise Dominion officials. Mr. Bentley pointed out that the Leader of the Government had apparently forgotten that there was to be an amalgamation of the Legislature; for the bill before the House made provision as for two Houses. He seemed to anticipate the loss of the Amalgamation Bill. According to the disfranchising bill Dominion officials would be in a worse position than the Indians of Ontario who are permitted to vote. He thought that Mr. Peters was legislating ahead of public opinion. The disfranchisement of public officials had not been demanded by the people.

Hon. Mr. Peters explained that each of the three bills relating to the Legislature stood upon its own bottom, and that the bill under consideration would operate whether the Amalgamation Bill became law or not.

Mr. Rogers said it was evident that the Government were treading upon dangerous ground. The Government dare not bring in the measure respecting the Legislature en bloc—they must needs bring it in in separate parts. If officials ought to be disfranchised why does not the measure include Provincial officials? Moreover, he would like to know what right the Local Legislature has to interfere with Dominion officials. The bill is evidently part of a scheme to still the voice of the electorate, in order that the Government may keep themselves in power. Mr. Rogers was speaking when the House took recess at six o'clock.

After recess Mr. Rogers resumed the debate on the bill disfranchising Dominion officials. He protested very strongly against the tyrannical action of the Government, and pointed out the injustice of disfranchising any man or any body of men who had the right to vote. He charged that the bill before the House was brought in for party purposes and that its sole object was to keep the Government in power. The disfranchisement of the officials was not asked for, and he challenged anyone in the House to say that he ever heard any of these officials ask that they be stripped of the franchise. Many of the officials were property-holders, and were deeply interested in the welfare of their country. To say that these men should not vote—should not have a voice in the affairs of the Province—was monstrous. The railway men, Custom House and Inland Revenue officials, postmasters and Public Works officials are all shut off from voting,—the county postmaster or the other man who was paid \$100 could not vote, while the man who got \$99 could exercise that right. Why was this? Did the Government think the latter class could be purchased? He challenged any hon. member to point to one single instance where the Dominion Government interfered at elections, or to anyone case where an official had been dismissed for voting. The thirty days clause in the bill he characterized as slipshod. If an official were out of office thirty-one days he could vote. It would be a very easy matter to dismiss a man in this way and re-appoint him after he had voted. This was even worse than the mortgage vote. The Commissioner of Public Works says he never heard anyone object to the government, the disfranchisement or the mortgage vote. Did they ever ask anyone except the most rabid Grit what he thought of it? Not they. Their questions are confined to their supporters. Did they ever call a public meeting to get the opinion of the electors on these measures? They did not. They knew well that the verdict would be

unfavorable. The honorable member for West River says the country is pretty evenly divided politically. He knows right well it is; that there is a small majority of Conservatives. Hence his ill-fate, in order, if possible, to get a majority on the other side. But the Government's action might act as a boom or a check on their own heads. Taking the bill as a whole, it is one of the most outrageous and iniquitous measures ever submitted—its sole object is to further the ends of the present administration.

Mr. Bell took up the matter of the disfranchisement of the railway officials. A majority of these men were Conservative and a minority Liberal, all came up on election day and voted against the Liberals. He could not say that these men were ordered to vote in this way. On election day, however, the "healers" of the Conservative party are found at the railway station and take the men up to the polls to vote for their candidates. Fear of the leaders of the Conservative party here who have influence at Ottawa compel the men to vote against their consciences. The man who goes up to the polls and votes Liberal is generally spotted, and the chance he has is small. The influence of the railway is also exercised in other ways. Great numbers of men are employed just prior to each election and others are transported over the line where it most suits the party. The parties here are pretty evenly divided, and the influence which the Dominion Government exercises is great enough to control the politics of the province. It was proposed to disfranchise the Dominion officials in order to get a free exercise of public opinion. Many of the Dominion officials have asked for the passage of such a bill, that now before the House, and it was only in this way that the Dominion Government could be prevented from exercising an influence in our election that they should not have.

Mr. Shaw was the next speaker. In opening he referred to the manner in which the Government had pandered to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor last year, and pointed out Mr. Bell's extraordinary conduct in the matter of the two-thirds clause in the bill respecting the Legislature. Then he took up the assertion of the Government that the Province is ruled from Ottawa, and their claim that the railway men and other officials were not allowed to vote as they pleased. He did not believe that any such influence was exercised, and he defied the Government to prove that. He said the railway men were all good men, honest and upright in their dealing, and thought it exceedingly unfair and unjust that they should be deprived of the right to vote simply because they are in the employ of the railway. Then he considered the assertion of the Government that the late Government did not press the claims of the Province on the Dominion Government as strongly as they should, because of the alleged influence exercised by the Dominion in their interests at local elections, and asked what under the sun the present Government were doing in the matter. So far as he knew they had not done anything at all, and the Province was going behind at the rate of about \$40,000 a year. The Sullivan Government sunk party interests and pressed our claims with such success that they were able to ward off taxation. At one time they got the sum of \$16,589.25 from the Dominion on account of our long term criminals; at another time \$1,100.75 on the same account, and at another \$4,075.20. Then they secured \$77,000 on account of wharves and piers. They also procured the steamer Stanley to keep up communication with the mainland, and had \$600,000 added to our capital at Ottawa or an increase of \$20,000 a year to our subsidy. How dare any one say in the face of these facts that our claims were not properly pressed—that we went about the work in a milk and water way. The idea was ridiculous. It was a despotic dog, that would deprive any man of the heaven-born privilege of voting at elections. Every man should have an equal voice in the affairs of the country. We would be unworthy sons of worthy sires if we did not do all in our power to prevent the outrage the Government was about to perpetrate upon the Dominion officials. He believed in the broad principle of one man one vote—that every man should have equal rights and privileges. In the Home Rule Bill, Gladstone places the qualification for a voter for the Senate of Ireland at \$100, but our great Liberal Government decrees that the qualification for a Legislative Council voter shall be property to the value of \$250—and gives the property holder two votes for the young men. Contrast the Liberalism of Gladstone with the broad principle of one man one vote—that every man should have equal rights and privileges. In the Home Rule Bill, Gladstone places the qualification for a voter for the Senate of Ireland at \$100, but our great Liberal Government decrees that the qualification for a Legislative Council voter shall be property to the value of \$250—and gives the property holder two votes for the young men. Contrast the Liberalism of Gladstone with the broad principle of one man one vote—that every man should have equal rights and privileges. 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