

# The Newfoundland.

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## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MONDAY, Feb. 5.

The House met at 8 o'clock. Mr. GODDEN, from the Select Committee to draft an address of thanks in reply to his Excellency's Speech at the opening of the session, presented the address, which was received and read a first time. Second reading to-morrow.

The hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL, pursuant to notice, moved the appointment of a Sergeant-at-Arms. There were only so far as he knew, two applicants for the office, and the majority of the House concurred in opinion that the office should be given to Mr. John B. Barnes. He had, therefore, much pleasure in moving that Mr. Barnes be appointed. That gentleman was well known to them all. He (hon. A.G.) had the pleasure of long knowing him, and of knowing that he was a man of the highest integrity, and of long being engaged in mercantile pursuits, but latterly, unfortunately, he was also the brother of the late Mr. Richard Barnes, who did very good service to the Colony as a leading member of the Assembly. Mr. Barnes was a man of liberal tendencies, all his life long. There was also the application of another person, Mr. William Woodley, whom he (hon. A.G.) had also long known, and who was well known to hon. members. His application was considered, but the majority concurred in supporting Mr. Barnes for the office, and he (hon. A.G.) had much pleasure, therefore, in moving that Mr. Barnes be appointed to the vacant office of Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. PROWSE was happy to second the motion for the appointment of Mr. Barnes. His only regret was that Mr. Barnes should be reduced to such circumstances as to be an applicant for the office. They all remembered the highly respectable merchant firm of John B. Barnes & Co., and he (Mr. P.) was aware that many of our shipmasters had been brought forward by that house; among others the master of the steamer Ariel. Hon. members had all a good opinion of Mr. John B. Barnes, and he (Mr. P.) had much pleasure in seconding the motion for his appointment to the office of Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. HOGSETT.—Before the motion was put, he wished to make some remarks. He was not aware that on this side of the House there was any disposition to oppose the appointment. He believed Mr. Barnes was a very worthy man, but before the motion was agreed to, he (Mr. H.) had something to say about the salary, and would have liked that the Attorney General had stated what salary would be proposed, as on this side they were powerless except to suggest. He considered that a salary of £50 was ample, considering the duties involved and the unfortunate state of the country; and seeing the office was a necessary one, so that it could not be abolished. The office had merely to occupy a chair beside the bar, and to call out order when directed by the Speaker, and occasionally to serve a writ, when some hon. member was obnoxious; and £50 was ample compensation for such services for three months of the year. It was as much as a member of the House got, who had to discharge much more onerous duties. He moved that the salary be £50.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The salary was an after consideration, and could not come up as an amendment. The question now was as to the appointment.

Mr. HOGSETT.—It was not an Executive appointment.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—It was not, but one to be filled up by the House; but the question now was what salary that officer should receive. It may afterwards become a question for the House whether the salary ought to be reduced, and he (hon. A.G.)'s own opinion was that there ought to be a considerable reduction, but not to £50, there was a number of other salaries in which reductions ought to be made. They gave the principal Door-keeper £230, and certainly the Sergeant-at-Arms, under whose orders he was placed, ought to have more than £200.

Mr. HOGSETT.—The Door-keeper's was not a new appointment.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—We only voted the salary from session to session.

Mr. HOGSETT.—The House had not hitherto interfered with those salaries; but this was a new appointment, and now was the time to say what the salary should be; otherwise the Sergeant-at-Arms, at the end of the session, might set up a claim to the same salary as his predecessor.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—He was not disposed to quarrel with economy in any department of the public service; but he did not agree that officers should be underpaid. Besides, the hon. member could not put that as an amendment to the appointment, while there was a difference as to the salary. They had to make the appointment whether the salary should be £50 or £75, or even £100. The salary of the late officer was too high, and all agreed there should be a reduction. Those who voted for the appointment would not be in any way bound to the salary, which would be afterwards considered by the House when their report was presented. It could not be decided in the manner proposed, and unless there was some other name to be submitted, no other amendment could be proposed.

Mr. GLEN.—thought it was necessary to fix the salary before the appointment was made; and if the Government had decided what the salary was to be, it might as well be stated. They all agreed that the appointment was necessary, and as the officer must have a salary, this was the best time to decide what it should be. There was another matter to which he wished to refer, but wished there was a full attendance of members on this side when he did so. They were aware that for the past two or three sessions there was no recognised leader of the opposition; and hon. members of this side had considered the matter, and had asked him (Mr. G.) to accept the appointment of leader, which he was unwilling to do, as he did not consider himself fit for it, but, at all events, if he did so, it must be on the understanding, that members on this side abstain from using violent language, or such as they would not dare to use in a private house. There was an important question coming up, that of Confederation, one of the most important which could engage the attention of any Legislature, involving the consideration of whether they would give up the management of their own affairs, which the House had held on the introduction of Responsible Government, and the subject should be entered upon with the greatest deliberation, and decided with a due regard to the best interests of the country. He trusted, therefore, that on that and all other questions coming up, the discussions should be conducted so as to command public respect.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The hon. member would find every courtesy extended to him so far as this side of the House was concerned; and from his long experience and desire to represent improper proceedings on the other side, he (hon. A.G.) was satisfied that nothing on this side would interrupt that decorum which should characterise the proceedings of the House.

Mr. PINSENT thought that so far as the salary of the Sergeant-at-Arms was concerned, there would be no difficulty in fixing its amount, of course there would be considerable reduction that let the appointment be first made, and then let them determine what that salary should be.

Mr. RENOUS regretted that it had become necessary to appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms but as the office had become vacant, he believed they were all agreed as to who should be appointed. But there was an important matter to be decided as to what they should pay that officer, which must be regarded as a view of the present circumstances of the country. The late officer had a salary of £144 cy, which was far more than they should give his successor. The Attorney General told the House that the salary would not be so much. But this side of the House wanted to have the salary definitely fixed now; and considering the circumstances of the Colony, and the duties of the office, they thought that £50 was sufficient compensation for that office.

If he received a pound a day, for three months during the winter, they thought he would be sufficiently paid. It was necessary to practice the strictest economy. The people were ground down by the taxes imposed upon them. Without any disrespect for Mr. Barnes, for whom he (Mr. R.) had a high respect, he would say that there were many equally respectable men in the community who would be glad to take the appointment at £50 a session. If the principal Door-keeper received £50, it was no reason that they should give a higher salary to a superior officer who was now to be appointed. They must consider the circumstances of the people. In Nova Scotia, with three times their population, the Sergeant-at-Arms had only £75 a session.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—What did the principal Door-keeper receive?

Mr. RENOUS.—\$3. Considering the revenues of Nova Scotia, and the circumstances of its people; and also the duties of the office, he held that £50 was ample compensation. He did not consider the professions on the other side as sufficient guarantee that the salary would be sufficiently reduced; and he was not disposed to leave it unsettled until the report of the Select Committee was presented at the close of the session. Let the House decide it now, with a due regard to the circumstances of the country. How much was the revenue of the past year short of the Estimate? He said there should be a large and general reduction of salaries, which were far in excess of what was paid in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The hon. member, Mr. Glen, had announced his appointment as leader of the opposition. The hon. member enjoyed the confidence of this side of the House, and he (Mr. R.) would be glad to support him in representing every thing becoming the dignity of the House; but he regretted that the hon. member went so far as to assume that it was on this side of the House such proceedings took place. The other side was as guilty in that respect as this side.

Mr. GLEN.—It was a mistake on his part, which he had intended to correct.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—It was not correct to assert that unbecoming language was used on this side.

Mr. RENOUS trusted the debates on both sides would be so conducted as to secure the respect of the whole community. With respect to the matter under consideration, the salary of the Sergeant-at-Arms should now be definitely settled. He did not agree with the Attorney General that it should be left till the end of the session.

Hon. RECEIVER GENERAL.—That salary should bear some proportion to the salaries of the lower officers. It would be perfectly absurd that the salary of the first officer of that department should be less than that of an officer under him. Supposing it was made \$30, it would be only a little over half what the late Sergeant-at-Arms received.

Mr. HOGSETT.—They wanted, on this side, to know what the salary was to be. They had fully considered it, and saw no reason, because the principal Door-keeper received £50 stg., that they should give over £50 cy. for this office, in making a new appointment. The salary of the Door-keeper was not now before the House, because, when appointed, it was considered that the appointment was for four years, and it was not now a question of what he should receive. But this was a new appointment, and they ought now in making it, to determine what the salary should be. He would press his amendment, that the salary should not exceed \$300.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Such an amendment was irregular and could not be put from the chair.

Mr. HOGSETT contended he had a right to move that resolution. If not now fixed the matter would remain for the Contingency Committee, and after a long session and many keen debates, there generally was a feeling of giving way at the end of the session, and if the Contingency Committee came up with a report of £75 or £100 for this office, it would be carried without much opposition.

Mr. TALBOT regretted not being present at the commencement of that debate. He had given notice that he would move that the salary should not exceed \$200. As to the objection of the Attorney General, that such a motion could not be put, nothing appeared to him more germane to the motion of which the Attorney General had given notice, than when the appointment was moved it should be added that the salary be \$200.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—But he had moved the appointment of a Sergeant-at-Arms, and the question being the appointment of that officer, the motion as to salary came up as an amendment, which was not admissible.

Mr. TALBOT.—Did he think £50 too low? He (Mr. T.) thought it a sufficient salary for the office. It required no labour, either mental or physical, and that officer was not put to any farthing of expense; and would the Attorney General say that they could not pay a gentleman in every respect suitable, for that salary? It was to be assumed that all Government officers were gentlemen, and it was not their salaries that made them such. There was an absolute necessity for curtailing the public expenditure in every department, and hon. members on this side of the House were determined to use every possible exertion to accomplish it. Now when it was proposed that the people should give up their liberties, earned by such protracted and earnest struggles, it was incumbent upon those who opposed it to a course to do all within their power to resuscitate the country by the means it possessed within itself. The salaries of the public officers were enormous. Was a country like this, with only 120,000 of a population, not more than that of a third or fourth rate city, with abundant resources, lying dormant, to have its revenues absorbed by the payment of £100,000 to the officers of the Government?

Mr. PROWSE.—How much of that sum was absorbed by the pauper expenditure?

Mr. TALBOT doubted if the paupers even got the money. They had been charged with the money which had been squandered for other purposes. But on this side they were determined to effect sweeping reductions. If they could get off from £20,000 to £30,000 from the civil expenditure, without impairing the efficiency of the public service, it would go far towards resuscitating the country. They would not attempt to do any thing which a reasonable man would say would be fair. With such a saving they would be able to lift up the country, and make it one of the most prosperous on either side of the Atlantic. It was a country of boundless resources, which could be made to support three times its present population in affluence. But it was sunk in misery and destitution through misgovernment. He did not say the present Government had produced all the evil. Much had resulted from the narrow and selfish policy of former Governments. But the present Government had intensified the evils resulting from former misgovernment, until they brought the country in its present deplorable circumstances. And now that the vessel was going upon the rocks, it became necessary to reverse the helm, so as to get the vessel out of the breakers. The Government could suggest no remedy for our depressed condition, no means of elevating the people but Confederation, which might benefit those who were its earnest advocates, but would be productive of anything but advantage to the people. But, while opposed to parting with our liberties, he said that the country could be elevated by a reduction of its enormous expenditure. If they laid £25,000 or £30,000 saved of the enormous salaries, and that sum applied to stimulate the industry and develop the resources of the country, it would soon effect a very great change for the better. Ten years before the present Government came into power the people had their food duty free; there was no duty upon flour or pork or butter, or upon several other necessities of life; but no sooner did the present Government assume the reins than they imposed duties upon all these articles, while lately they had also increased the duty upon manufactured goods. But this side were prepared to show that with a proper reduction in the civil expenditure, these duties might be dispensed with, and a surplus left to stimulate the energies of the country. It would be for the Government, if they desired to retain to their places, to give effect to these savings which this side would show could be easily carried out. Hon. members on this side did not covet their places. Let the present holders

retain them. On this side they were willing to act the part of Mr. Gladstone with the R-form Bill, who carried the measure while in opposition. So this side were ready to carry out a financial reform for the benefit of the country, without caring for the emoluments of office, which the present holders were welcome to retain at such reduced salaries as were commensurate with the extent of their duties and the circumstances of the country.

Hon. A. SUGA.—The hon. member, in his anxiety to give out the results of his deliberations for the past nine months, had jumped altogether from the question before the House, which was simply the appointment of a Sergeant-at-Arms. The hon. member had gone into all manner of questions, several of which would come up in due course, when they could be better discussed than in the irregular way in which the hon. member had referred to them. But such was the earnestness of the hon. member for St. John's West to set his views before the country, that he must lay hold of that opportunity to do so. This question now for their decision was the appointment of a Sergeant-at-Arms, and it seemed to be the unanimous opinion of the House that Mr. Barnes should be appointed, although there was some difference of opinion as to the salary. He (hon. Mr. S.) was glad there was so much unanimity about Mr. Barnes, who was an old friend of his and a worthy man. He (hon. Mr. S.) would not have troubled the House with any observations beyond the question before the chair, were it not for the irregular observations in which the hon. member for St. John's West had indulged, with the evident intention of producing mistaken impressions, which he (hon. Mr. S.) would not allow to go forth uncontradicted. The hon. member must inform the House and the country that he was opposed to Confederation. That question was now before the House, and it had been stated by the hon. Attorney General that resolutions were to be submitted on the question, when there would be an opportunity for the regular discussion. When it came up he (hon. Mr. S.) would be prepared to deal with it. But the hon. member proposed to obviate the necessity of going into Confederation, by raising the people to a state of prosperity by means of a sweeping reduction of the public expenditures. Now it appeared to him (hon. Mr. S.) that there was an evil intent of sincerity in such professions of a desire to reduce official salaries, when hon. members opposite anticipated that the approaching general election would transfer to them the offices of the Government with their emoluments. The hon. member, however, affirmed the practicability of reducing the civil expenditure by £30,000. Now the total amount of the official salaries, from the highest to the lowest, including those of the officers of Customs, was only £32,053 stg. currency; and how was the hon. member to effect a saving of £25,000 or £30,000 out of that, and still maintain the public departments efficiently?—The hon. member must have known perfectly well that it was impossible to make such a saving, and said it merely for the sake of effect. The Government had made considerable reductions in the civil expenditure, as officers became vacant by the death of their incumbents, by making no new appointments where they could be dispensed with. The civil expenditure now was considerably less than it was a few years ago, and the reductions were effected with a due regard to the claims of existing incumbents, and to the circumstances of a large portion of our population; all knew that distress existed, and for years past large sums had to be disbursed from the public treasury for the relief of the poor; but the decision had been come to, with the concurrence of both sides of the House, that relief should no longer be afforded to the able-bodied poor. But the hon. member would elevate the condition of the people by the saving which he was to effect in the civil expenditure. Granting that it was practicable to effect such a saving, how, with the population prostrate from one end of the country to the other, was he to elevate them to a state of comparative comfort with a sum of £30,000? What would that saving effect? Why, it would amount to just 61 a quinal on all the fish exported from the Island; so that if a fisherman caught 50 quinals of fish, it would be equivalent to his getting 18s 6d a quinal for it, in place of 18s. And would 25s a year to a fisherman's family make up the difference between poverty and comfort? The people were not so ignorant as to be imposed upon by any such absurdity. It was not by any limited saving in the civil expenditure that the condition of the people was to be elevated, but by opening up to them new sources of employment, and this Confederation would effect. The hon. member indulged in the specious clap net that in joining the Confederacy the people would part with their liberties, as it in the Dominion of Canada they had not as well balanced freedom as we enjoy in this Colony. In the great Confederacy of the United States, which has advanced in the course of two or three generations to be one of the foremost nations of the world, would it be said that the people of the several States had parted with their liberty in forming a Confederacy which commanded the respect of all civilized nations? The hon. member charged the Government with increasing the burden of taxation upon the people. They had imposed no higher duties than were absolutely necessary

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