

Inches, that the order had been repealed, and the grants would issue to all previous sales under the order. This was the way the business of the office was managed. They sold land under certain conditions, and then violated them. Why did they not extend some of these privileges to the Hartley sales? They forgot who were required to perform the conditions of the law to the latter, and received no grants. The intention of the Commissioner, or the want of knowledge in reference to the matter, has caused persons a great inconvenience. I know it from the many calls I have to attend to in these matters, and my communications to the Crown Land Office will show a further evidence in regard to it. I will mention a case where a grant was issued to a man who actually does not own the land, and four or five others have been kept out of their grants where the labor had been performed, within my personal knowledge, for the last three or four years. This matter was brought under the notice of the Surveyor General during the last Session. I had to take the matter in hand myself, and get a survey, and have now the returns in my hand for the purpose of being handed in to the Crown Land Office, which being done, I am informed the grants will be issued. If this is the way one of the most important departments, affecting every settler throughout the Province, is to be managed—if the head of the department is incompetent—it is a charge against the Government, and I hope by a vote of this House a change will take place, and a thorough reformation be established in that office.

The Surveyor General attacked me in a rather defiant manner, in reference to a case—, that I did not inform somebody that I knew this Order of Council was rescinded. (Mr. Botsford—I did not, I made no charge against him. It was in reply to a charge made against me in reference to a petition, he said it was not known, and I said he knew it.) I made no charge. I said there appeared to be some misapprehension in reference to something in connection with Mr. Hartley. (Mr. Botsford—I made no charge against Mr. Hartley. I asked his hon. colleague (Mr. Lindsay) who the deputy was that stated the land could not be sold, and he replied, Mr. Hartley. I was replying when he (Mr. Connell) rose up and stated it was not known. I replied that he knew of it, and others knew of it.) I stood up for the purpose of removing an erroneous impression, so far as Mr. Hartley was concerned. Mr. Hartley knew nothing in reference to this order being rescinded, until it was remarked upon by the papers in St. John. He said he had seen in the *Telegraph*, that there was a great difficulty about the Government selling land, and that the order of Council had been rescinded. I replied I had known that some time ago. He said that this was the first he had heard of it. The Surveyor General knows that was Mr. Hartley's position, and that was the reason I made these observations.

The debate was then adjourned until to-morrow.

T. P. D.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27.

The House went into Committee of the Whole (Mr. Scoville in the chair) in further consideration of a Bill to abolish the property qualification of members to serve in the General Assembly of the Province.

MR. COSTIGAN explained that the object of the Bill was to do away with the law that now existed. That demanded that candidates offering to serve in the General Assembly of the Province should possess real estate to the value of £300. The true principle, which it was the object of the Bill to establish, was, that the choice of representatives should be left to the constituents. The abolishment of the property qualification would give them a freer choice, and this would be better for the interests of the country. As the law now stood, a man might be elected to serve, in whom all the electors of a County saw one, were perfectly willing to confide, and this one man might object to his election, and say he had no property qualification. (Mr. Costigan then quoted from a despatch to Mr. Dundas, Governor of Prince Edward's Island, from the late Secretary of the Colonies, on the subject of election of the Legislative Council, in which the Duke of Newcastle said, that the property qualification ought to be possessed not by the candidate, but by the voter. In Great Britain no property qualification was now required of candidates to the Imperial Parliament. With regard to the law in the Province, he did not see why it should be allowed to stand on the Statute Book, for it was not carried out. It gave to the man having no property qualification, but who did not respect the law, an advantage over the honest, unqualified man who did.

HON. ATTORNEY GENERAL said he had always opposed this Bill. Though he could not deny that the property qualification had been abolished in England. He did not see that was a conclusive argument for abolishing it in the Province. The principle of safety and conservatism required that the men who sent representatives to the Legislature should be possessed of property. If the electors sent a representative who had no property, would he be a safe man to whom to submit the protection of their property? He did not think that it was too much to demand that all men who proposed to serve as representatives in the House of Assembly should be possessed of real estate to the amount of £300.

MR. NEEDHAM said that there were some great principles connected with the principle of the Bill that ought to be understood. He would take the present opportunity to announce his political faith. He wished the people to understand that he had not been born a politician—the principles he maintained had not grown up with him from his boyhood, but had their commencement about the year 1847 and 48. Ever since the time he had been politically regenerated, he could say that he had never fallen away from political grace. He entertained the same principles now as these he had learnt in the years 1847 and '8. In making use of bold expressions of opinion, men were often misunderstood, but the opinion he was about to utter he had before expressed on the floors of the House and outside its walls. He did believe in the principle of universal suffrage, and he would tell the House why he believed in it. In this deliberative Assembly where they legislated on the lives, property and liberties of the people—he wished to say that that principle was consonant with the spirit of the British Constitution, and he wished that opinion put on record. When he spoke of universal suffrage—he meant that every man in the community who paid taxes had a right to vote, and to have a say in the legislation of the country. They were there to legislate on the lives, liberties, and properties of the people—and the most abject man, he meant subject, not in spirit, but in purse, who paid the least amount of taxes had as much right to have a voice in the choice of a representative as the richest. Liberty was dear to every man—the life of a man was not to be measured by the riches he possessed, it was as precious to the man who had scarcely a rag to cover him—as to him who was clothed in purple and fine linen; was not life to Lazarus the beggar as dear as was life to the rich man Dives? He said that the most abject man in condition had the right to an equal voice in the legislature of his country with the most powerful.

He would call the attention of his brethren of the law to a statement made by Sir William Blackstone in his commentaries—a man whose dicta was never discredited from. It was perfectly consonant he said, with the spirit of the British Constitution, that every man who paid taxes should have a vote, and the time would come when that principle would be carried out—might was not always right. The Parliament of England when it established property qualification for members, gave as a reason why a certain class of men ought to be excluded from the right of voting, that they were men of so mean a situation in life that they had no wife or child of their own. If Sir William Blackstone had lived in our day, he would know that it was not a ways the poor man who was influenced by the will of others, or who was most corrupt. He had seen a poor man in one of the back settlements of York County, whose barns and house had been swept away by fire, who had solicited and received donations to help him to repair his loss; he had seen that man at the polls offered \$10 to vote against a candidate whose principles he believed in; but though homeless, barnless and shelterless, he turned away from the proffered bribe and voted as his judgment and his conscience dictated. And that was a specimen of a York elector. He had assigned the reason why the property qualification was at first demanded, but when Blackstone said that it was consonant with the spirit of the British Constitution that every man who was taxed should have the right to vote, then, he said, policy ought to give way to absolute right. It was the Legislature that gave the people the right to vote. But he held that it was the inalienable right of every man born into the world to enjoy life and liberty. Go back to the most ancient times, and they would find that every man had the same right as he came from the hand of God. Then the weak and most abject man was equal in these respects with the richest and strongest. That was the original state, and the same rights that existed then existed now. That inalienable right to life and liberty, and to have a voice in the Government, had never been given up by the people. Then, if the right to vote had never been taken up, there was no reason why they could be asked to give the people the right; and the people had the right to