

Mr. TASCHEREAU.—I say you did say so to myself in Mr. King's presence.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD.—Now the hon. gentleman had got up and added another statement, beyond any he had yet made, just as Major de Bellefeuille had in his second letter, invented and given currency to a thing he never thought of at first. It was really wonderful the amount of inventive genius the gentlemen possessed. This, he supposed, was only the commencement of the new system of tactics adopted by the Opposition—the catching up of every casual observation, made without thought of their ever being reported again as earnest statements, and twisting and manufacturing them into something credible. To show how liable people were to be mistaken in endeavoring to repeat casual statements, he begged to read the report of Hon. J. A. Macdonald's remarks in reference to what Mr. King told him, and then Mr. King's own version of what had occurred, (which passages have already appeared in the MERCURY.) If the hon. member for Kingston was unable to repeat correctly what Mr. King expressly told him only a few days ago, how was it possible for gentlemen to state in such a positive manner as they had pretended to do, the very words used in a casual conversation of six months previous? Was it at all surprising, under such circumstances, that what had been stated wore a color that was never given to it at the time it occurred, or that things should be added to the story that had never transpired? For his own part, he defied any hon. gentleman to say that he had ever made any such charges against any member of the House as had been made against him during the past twelve months. In conclusion, he remarked that he was sorry if the hon. member for Sherbrooke understood him to mean that he was in any manner instrumental in bringing up the charges of Grand Trunk bribery last session, as he only meant to say that he had acquiesced in the propriety of their being made by his failure to disclaim, at the time, any connection with them. (Applause.)

Hon. Mr. GALT, in a somewhat excited manner declared that the statement just made to the House was by no means satisfactory to him, and was not such a course as he would have expected the hon. gentleman to take in reference to the charge of bribery of the Grand Trunk Railway. Those were not political charges, but they were made in the face of the people of Canada, and they ought to have been met by the Government with a full explanation and investigation. He would remark, moreover, that those charges related more to him (Hon. John S. Macdonald) than to his two colleagues, for one of the interviews was with him alone. And when the hon. gentleman undertook to say that certain members of the Opposition had made charges, he ought to have had a sufficient sense of honor to have stated that the leaders of the Opposition had a desire to prevent an indecent exposure. (Hear, hear, and ironical laughter.)

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD.—Heaven helps them, if we are indebted only to the forbearance of that side of the House for immunity from exposure. (Hear, hear.)

Hon. Mr. GALT went on to say that there was one gentleman in Canada more than another against whom the making of charges of corruption, and of corrupt offers, could be made and proved, it was the hon. member for Cornwall. (Oh! oh!) It did not lie in his mouth to appeal to either his past or his future conduct as a member of that House. As to those conversations, the hon. gentleman made nothing out of them. There was the direct statements of his (Hon. Mr. Galt's) hon. friends, and the reply was that they were only badinage. When the attempt to seduce hon. members of the House from their upright and consistent course failed, then the unfortunate gentleman who had served as the tool for conveying the corrupt offers was cruelly deprived of his appointment, for no fault of his, but because his relations on the floor of the House were too honest to accept a bribe. What a pitiful defense the hon. Premier had offered to the country for his conduct. He did not deny in the main, the correctness of the statements that had been made. He did not pretend to deny that he had some communication with the two hon. gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, nor that Major de Bellefeuille was not properly qualified for the station he held. When it was found that his friends in the House were not open to the acceptance of a bribe, then it was found that the interests of retrenchment required his dismissal. The whole case was admitted. It was admitted that the offers were made, and everybody knew that Major de Bellefeuille had been dismissed. There was no doubt whatever, in his mind, that if it were not for the fact that his friends remained true, Major de Bellefeuille would have been the commandant of the two districts, instead of having been dismissed the service.

Hon. Mr. DORION said he had no doubt that when he hon. member for Sherbrooke came to reflect upon the statement that his hon. friend the leader of the Government had made to the House, and upon his own remarks in reply, he would feel that those remarks were recalled for. The tone of his hon. colleague had not invited the most unjust aspersions that had just been cast upon him, and he had hoped that the debate was about to close without a repetition of those disgraceful scenes which characterized its commencement. (Hear, hear.)

Hon. Mr. GALT.—Disgraceful scenes!

Hon. Mr. DORION.—Yes, disgraceful scenes of which the hon. gentlemen themselves had been ashamed. Every one of them had felt compelled to apologize for them as they rose, one after another, to address the House during the past week. What were the facts in reference to Major de Bellefeuille's dismissal? It was charged that the Minister of Militia had dismissed him because his friends in the House would not support the Government; but after the statements that had been made by his hon. colleague, it was plain to the House that he was only dismissed because his services were no longer required. He was dismissed in pursuance of the policy adopted by the Government last session, and which policy was almost unanimously supported by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. Only two officers had been dismissed in Lower Canada, in accordance with the power placed in the hands of the Government at last session, and those were the two senior Brigade Majors then in commission. What reason was there for claiming any preference for Major de Bellefeuille? Why ought he to be retained while a senior officer was dismissed? The two Brigade Majors dismissed were the two who had the smallest number of companies under their superintendence, and he defied any man to show that their dismissal was not perfectly justifiable. The hon. member for Sherbrooke in referring to the dismissal of Major Bellefeuille, had sought to manufacture political capital out of that circumstance. But the real question at issue was this—Could the dismissal of Major de Bellefeuille be justified on public grounds? This question was easy to answer, and the answer must be in the affirmative. And, if, before he was dismissed, some jovial remarks were passed, was the Government to be judged by whatever construction the Opposition were pleased to put on these remarks? The hon. member for Sherbrooke had referred to the allegations about the Grand Trunk. But did that hon. gentleman seriously intend to make any accusation against the government on this head? That hon. gentleman knew very well that the hon. member for Kingston had had a notice on the paper with reference to this subject, and when the day came the Government insisted on going on with it. (Hear, hear.) When the discussion came up again he (Hon. Mr. Dorion) challenged the hon. member for Kingston to bring the subject forward. (Hear.) The hon. member for Sherbrooke and others might choose their own time, but he (the speaker) would say that the Government would skir no investigation on that or any other matter, when their personal honor was concerned. (Applause.) These Grand Trunk charges were got up for the sake of effect—they were part of a plot that was concocted to damage a Government the Opposition could not break down. (Hear, hear.) These accusations were first published in Montreal, and brought down to Quebec by express in order to be used against the Government. But he would now state that the Government desired any investigations either inside or outside this House. (Applause.)

Hon. Mr. GALT.—Are the Government prepared for an inquiry by a committee into these accusations?

Hon. Mr. DORION.—Certainly.

Hon. Mr. GALT.—Well, I would feel wanting in my duty if I did not put a notice that effect on the paper.

Hon. Mr. MACDOUGAL.—There will be other committees, too.

Mr. TASCHEREAU said the facts were before the country, and the statements made by the hon. members for Lewis and Vaudreuil, by Major de Bellefeuille, and by himself (Mr. Taschereau) were in reality uncontradicted; but even supposing a direct denial were given, he would be quite content to leave it to the country to decide, even if he (Mr. Taschereau) stood alone at issue with the hon. Premier.

Mr. BLANCHET said that if no action had been taken, he would have looked upon the statement made to him as a conversation. As it was followed up by action, he looked upon it as a message. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. POWELL said he had intended to speak upon the Address, but the time of the House had been so much taken up by other hon. members that he had been prevented from doing so, and would at present make only a few observations. He would not help himself by that the time was when the word of a Minister of the Crown was taken as a guarantee of truth. Now, unfortunately, that time had passed. He did not intend to discuss the question as to the guilt or innocence of the hon. Premier in reference to the charges brought against him. He appealed to his colleagues and followers who had been outraged by the indecency of which he had been guilty, time and again, in attempting to corrupt the public men of the Province, to say whether his conduct had been worthy of the head of the Government? It was notorious that this sort of thing had been carried on to a great extent by the hon. Premier; and not a member of the cabinet but had felt degraded by it. It was desirable the debate should now close. Let the country judge whether the overtures made by him were of a corrupt nature or not, or deserving of universal condemnation. (Cheers.)

Mr. BELLEROSE proceeded to make some explanations in reference to the proceedings in connexion with the dismissal of Major de Bellefeuille, when he was interrupted by cries of "order."

The SPEAKER decided that the discussion, ever since the adoption of the last clause of the Address, had been irregular.

Mr. BELLEROSE moved an amendment to the motion for adjournment, and went on to denounce the Government for their dismissal of Major de Bellefeuille.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON rose to say that he believed the rumor alluded to by Hon. Mr. McGee, that a bill abolishing the bonding system had passed the House of Representatives was unfounded, and that the rumor arose out of the fact that a bill referring to some local matter for the purpose of extending the time during which goods might be taken out of bond, in the United States, had passed the House of Representatives.

Hon. Mr. CARTIER said a bill to abolish the bonding system, with respect to Canada, had been introduced into the House of Representatives, and referred to a Committee.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON said he believed there was little danger of its being passed.

The House adjourned at two o'clock a.m.

Legislative Council

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THURSDAY, 3rd March, 1864.

After routine,  
GOVERNMENT MEASURES.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL begged to inquire from the Hon. Provincial Secretary whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce any of their measures this session in this House; and if so, whether he could indicate which of the measures would be so introduced.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSSON BLAIR said he believed some of the measures would be introduced in this House, but he could not just at present say which. The subject was under the consideration of the Government.

The House then adjourned.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 3rd March, 1864.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at three o'clock, and read letters from the petitioners against the sitting members for Quebec Centre and Laprairie, withdrawing their contestations.

Hon. Mr. DORION enquired of the hon. member for Montreal East, whether it was likely that the Hon. J. H. Cameron, Chairman of the Joliette Election Committee, would be here to-morrow. It was for the convenience of the Committee that he asked this question of the hon. member for Montreal East.

Mr. SIMPSON said he had received a letter from the Hon. J. H. Cameron yesterday, stating that he was better, and that he expected to be in Quebec in a few days.

Mr. McGIVERN suggested that the Committee, under these circumstances, should be allowed to adjourn.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON.—That would not be according to law.

Hon. Mr. DORION.—It would be impossible to have an adjournment except on the resolution of the Committee, and the Committee could not meet in the absence of their Chairman, the Hon. J. H. Cameron.

On a motion to that effect, the House adjourned for five minutes, in order to allow the Committee on the Verchers election to adjourn until the 14th day of March.

The SPEAKER having again taken the chair,

Hon. Mr. CARTIER enquired at what time the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne would be presented to His Excellency.

Hon. Mr. DORION.—His Excellency is not now in town, but he will be here to-morrow.