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ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

**Mr. Marter's Motion Respecting
Mr. Aubrey White.**

THE ATTACK FALLS FLAT.

**Facilities for the Education of
Farmers' Sons.**

**THE AGREEMENT WITH THE ASHBRIDGE'S BAY
COMPANY MUST BE SUBMITTED
TO THE PEOPLE.**

TORONTO, March 23, 1892.

In the Legislative Assembly to-day a report was read from two of the Commissioners of Estate Bills, Chief Justice Magarty and Justice MacLennan, upon the bill to enable Mary Soden to sell certain lands in the City of Guelph, to the effect that the bill in its present shape ought not to pass into law.

The bill to amend the act respecting the public burying ground at Guelph was read a third time and passed.

AN OLD STORY.

Mr. Marter moved for a return showing the date when the persons to whom and the price for which timber berth No. 118, north shore of Lake Huron, was sold; the respective dates when and the amounts in which and persons by whom the bonus was paid; the date when the said limit was first placed under license and the persons to whom the license was issued; copies of all transfers of the said berth, or of any interest therein, and copies of all correspondence, memoranda, rulings of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, or by any other officer of his department, with reference to the said berth; and also copies of all reports made to the said department by any wood ranger or other officer of the department as to the quantity of timber in the said berth. He said that he was informed that this berth was sold in 1872 for \$3,132, of which half was paid down. In 1886 the land was sold to a party for about \$8,000, who re-sold it for \$90,000 and divided a large portion of this proceeds among three officials of the Crown Lands Department, two being bush rangers who had assisted in the sale.

Mr. Hardy said that Mr. White had fully explained the whole transaction in the columns of THE GLOBE a week ago, and that a large portion of the information asked for in the return had been brought down on other occasions. Still he had no objection to the motion. As for the money transaction the Government disapproved of clerks undertaking for a commission sales of that kind or assisting in such sales. The action might be liable to abuse or suspicion. Nevertheless nothing illegal appeared to have been done. Mr. White had nothing to do with the sale in the department, such as passing the transfer. As a matter of morality, or as far as the efficient discharge of his duty was concerned, there was nothing to prevent him accepting a commission on a sale, provided that it did not interfere with the time which should be devoted to the country. Clause 38 of the Public Lands Act forbids any officer of the department from buying public lands, but it does not apply to sale of timber lands. Yet from the analogy, he disapproved of a clerk assisting in a sale for a commission. A letter from Mr. Barnett states that no private information was

given to him in consideration of the payment. In fact Mr. White had no information to give, because the information in the department was public. While the practice should not prevail, yet there was nothing immoral or wrong about it. The action of Mr. White involved no breach of faith or of the law. Any information concerning the lot will be brought down.

It did seem to Mr. Clancy that a mere sham was gone through in rebuking this official.

Mr. Hardy said there was not a particle of information in the department as to the estimated quantity of pine on this property.

Mr. Miscampbell said the Province had paid the forest ranger, Mr. Johnson, in 1886, and he should have communicated his information to the department and not to some one else.

Mr. Whitney said that it appeared that some officials were paid by the Government during a portion of the year for acquiring information which during the rest of the year they sold to others.

Mr. Meredith's chief objection was that Mr. White had rushed into print and thereby anticipated the discussion. He thought it was grossly indecent and discourteous to the House for an official who thought he was going to be attacked to make a defence in the newspapers before the question came up in the House.

Mr. Mowat said that the suggestion that Mr. White ought to have remained silent when he thought he would be attacked was monstrous. There was no obligation on Mr. White to wait. As long as the explanation was proper it was within his rights and involved no breach of decency. It has not been suggested that there was one word untrue in Mr. White's statement or that Mr. White has kept back anything. What his hon. friend was indignant about was that the explanation having been made this whole attack falls to the ground. (Applause.) The Government did not approve of Mr. White's conduct. But the action involved nothing morally wrong on his part, nor was it illegal in the sense that he could be compelled to pay any of this money into the public treasury. The case was that a valuable officer had obtained this money on account of a sale which had taken place before he became an official. It was an isolated transaction. The Government did not think that it was in the public interest that such a valuable officer as Mr. White should be dismissed. Nothing whatever was lost to the Province by this transaction. It would probably surprise the House to learn that Mr. Barnett was not a Reformer at all, but a good Conservative of long standing. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. White attacked Mr. Aubrey White for writing an explanation of his conduct.

Mr. Tait defended the conduct of Mr. Aubrey White in writing a plain, unvarnished story to the papers when stories were being circulated about him. There would have been a serious wrong if the property had belonged to the Government, but the whole transaction was between two parties outside of the Government altogether. The fact that two years ago Mr. Marter was in possession of all the facts he now had showed that there was nothing wrong about it. The matter was brought up now because there were cries of boodle and commission in other places, and it was thought that to associate the name of an honorable man with commissions here would damage the Government in quarters where the explanation was not well known. In view of the reports circulated about Mr. White when the motion was put upon the order paper it was the right thing for him to do to come forward and tell the truth, especially when he had nothing to hide. (Applause.)

Mr. Marter said it would be more correct to say that Mr. White's letter emanated from the Government in order to break the force of the attack. The motion was then adopted.

Mr. Balfour moved for a return showing the amounts of defalcations made by the treasurers of any of the municipalities in