

LAZY DAY IN THE LEGISLATURE.

Members Speak to Many Empty Benches.

HANNA, GROSS, NESBITT.

Bright Speech by the Member for Welland.

Maiden Speech by the Member for North Toronto—Mr. Hanna Speaks Vigorously—Some Questions.

The members of the Legislature yesterday wore an attitude of resignation, which is usually assumed by them when the estimates or other unavoidable matters are before them, and have to be discussed a certain length of time. There was a scanty attendance on both sides, and few members remained in their own seats for any length of time, but wandered about, engaging in social intercourse. Mr. Hanna consumed more than an hour in finishing his speech, which, delivered in an earnest manner, roused to some extent the flagging interest of the Opposition members. Mr. Gross, who followed for the Ministers, spoke briefly, but in that interesting style which always secures him a good hearing. Dr. Beattie Nesbitt came next, in his maiden speech. His earlier remarks lacked a good deal of the fire which characterizes his utterances on the stump, but this was remedied in his peroration.

Calling for Denials.

Mr. W. J. Hanna (W. Lambton) gave a resume of his address of the day previous, and then spoke of the letter from D. A. Jones to the member for Manitoulin, which, he stated, showed that Mr. Jones had had an interview with a member of the Government, with whom he arranged that the member for Manitoulin should receive the patronage of the riding. The public to-day thought it was a very suspicious circumstance that a Minister should insist upon a letter being written by the member for Manitoulin to the effect that he had received no consideration for supporting the Government. On this and other matters they were entitled to a specific denial from the Provincial Secretary. Someone would say that they were not entitled to a denial. If that were so, the Hon. Edward Blake was wrong when he said in connection with the Pacific scandal case that the House was entitled to a complete denial of the charges made. The Hon. Provincial Secretary had made no such specific denials. Without those denials they were entitled to the hon. gentleman's resignation. Moreover, there was a general suspicion in the country that the Provincial Secretary had refused to be the Jonah who should be jettisoned to save the rest of the cargo.

Contradicting Precedents.

The investigation of 1884 had been cited as a precedent for the present case. He denied the parallel. In the former case the men accused were immediately put in irons to insure their attendance. In the present case,

re-declared, Cap. Sullivan and D. A. Jones ought to have been "impounded" and should be in irons to-day to insure their presence when called upon to give evidence. Mr. Hanna quoted the Hon. Edward Blake in his opinion of Lord Dufferin's statement in connection with the Pacific scandal. Hon. Edward Blake said that Lord Dufferin's paper was the work of his Ministers, and not his own.

There was no parallel either between the Brockville and West Huron commission and the present case. The

Brockville commission was to investigate charges of election corruption, a matter very properly within the jurisdiction of the courts of the country. There was no impeachment of the honor of a member of the House. Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1892, in a case just such as they had now, had refused to recognize the suitability of a commission to try charges against the Postmaster-General, saying that the House was the only body entitled to try the case. The charges then made against the Postmaster-General involved the whole Government, because of the solidarity of the Cabinet. The course pursued by the Government to-day, he asserted, had no authority in precedent. He quoted the position taken by the Liberal convention in 1893. There was arrayed against them also every constitutional authority in Great Britain and Canada, and, what was more, the members of the Cabinet could be quoted against themselves. The pulpits of the Province and the public opinion of the Province were against them.

Commission's Alleged Shortcomings.

Mr. Hanna criticized the scope of the commission. It had been promised that the commission would investigate every charge against anyone. As it now appeared, the commission could hear only charges against a member of the Government. They could not investigate the conduct of D. A. Jones, Cap. Sullivan, Frank Sullivan, Vance, Chace or Myers. He asked could evidence be taken concerning the meeting in the Walker House between Frank Sullivan, a Liberal lawyer, and the member for Manitoulin. Would the denial of Frank Sullivan of the presence of the Provincial Secretary at that meeting be satisfactory? Would Frank Sullivan's denial on oath be satisfactory to the House?

He had been informed that the draft commission had been in the hands of Mr. E. F. B. Johnston and of Mr. A. B. Aylesworth, the counsel for the accused, before it had been submitted to the House. He asked the hon. Attorney-General whether he was entitled to an answer to a question whether that was the case.

Mr. Gibson—I do not think the hon. gentleman is entitled to any such information as he asks.

In conclusion Mr. Hanna said that he thought the Government had nothing whatever to risk in submitting the whole question to the Committee of Privileges and Elections. The country did not care what the decision would be so long as the evidence was all brought out.

A Legal Comparison.

Mr. J. F. Gross (Welland), in opening, said that all he asked was that even-handed justice should be done. The Provincial Secretary was no particular friend of his, but he purposed standing by him until he was proven guilty by an impartial tribunal. Even the indictment of a man who was charged with stealing a sheep gave the day and date and nature of the charge, and he had the right to object to anyone serving on the jury which tried him. Mr. Gross questioned the justice of the hon. gentlemen opposite acting as a jury; he would prefer them as advocates. (Hear, hear.) The Judges had been criticized, but in all his practice at law he never heard a Judge give a decision with which he could find fault, if he adopted a judicial frame of mind. Why should all the rules of evidence be set aside for the purpose of trying to convict a Minister of the

Crown? The member for West Lambton was more anxious for resignation than for investigation. The investigation might be more than half through now, and it looked as if they might go on to the 1st of July. (Applause.) Did the hon. gentleman ever notice, asked Mr. Gross, that Conservatives liked to quote such men as Sir Oliver Mowat, Edward Blake and Hon. David Mills just when it suited them? (Hear, hear.) In 1873, at the time of the Pacific scandal, there was no law on the statute book providing for a commission, as there was now. Mr. Gross pictured Mr. Carscallen examining Mr. Stratton in a committee, when the latter refused to answer a question as to whether he had given Sullivan \$1,000. "Now, wouldn't that be all you would want for political purposes?" asked Mr. Gross, amid laughter and applause. Mr. Hanna's demand for denials from the Ministers was an effort to get at the nature of the defence. That was where he showed the characteristic of the advocate, but not of the Judge. Mr. Hanna wanted to know why the Government did not put certain men in irons. Why didn't Mr. Hanna go down and lay an information before the Police Magistrate? Some people thought the only way to set the law in motion in Ontario was to come to Toronto and get the Attorney-General to act. (Applause.) He asked how hon. gentlemen opposite would like to come to Toronto, before a committee of the House, comprising a large majority of Liberals, and have their election protests decided there. That used to be the way, but fortunately was not now. The trial before a commission was the only proper way, and he was prepared to stay here and debate it until the 1st of July if necessary. (Applause.)

The Member for North Toronto.

Dr. W. Beattie Nesbitt (North Toronto) was loudly applauded by his fellow-Conservatives when he rose to make his maiden speech. He opened with a reference to Mr. Alpheus Todd's book on Parliamentary practice, to the effect that a Minister of the Crown was responsible to the House only for any misconduct. Continuing, he criticized the member for North Oxford for insinuating that the leader of the Opposition, and the members who witnessed the sealing of the documents containing the Gamey charges, were not to be trusted. The crime charged against the Provincial Secretary was not that they gave patronage or paid money to the member for Manitoulin, but that they had attempted to traffic in the honor of a member of the House. It was not that a member had put himself in a position to sell his support, but that the Provincial Secretary had attempted to buy. The danger involved was that members coming to this House were to be exposed to the temptations to which it was charged one of them had recently been exposed. The Opposition wanted a trial free from legal verbiage and legal technicalities, and in which there would be plain questions and plain answers. If the judiciary of this country were willing to interject themselves into this matter, they need not be surprised if the people cease to respect their decisions. He asked the Premier whether he had consulted with the two Judges named when he asked them to act on the commission.

Mr. Ross—They were out of town and were telegraphed to.

Dr. Nesbitt—Did they consent?

Mr. Ross—They did.

Dr. Nesbitt—And no others were asked?

Mr. Ross—No others were asked.

Dr. Nesbitt—How unfortunate for the others.

Dr. Nesbitt repeated some of the arguments that his friends had offered before him, and said that the whole matter should not be placed upon the Provincial Secretary. He was but the rim of the funnel of which the Premier was the spout.

In connection with a reference to Cap. Sullivan, Dr. Nesbitt spoke of Duncan Bole as an agent of an insur-