

THE DAILY EXAMINER

APRIL 30, 1899.

POINTS OF AGREEMENT.

THERE were several points in the speech of Mr. Fred Peters, Q. C., delivered yesterday, on the address, with which all reasonable men will agree.

First, as to the breach of the breach of Lord's Day Act. Mr. Peters says that he found the Stanley at Pictou on Sunday morning and he came aboard and was brought over. Anyone else in the House would have done likewise. Within reach of his native Island, his relatives and friends, and his dearly-beloved constituents, it was not in human nature to have rejected the opportunity afforded. Trains and steamers on the mainland travel (though they do not start) on Sunday, and Mr. Peters was en route with his family. He could not, therefore, be blamed for taking advantage of the Stanley. But who caused the disturbance of the Sabbath rest of the Stanley's officers and crew? That's the question.

We supposed it possible that Mr. Peters had, himself, ordered and paid for the special Sunday trips of the Stanley and the train. But his speech shows that this supposition was wrong. The cost of the special Sunday trips comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers, and either Sir Louis Davies or Premier Fairbairn, or both, are responsible. This is a point to be borne in mind. Many of our good people lament the laxity of the observance of the Lord's day. But what can be expected when our leaders in the State, the makers of our laws, the "Powers that be," merely for the sake of gaining a political advantage, order a special passage of steamer and train which disturbs the rest of dozens of men and is a notable example of Sunday desecration? We do not hesitate to say that the men responsible deserve the reprobation and censure of all who believe that it is right to keep holy the Lord's day.

Another point upon which we are in agreement with Mr. Peters refers to his seat in the Legislature. Mr. Peters says that no one has a right to object, except his constituents. That is true—quite true. But Mr. Peters forgets that his constituents have not yet been afforded an opportunity to express their opinion about the matter. They elected Mr. Peters at a general election, when he was leader of the Government, when he controlled the patronage of the Administration, when he resided in Charlottetown, when he could at all times represent their local interests and, also, let this man and that voter have an occasional five or ten or twenty dollar bill. But for reasons of his own, he disturbed all these close and kindly relations. He went all but four thousand miles away to the other side of the continent, completely out of his constituents' reach. If, under these changed conditions, Mr. Peters deems it proper to come back, and claim, and take his seat for a week, and scoop his sessional allowance, and deprive his constituents of an opportunity to elect another representative,—we are bound to admit that his constituents only have the right to object. That they will signify their opinion in a very practical way so soon as they get an opportunity to do so we are very sure. They will not blame Mr. Peters as much as the Administration for whose sake and at whose desire he has done this thing. The Administration they will condemn utterly.

We are also in agreement with Mr. Peters in respect to the importance of standing together in respect to the bargain to be made with the Dominion Govern-

ment as to the construction of the bridge across the Hillsborough. But in order that the two parties may stand together in this regard, it is important—it is necessary—that the terms of the agreement and all the correspondence and statistics connected therewith shall be frankly submitted and that the terms shall, while providing for the construction of the bridge, be just in respect to the province as a whole. The Opposition are, in duty bound, to demand the fullest information upon the subject and to protest against the arrangement should the information prove to be unsatisfactory. We hope and trust, however, that the Government will be able to give the Opposition and the country the fullest satisfaction, and that the Legislature will be able to stand as a unit in this regard. It was not, at all events, necessary for Mr. Peters to come four thousand miles across the continent, and to accomplish a scandalous breach of the spirit of the Fourth Commandment, as well as of the law of the land, to teach the gentlemen of the Opposition this simple lesson in patriotism.

Mr. Campbell, who followed Mr. Peters, effectively answered several objectionable points in Mr. Peters' speech; and it gives us pleasure to notice some of those upon which we are in agreement with the honorable gentleman. But we fear that the joy of the Leader of the Government at the arrival of Mr. Peters, "just in time to save the seat," has not been increased by Mr. Peters' defence of himself.

The Gaspesia has not, after all, escaped without damage. A despatch from St. John states that the wrecked vessel has received considerable squeezing during detention in the ice. Some of her frame timbers are badly broken and many of her beams smashed. Her rudder head is so broken that the vessel cannot be steered, so that she was practically a wreck when the Kite took her in tow. I asked Mr. Bowring if any arrangement had been made between Captain James Young of the Kite and the captain of the Gaspesia as to salvage. He answered, "No; and there was no need for such an arrangement." The Gaspesia must be placed in the category of a total wreck, and an award made on the basis of the value of the ship and cargo. I do not yet know if it is a case for arbitration or for the Admiralty Court. The ice, it appears, was very heavy, and it was hard work to get the ship through. When the Kite went to the Gaspesia's assistance the latter was short of both coal and provisions, and a few days more would have meant starvation for those on board.

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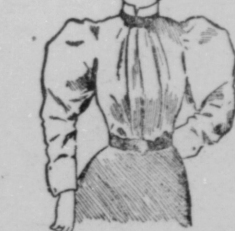
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