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A Satire on New Brunswick Politics in 1802

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Creon: A Satire on New Brunswick Politics in 1802

The Third Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick ran from 1795 to the spring of 1802.[1] From the second session on, there was continual conflict between the elected Assembly and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Carleton and his Executive Council. The initial clash occurred at the close of the 1796 session. In the Appropriations Bill of 1796, the House inserted a clause providing for a payment of ten shillings a day to its members, who had previously served without pay. The Governor and Council were opposed to such a payment, but since the Crown is forbidden by parliamentary tradition to change a "money bill," they had no choice but to accept or reject the bill in its entirety. Carleton and his Council chose to reject the bill, and when the House employed the same tactic in 1797 and 1798, they also rejected the appropriations bills of those years. By 1799, not even the day-to-day expenses of government could be met and the home government was becoming increasingly disturbed. Finally, in February of 1799, the Governor and Council acceded to the wishes of the House.

It is difficult to assess to what extent the House was motivated by constitutional concerns in its confrontation with Carleton and his Council. Although the issue which precipitated the conflict was a simple economic matter, one cannot discount the element of personal animosity as relationships became increasingly bitter in the course of the confrontation. But, whatever the individual motives of those involved, the result is clear. Under the pressure of confrontation, a majority of the House led by James Glenie formed a relatively cohesive political entity in opposition to the Governor, his Council, and the Governor's "friends" in the House. Furthermore, in the

1 This discussion of the history of the Third Legislature is based upon the *Journals of the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of New-Brunswick,* Third Legislature, all Sessions, 1795-1802, with particular reference to the Sixth Session (1802); James Hannay, *History of New Brunswick* (Saint John, 1909), chapters XVI and XVII; W.S. MacNutt, *New Brunswick, A History: 1784-1867* (Toronto, 1963), chapter 5.

course of their struggle with the Crown, the Governor's "enemies" became keenly aware at least of the rights and prerogatives of the House, if not of the political potential of the House in governing the province. This concern for constitutional prerogatives gradually intensified and finally emerged as a dominant element in the sixth and last session (1802) of the Third Legislature.

When the House met in early 1802, it was announced that the Clerk, Isaac Hedden, was dying and could not assume his duties. The House decided by a vote of 11 to 7 to elect one of its own members (as was the Nova Scotian custom) to act as Clerk; it duly elected Samuel Denny Street, a member of Glenie's opposition group. When Hedden died a few days later, the House sent an Address to the Governor asking him to ratify the election of Street. Carleton refused and sent word that he had appointed Dugald Campbell. The House reacted quickly; it refused to allow Campbell to take his seat, and confirmed Samuel Denny Street as Clerk by a vote of 11 to 9. Street acted as Clerk throughout the sixth session, and, in the Appropriations Bill of 1802, the House specified that Street was to receive the salary allotted to the Clerk. When the Council demanded that Street's name be deleted from the bill, the House refused and sent the bill back to Council on Tuesday, March 2. Next day, in order to force the adjournment of the session and thereby keep the Council from once again returning the bill to the House, Glenie and most of his followers absented themselves from the Assembly so that there would be insufficient members for a quorum. By custom, colonial Houses traditionally required that thirteen members (including the Speaker) be present in order to carry on business, but the rule was not hard and fast. When the count was taken on Wednesday the third, there were only ten members present. The Governor's "friends" quickly moved that the question of quorum be referred at once to the Supreme Court, all four judges of which were members of the Governor's Council. The Speaker, however, decided to adjourn the House until the next day to think the matter over.

On Thursday the fourth, there were only eight members present, including the Speaker. Nonetheless, the Speaker (probably under pressure from the Government) allowed the House to carry on "old" business over the protests of Samuel Denny Street and Major Thomas Dixon. Predictably, the main business of the day involved striking the name "Samuel Denny Street" from the Appropriations Bill. When the Clerk (Samuel Denny Street) was ordered to make this change in the bill, he refused. Ultimately, the Speaker made the change himself, and next day the bill was assented to by the Governor. The immediate effect of this action was that Dugald Campbell, rather than Samuel Denny Street, received the salary of the Clerk of the House. More important, the incident became a central issue in the political campaign of the summer of 1802. In May, Carleton dissolved the Third Legislature and called an election for October. Thus the stage was set for Glenie and his followers to take

their case to the voters of the province.

Even in a province noted for its lively politics, the election of 1802 was an outstanding one.[2] By mid-May it was in full swing. Under the pseudonym "Creon," Samuel Denny Street published a pamphlet, entitled *A Statement of the Facts Relative to the Proceedings of the House of Assembly on Wednesday the Third, and Thursday the Fourth of March, 1802, at the Close of the Last Session.* In his pamphlet, Street accused the government of flouting constitutional rights and undermining parliamentary tradition. This attack was vigorously countered by Ward Chipman's anonymous pamphlet, *A Fair and Candid Review of the Proceedings of the House of Assembly*, and by Edward Winslow's rather vicious pamphlet (signed "Job Creon"), *A Statement of facts relative to the Standfasts and Runaways. Or Sammy Creon's Pamphlet Turn'd Right Side Outwards.* At the same time, in the pages of Ryan's *Royal Gazette* and Mott's *Saint John Gazette* a large number of correspondents (including Street, Chipman, and Winslow) debated the legalities of the issue in minute detail throughout the summer months.

The satiric poem *Creon* was part of the political activities of the 1802 election. Although it appeared very late in the campaign (in fact most of it was published after the election), there is no doubt it was designed as a piece of political propaganda. Why it was not published sooner in the campaign, we will probably never know. Possibly it circulated in manuscript form. In any case, *Creon* was finally published canto by canto in four separate issues of Jacob Mott's *Saint John Gazette* (23 October, 6, 13, 20 November). Although irrefutable evidence supporting his authorship is lacking, Samuel Denny Street seems to be the most likely candidate. This assumption is based on the fact that the poem is in effect a versification of Street's pamphlet and, in the final verse paragraph of Canto IV, the narrator of the poem (Creon) and Street (the protagonist of the poem) merge identities.

As a poem, *Creon* cannot be approached as a work of significant aesthetic value. Yet, it would also be a mistake to dismiss the poem as simply a piece of trivial political propaganda. While propagandistic in its intention and design, it nonetheless manages to capture something of the ideological and emotional complexities of an important moment in the political history of New Brunswick. Viewing it in the context of the political ferment out of which it sprang, we may begin to appreciate more fully both the complex nature of the politics and perceptiveness of the poetry. What is remarkable is the tone of calmness which is deliberately sustained throughout. In such a hotly contested election, one might well expect a work of political propaganda to be a much more passionate denigration of political enemies. But the narrator presents himself to the reader as an eminently reasonable man,

2 Hannay, *op cit.*, discusses the election and its results, in some detail, pp. 285-86.

one with a highly developed sense of fair play and an abiding reverence for the proprieties and order of government. By comparison, the Governor's "party" is depicted as spiteful, selfish, and mean-spirited, prepared to sacrifice the sanctity of law and the proper order of government to satisfy the impulsive dictates of their own willful natures.

The kind of perspective which the poet establishes here is not new. His implicit appeal to reason and common sense was a fundamental characteristic of eighteenth-century English satire. So too is his depiction of his enemies as irresponsible, irrational, self-oriented men. Moreover, this perspective carried political implications in that it was developed and primarily used by Tory political satirists, especially the Tory satirists of the American Rebellion, poets such as Jonathan Odell, Joseph Stansbury, and Jacob Bailey. In their satires, the loyal Tories are presented as the upholders of Reason, Justice, Law and Order, while the Rebels play fast and loose with these precious gifts, compromising social stability in order to achieve selfish ends. In effect, the poet of *Creon* is implicitly setting the political situation of New Brunswick in 1802 against the background of the American Rebellion and Whig-Tory politics of eighteenth-century England. To employ such a widely accepted political frame of reference may seem like a rather obvious thing for the poet to do, until we consider that New Brunswick in 1802 was overwhelmingly loyalist and Tory in its political complexion. Both sides in this election viewed themselves as champions of British rule. On the one hand, the Governor's "friends" proclaimed their loyalty in their deference to the authority of the Governor, and depicted the constitutional challenges to Carleton's authority as inherently rebellious and seditious. On the other hand, Glenie and his supporters proclaimed their loyalty by supporting the constitutional prerogatives of the House and the traditional procedures of British parliamentary government. As in the poem, they depicted the other side's disregard for constitutional and legal procedures as an irresponsible attack upon the foundations of British law and order.

In the end, the election went badly for the Governor's "enemies." Glenie was one of the few to retain his seat. But the poem was written in mid-campaign, and is buoyed up by the emotional energy generated by the conflict of differing political attitudes. The poem also draws vitality from the dramatic clash of personality and character types which coincides with the ideological divisions of the political scene. The Governor's "friends" are depicted as blustering, impulsive men whose blind emotional commitment to authority allows them to perpetrate unfair, indeed unlawful, acts under the guise of loyalty. They are unsophisticated and irrationally stubborn, operating solely in terms of what they *feel* to be right. In sharp contrast, the narrator presents himself and his associates as rational, cool-headed men, whose passions are governed always by a strong sense of moral, ethical, and social propriety. This does not preclude his communicating the intensity of his

commitment to his convictions, nor does it keep him from vigorously attacking the wrong-headedness of his opponents. Yet he never goes too far; hysteria and overzealousness would betray a lack of self-control. The treatment of the problem, while partisan, must be rational and analytical. To compromise these qualities, even for the sake of attacking a dangerous enemy, would imply that the author has allowed his reason to be overcome by passion. It is this condition, this weakness of character, that the author imputes to his political enemies. They are not simply wrong in their political views, but they also manifest in their conduct undesirable personality traits. The eighteenth-century reader would immediately recognize this weakness of character as the source of their ideological error. Thus, *because of* its partisan character, the poem offers a vivid impression of the emotional complexities of the political environment. Although its value as a record of political history is questionable, it embodies in its narrative a dramatic picture of political life at an interesting time in New Brunswick history. Since such glimpses into early political life in Canada are so very few in number, the poem makes a special contribution to our understanding of our social and cultural history.

THOMAS B. VINCENT

CANTO FIRST.

Shewing how Creon sat in the Gallery — How some of the Members went home — The Story of a Coffin — A Ghost — A Resurrection — The Noble Colonel's Motion — A Description of a Young Man, and what he said.

It was among the latter days
Of last Assembly — Creon says,
I, in the Gallery did set
List'ning with care to each debate,
And there, with others, plainly heard,
All that was said on Wednesday third
Of instant March — and day the next
Being Thursday fourth — so says the text.
  Before all this I had suppos'd
The bus'ness was completely clos'd, 10
Except the Governor's consent

I, 2 last Assembly: the sixth and last session (1802) of the Third Legislature of New Brunswick (1796-1802).

To Bills which upwards had been sent,
With two of which, but not the third
The Councillors had then concurr'd
This third I thought, and think so still
Was properly a Money Bill,
Which they'd no pow'r or right to go to
Unless to negative — *in toto*.
  'Twas then a major part of th' Members,
Finding that heat was in the embers, 20
And that disputes on the objections
Might interfere with next elections,
Wishing to fight another day,
Turned their tails to and ran away,
Leaving no more but number ten,
Speaker and all — to sit again,
Which I declare is not sufficient,
To form a House good and efficient.
  I — Printer, am, without presumption,
Undoubtedly — a man of gumption, 30
And readily will shew my light,
That others may get something by't
  On Tuesday eve I plainly saw,
What in the morn would be the Law,
And that inspite of my injunctions,
The House would exercise its functions,
— Like to the man who lost his wife,
I never felt so in my life,
He thought he had her safely nail'd,
And joy o'er grief at once prevail'd, 40
But to his wonder and surprize,
Stern — she appears before his eyes —
And seizing on th' unwary clown,
With one bold stroke she knock'd him down.
  So, we my friends were satisfi'd
That this same House had gasp'd and dy'd,
But see — in midst of all our scoffing

I, 23 next elections: October 1802.
I, 25 number ten: these were Amos Botsford (Westmorland Co.), Speaker of the House; Samuel Denny Street (Sunbury Co.), Clerk of the House; James Peters (Queen's Co.); John Yeamans (Queen's Co.); Capt. Archibald McLean (York Co.); Capt. Stair Agnew (York Co.); Col. John Coffin (King's Co.); George Leonard, Jr. (King's Co.); Ralph Siddall (Westmorland Co.); and Major Thomas Dixon (Westmorland Co.).

— A resurrection from a Coffin —
The Game is up — the scene is chang'd,
And all our matters are derang'd, 50
The Boys they shout — the girls are laughing
— May curses light on such a Coffin.
This Anecdote to you I mention,
With heavy heart but pure intention,
That you in future may look out,
And clearly see what you're about,
Nor think because a thing is dead,
It never can lift up its head.
So much I heard without the door,
That when I got upon the floor, 60
I had a just and perfect notion
Of all the noble Col'nel's motion,
Which was to call upon the Judges,
Who in the Council are the drudges,
And to apply for their advice
About a point so very nice,
And fairly put the question — Whether
The Members who were then together,
Might finish what had been begun
By those who thus had cut and run? 70
Chock full of zeal the man appear'd,
And looked on Mister St---t and sneer'd,
When he presumed to interfere,
And make a motion to the Chair,
Which was — to have the Members counted,
And see to what the whole amounted,
Which being done — the Speaker then,
Declar'd, "there are exactly ten."
A diffident young man arose,
The Col'nel's colleague I suppose, 80
Whose manners are not prepossessing,

I, 48 Coffin: an indirect reference to Col. John Coffin, leader of the Governor's "friends" in the House.
I, 55 in future: reference to the coming election (October 1802).
I, 62 Col'nel: Colonel John Coffin.
I, 72 Mr. St---t: Samuel Denny Street, member for Sunbury.
I, 77 Speaker: Amos Botsford, member for Westmorland and Speaker of the House of Assembly.
I, 79 diffident young man: George Leonard, Jr., elected as member for King's County in a by-election in 1802.

Nor do I like his style of dressing;
But lest I should mistake his name,
I tell you 'tis the very same,
Who in the course of a debate,
Something unto the House did state,
Which to the best of my discerning,
Shew'd him to be a man of learning,
This young man then, I say, arose,
And what the Col'nel did propose 90
He back'd with all his might and main,
And then he sat him down again.
— Then Mister St---t the youth address'd,
And made to him a small request,
Which was in my opinion right,
"To put his words in black and white."
And this — for I will tell you true,
The Gentleman appear'd to do —
And then he up again did stand,
And read the paper from his hand. 100
He mov'd that the Assembly shou'd
Consult the Judges, if they wou'd
Take up the case on his suggestion,
Upon the foll'wing serious question,
"Can any number less than thirteen,
"Proceed as Legislators certain?"
The Col'nel, tickled with the notion,
Arose and seconded the motion,
Which was supported by Ag--w,
And by another Captain too. 110

CANTO SECOND.

Shewing how Mr. St---t arose — How he complimented the Judges — And how he oppos'd the Motion — How he asserted the Laws were not made for men of probity — The whole doctrine of usage beautifully explained — Introduction of a Veteran.

Now Mister St---t again did rise,

I, 109 Ag--w: Captain Stair Agnew, member for York County.
I, 110 another Captain: Archibald McLean, the other member for York County. His wife was a sister of Dugald Campbell, the Governor's appointee in the dispute over who should be Clerk of the House.

And casting round his brilliant eyes,
He thus the Speaker did address,
And thus his sentiments express.
"Sir, at this time I can't neglect
"To show my most profound respect
"Towards the Judges, nor will I
"Their great sagacity deny,
"In all such matters and such cases
"As do belong to 'em in their places." 10
He then, with warmth a proper portion)
Explicitly oppos'd the motion;
And said in language very able,
"Its object is unwarrantable,
"It is a truth," (says he) "well known,"
"To every man in every town,
"That all the rights and all the pow'rs
"Of this same House are *solely* ours,
"And that this noble institution,
"Derived is from Constitution, 20
"Nor can the same e'er be amended,
"Diminished — or be extended
"By any manner of authority,
"Excepting by our own majority;
"*That*, ancient usage is beside
"The only safe and certain guide
"Unto the proper exercise,
"Of the same pow'rs so just and wise,
"And is exactly what is meant,
"And term'd, the Law of Parli'ment; 30
"And we can see with half our eyes,
"That in the King's own Colonies
"It was established for certain,
"That there must be no less than thirteen
"Before you can your bus'ness do,
"Or form a House that's good and true;
"And I will tell you plain and flat,
"That any number less than *that*
"As a Grand-Jury cannot find
"A Bill, if ne'er so much inclin'd, 40
"Against *one* subject, tho' he steal,
"Or interrupt the Common Weal,
"And as this House most surely must
"Be in possession of *that* trust,

"And is, as I do now assure ye,
"A Constitutional Grand-Jury,
"To you it will appear absurd
"Without my say'ng another word,
"That *fewer* men, shou'd pass *those* Bills
"Which put restraint upon our wills, 50
"And do affect our properties,
"And all our rights and liberties."
"And now" (says he) "I well remember
"What did escape the Senior Member
"Who from King's County here does come,
"(I wish they both had staid at home)
"*There is no Law that does restrain*
"*A lesser number than thirteen,*
"*Or does on us lay such injunctions*
"*That we can't exercise our functions;* 60
"To which assertion then did I
"Make this remarkable reply,
"Laws were not made for you and me,
"Or other men of probity,
"But, if I dare to speak my mind,
"For men of quite another kind,
"The House of Commons of Great-Britain
"Have always thought it right and fitting
"That their own usage shou'd be sure,
"Their Privileges to secure; 70
"To that great House we are ally'd,
"Like it, we're great and dignify'd,*
"*That* House again I do assure ye
"Is of the Realm the great Grand-Jury,
"Yet their importance and extent
"Is such, that when they represent
"The mighty body of the nation,
"In order to a right formation,
"*Their* ancient usage does require,

*SOLILOQUY [Author's footnote]
"Oh! when I think of this alliance,
"I bid my modesty defiance,
"Sometimes when on my seat I sit,
"I seem as wise as Mister Pitt —
"And when I rise — Oh! then! — Odzooks!
"I feel as big as Mr. Fox."

II, 54 Senior Member: Col. John Coffin.
II, 56 The other member was George Leonard, Jr.

"(And ancient usage can't expire,) 80
"That *forty* Members shou'd be there
"Whene'er the Speaker takes the Chair,
"And that without th' aforesaid number,
"(Speaker included as a Member)
"The usages invariable,
"By records prov'd upon the table,
"Were always Law sufficient found,
"And held as good and certain ground,
"The Speaker wholly to debar
"From taking the official Chair — 90
"Unless it was for some great thing,
"Such as a Message from the King.
"Now I've a right within my seat
"Thus to compare small things with great,
"And our New-Brunswick House to view
"As great and dignified too:
"Our ANCIENT usage cannot fail,
"But must *for ever* here prevail,
"And ought not now to meet resistance,
"'Tis *fourteen* years since our existence, 100
"This *antique* custom to unhinge,
"And on this usage to infringe —
"It is a thing both new and rare
"And most dishon'rable I swear;
"The memory of man, I wot,
"Against this practice runneth not."
He then once more around did stare
And mov'd — "The Speaker quit the Chair,"
And in the midst of this affliction,
Was seconded by Major D-x-n, 110
A Vet'ran of the half-pay list,
A Trojan true as ever p---,
Who was the only Member stable
T' oppose the Phalanx formidable,
Which seem'd determin'd to defy
Old usage, that most sacred tye.
The Speaker, meaning to compose,
Stroked his chin, and then arose,
And when each man was still as mouse,
He audibly adjourn'd the House, 120

II, 110 Major D-x-n: Thomas Dixon or Dickson, member for Westmorland from 1792 until 1802.

From one o'Clock the Journals say
Unto eleven the next day.
  The Champions, not of Christendom,
But of the ---- I presume,
Were shock'd, and you might see the traces
Of great dismay upon their faces,
The noble Col'nel, he was cross'd,
And as completely was unhors'd,
As Royal Dick, when he did yield,
Upon the famous Bosworth field, 130
With countenance austere and eager,
He loudly called for the Speaker.
Then in a manner grave and sweet
It was proposed by Mister St---t,
(A Motion very unexpected)
"That a *new* Speaker be elected."
The Champions then without delay
Took up their hats and went away.

CANTO THIRD.

A Digression — The Consultation — Some Remarks on the Science of Blundering — How Creon wishes to blow Snuff — How he danc'd after Curiosity — A Great Event — A detail of Motions not very interesting, but necessary for the purposes of "Investigation."

  Here now a bit I must digress,
And as a man of sense express
The very great surprize and wonder,
Which I and others labour'd under,
That, *that* ingenious modest youth
Who, I assert as fact and truth,
The Motion forward first did bring
About the twice before nam'd thing,
Shou'd in his head have had a notion
That there was cause for such a Motion, 10
For this is fact, I do declare —
Before the Speaker took the Chair
On We'n'sday morning, I did see
(And others saw as well as me)

II, 123 The Champions: Col. Coffin's party, which included James Peters, John Yeamans, Archibald McLean, Stair Agnew, George Leonard, Jr., and Ralph Siddall.
III, 5 Modest youth: George Leonard, Jr.

The seven Gentlemen go up
All hands together like a troop,
With seeming harmony and love,
From House below to House above,
And there, when they had got their station,
They went into a consultation — 20
I therefore took the thing for granted,
That they knew what each other wanted,
And that they did not disagree,
— But we must live and learn you see.
  In present times, and times of old,
I very often have been told,
That for a man to be mistaken,
Or in an error to be taken,
Is not a strange thing or a new,
And I subscribe it to be true, 30
For as I am a simpleton,
I'm ready to confess for one —
That the same art of blundering
To me appears an easy thing,
And as the Dev'l (as one may say)
In common seems to have his way,
Those men who seem the most alive,
And are the most inquisitive,
Are always sure to watch the nearest,
And my designs to see the clearest, 40
When I could wish with one great puff
To fill their eyes chock-full of snuff.
  That pimp call'd curiosity,
Which acts with great velocity —
Has led me many an ugly dance,
Altho' I've never been to France,
And did, upon this great occasion
Of my poor fabric take possession;
Specu-la-tive expectation,
Hurry'd me unto my station, 50
Thursday — the day by Heaven sent
Portentous of some *great* event
(O'ercast the dawn, the morning lour'd,

III, 15 Seven Gentlemen: The Champions.
III, 18 House below . . . House above: The Legislature consisted of the Lieutenant Governor, the Council, and the Assembly. The Council was referred to as the Upper House; the Assembly, as the Lower House.

And nature's self seem'd somewhat sour'd).
But tho' a watch I strict had set
I cou'd not yet discover it;
In darkness I remain'd, — 'tis true
'Til half an hour after two —
And then the Speaker I declare
With Beaver cock'd did take the Chair. 60
All that I cou'd observe before
Either within or out of door
Was a confused general noise,
Gig'ling and whisp'ring like young boys,
And that they *frequently* did move
From House below to House above —
Great shew there was of consultation,
Of treaty, and negotiation —
But tho' I every method try'd,
Listen'd and peep'd and almost cry'd, 70
I cou'd not for my soul find out,
What these sly fellows were about,
But I'm afraid they play'd their tricks on
This Mister St---t and Major D-x-n.
At length the Speaker to their faces
Desir'd 'em all to take their places.
Then Mister St---t again did rouse,
And mov'd again "to count the House" —
And so the Speaker counted strait,
And found there were no more than eight — 80
The Member who from Queen's does come
With his own colleague had gone home,
Or as (more learned) I'll relate t'ye,
To otium cum dignitate.
He was as I to you will state
Most certainly one day too late.
The man who undertook the task
To wear on's face an iron mask,
Wou'd when that he was growing old,
Have surely catch'd a dreadful cold, 90
If he had left it off, I say
And gone without it one whole day.
And I suppose the same neglect

III, 80 eight: The Champions plus Amos Botsford, the Speaker of the House.
III, 81-82 The members for Queen's County were John Yeamans and James Peters.
III, 84 Translation: "Idleness with Dignity."

In us wou'd have the same effect.
  Another Motion then was made
By Mister St---t, and seconded
By the same Vet'ran firm and bold
Of whom before you have been told,
The man whom St---t his mark did fix on
Known by the name of Major D-x-n. 100
'Twas the old Motion I declare
"To make the Speaker quit the Chair"
But it no favor now did meet
Except from D-x-n and from St---t.
    Then came a message with a Bill
Amended by the King's Council,
About the Courts of Common Pleas
To fix their sittings and their fees,
Which then and there was quickly read
And instantly was concurred 110
By every Member of the eight,
Except said D-x-n and said St---t:
St---t then unto the House did say —
I will not speak — or yes — or nay,
And (when the turn to t'other came)
He like a Vet'ran said the same:
That Bill had hardly gone from thence
When they propos'd a conference
About a Bill (which was not new)
For raising of a Revenue — 120
To which with readiness and speed
The Members of the House agreed,
Except th' aforesaid Gentleman,
And his determin'd Veteran;
The former (casting no reflections)
Beg'd to be heard on his objections,
But whilst he was engag'd in speaking,
And plainly his remarks was making,
The Captains Ag--w and M'L--n,
(As if to interrupt his strain) 130
Seem'd to be hurry'd out from thence
For to attend the conference —
But soon, the two aforesaid men

III, 119-120 Bill: The Revenue and Appropriations Bill of 1802.
III, 129 Captains Ag--w and M'L--n: Stair Agnew and Archibald McLean.

Unto the House return'd again,
And as it did appear to me
From all that I cou'd guess or see —
They to the Speaker then did give
The very Bill — true as you live —
Together with another thing —
Which from the Council they did bring, 140
Which I believe did clear express
That *they* refus'd to acquiesce,
And at the same time did require,
The name of D-n-y St---t, Esquire,
(For some *wise* reason there's no doubt)
To be expunged — and left out.
The Speaker then, on their suggestion,
Proceeded quick to put the question,
Whether the words they did desire,
"S-m--l D-nn-y St---t, Esquire," 150
"Should be expunged now or not?"
And so the thing was put to vote,
And 'tis as true as you're alive
It passed in the affirmative,
And by this measure 'twill be found,
That St---t did lose full fifty pound.
To Mister St---t the Bill was handed,
(As Clerk) as then I understand did,
But St---t, as it appear'd to me,
To take the Bill would not agree, 160
Nor wou'd he alter or amend it,
But to the Speaker back did send it,
Who then without much hesitation,
Himself did make the alteration.
The Bill was up to Council sent,
And there obtain'd a full consent.
And thus it is, as I suppose,
That this first ordinance arose,
For raising of a Revenue,
And for appropriating too,
And very wrongly I have reckon'd,
If ever we shall have a second.
But from respect to Majesty,
And for the sake of harmony,
I do sincerely hope and pray
That all the people will obey;

As I've a pride in being known,
To be a true and Loyal Son,
As any New-Brunswick-state,
Firm, faithful, and affectionate — 180
—But if our privileges dear
Have been infring'd by any here,
And that, in an ill-fated hour,
Unjustly they've usurp'd a pow'r,
All other powers by far transcending,
To mend a Bill which wanted mending,
I hope for it they'll dearly pay
Upon a future reck'ning day,
And that they'll never have occasion
Again to make such bold invasion. 190

CANTO FOURTH.

Shewing concisely the Cream of the whole Jest — How Creon lost near 50£. more or less — The learned Authorities, and the Conclusion.

I've made this fair and free relation
On purpose for investigation,
That we may realize these acts
And make a judgement of the facts,
And — challenge all the world, do I
To say that I have told a lye.
The House of Commons of Great-Britain
Upon a day when they were sitting,
For peace and for good order's sake, 10
The following good rule did make,
"That when a thing is fairly ended
"It can't be alter'd or amended,
"But that the same must always stand
"Firm as a judgement in the land."
And of the same opinion — they
Continue to the present day —
Is it not then — a crying sin,
That in a House so spare and thin
The Members shou'd be so perverse
As this great rule to thus reverse: 20
"Let those who do enjoy their sight
"Peruse this Book and see the light."

III, 187-188 refers to the upcoming elections, October 1802.

— Now comes the bone — now comes the meat
About this S----l D----y St---t.
He does unto the House belong,
And he's the burden of my song —
His name was (as the sailors say)
Put in the Bill "to stop her way"
But some few Members (pretty knowing)
Contriv'd to keep the Bill agoing — 30
And thus our learned man profound,
Was balk'd of nearly fifty pound,
All by the affirmative of five,
Against a previous negative.
  Has this a fair and honest sound
To rob a man of fifty pound?
It's time my fellow subjects loyal
Of Monarchy, who has virtues royal,
That we shou'd contemplate this fact,
And that we shou'd with caution act, 40
We've proved ourselves most faithful subjects
And are undoubtedly fit objects,
A Constitution to enjoy,
Where freedom reigns without alloy,
A Government so very good
That for it, some have shed their blood,
And Creon's self received a wound
For he has lost near fifty pound.
  We're now upon the very eve,
As I am told, and do believe 50
When we're to exercise our rights,
And to elect our virt'ous knights
To represent us (to be sure)
In one branch of Legislature,
And now if any can be found
Who took from Creon fifty pound —
Indignant frown upon the creature,
Of whatsoever name or stature.
I hope the rogue will come to want
For he's a fawning sycophant. 60
  Attend my friends I do entreat you,
And with assurances I greet you —

IV, 32 fifty pound: the Clerk's salary.
IV, 33 five: The Champions minus the two members from Queen's County.

I hate, and do despise all pelf,
Nor do I wish to serve myself,
For though as Clerk I've run aground,
And sacrific'd full fifty pound,
It is not to serve my own ends,
Nor yet to help my nearest friends,
That I have all this story told,
But to prevent your being cajol'd. 70
  To make the public very wise,
I quote these new authorities.
"It dont belong unto the judges,
"To judge of our great privileges."*
"When laws are chang'd or altered
"By those who did not see them made,
"Your whole foundation's in the dust."
So said our Royal Charles the First
When he at Newark had began
His speech to folks at Nottingham.+ 80
"The difference between an act
"And ordinance, is this in fact —
"The one obtains a full consent
"From ev'ry branch of Parliament,
"The other very well will do
"With the consent of one or two."‡
By this same rule which God confound
I've sunk and lost, aye! fifty pound,
No comment need be made upon
These passages from me 90

CREON.

*Coke's *Instit.* +Rush. ‡Coke's *Instit.*

Poet's annotations: (1) Coke's *Instit:* Sir Edward Coke's "Institutions" (1628-1644) in which he explained and defended Common Law Rules.

(2) Rush: John Rushworth's *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State* (1619-1701; 1721) in which he recorded many events of the Civil War period in England.