

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. OFFICIAL SYNOPSIS OF PROCEEDINGS

(Continued.)

Summerford and hoped that due regard would be given to it. He also suggested that the time of mails closing in St. John's should be extended till within a half-hour of train departure. People in the East End had complained to him that it was ridiculous the time they had to post a letter before the train left so as to catch the mail.

MR. GRIMES backed up all that had been said about the salary of the postmaster at Summerford. He made reference to the Civil Service Commission as appointed some two years ago, which had gone into these salaries and recommended some revisions. He would like to know if there was a report to be made.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that the salaries of the outport postmasters were in need of revision and hoped to see it done. He thought they should be paid according to work done and revenue collected. He promised that consideration should be given of the suggestions put forward by the members for Twillingate.

Mr. GRIMES continuing spoke at some length upon the matter of the employment of civil servants and the Government's modus of their appointment. He criticized the Government's engagement of civil servants and charged that political favour was being shown. He condemned the delay of the Government in bringing down Col. Ross' report.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE replying said that the Government were not considering a man's politics when they appointed him to any post in the Civil Service. They were working in the best interests of the Colony and he ventured to say that within a year the members opposite would agree that they had.

MR. HALFYARD in replying to the speech of the Minister of Finance during the afternoon, agreed that Hon. Dr. Robinson was a very good official, but contended he never had a free hand as Postmaster General, but was always required to submit to the Executive Government. The inference to be gathered from the Minister's speech during the afternoon was that politics played a great part in the conduct of the Department during 1919-1924. He denied this and said he had never made any appointments there, with the possible exception of one or two minor posts. All appreciate the efforts of the Minister of Finance to correct the existing abuses. In 1924 there was an Inspector of Outport Post Offices, but seemingly this was not done. He deplored the abolition of the motor-van and the reverting to the horse-drawn vehicles. He characterized the treatment of Mr. Sam Bradbury as being "most cruel" and could see no motive for this treatment other than politics. The Government cannot be expected to accomplish everything they hope to in eight months. Mr. Halfyard then dwelt on the relief system, spending money on Executive authority, the steam service on Bonavista Bay. Accusations at Captain Winsor and Mr. Monroe about the spending of money in that District and the placing of a steamer on the Bay, concluded the address.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE replied that Dr. Robinson had not been dictated to as Postmaster General, as the honourable member knew for they had been colleagues in 1917. Doctor Robinson had been forced out of office to suit the Prime Minister of the day. The present Prime Minister's policy about spending money on Executive authority was that he entirely opposed it, but he fully realized that it might be necessary to utilize the authority granted them by section 33 (b) of the Audit Act. There is no man who could accurately estimate the expenditure for the year in some cases it was over-estimated and in some under-estimated. He pointed out in passing that his predecessor in office, Mr. Cave, had left a deficit of \$1,718,000 although he estimated a surplus, a thing which no Finance Minister had ever done before, and which the Honourable Minister hoped would never be done again. He said he directed no personal criticism against the member for Twillingate, but he did

against the Government of Sir R. A. Squires and he thought that no matter what differences he may have had with Sir M. P. Cashin, the greatest misfortune that had ever befallen the country was the defeat of Sir Michael's Government in 1919.

MR. WARREN said he had been associated with the policy of "clean up" and publicity was necessary to the carrying out of such a policy such publicity as we have had this afternoon from the Minister of Finance. The present Government in pursuance of this policy has held several inquiries. Any inquiries that will be held in the future will lose their worth unless the report is made public and broadcast. This would go a long way to stop irregularities. The Minister's speech to-day was a move in the right direction. When an inquiry is instituted in any Department the officials of that Department are brought under suspicion and the lack of publicity in the report is unfair to the officials of the Department. The Minister had said that it was difficult to get a conviction from a Court; this may be so, but it is no reason why there should be no proceedings. When he had been Prime Minister it was reported that there were some irregularities at the Post Office and Mr. Aylward was appointed as an Inspector. Two months after this appointment, his regime came to an end. His was a most essential appointment and should be continued and the inspection carried out vigorously. His Government had invited G. N. Read, Son and Watson to investigate the Audit Department and investigate what must be a faulty system which permits of the disappearance of public funds without leaving any trace. He advocated that this be done now.

CAPTAIN WINSOR said he had heard some criticism of the expenditure of \$40,000. This money had been expended in some measure in paying out moneys for accounts incurred by the Government of which Mr. Halfyard had been a member. Mention had been made of some work around the school at Knight's Cove. He had promised that this would be done about fifteen years ago, and he had now redeemed his pledge, which previous members for the District had promised but not fulfilled. The member for Trinity had made no mention of \$15,000 spent in Trinity District. Any money spent in Bonavista would be for the best interest of the people. Reference had been made to the "Prospero" calling at ports in Bonavista Bay. One trip had been made to take two patients to St. Anthony Hospital, and another occasion was to bring men to and from the French Shore in the Spring and Fall. He promised that the Monroe Government would be just as much interested in Trinity Bay as the honourable member for that District. He felt that in view of the accusations made by Mr. Halfyard, he should tell both sides of the story, and not only his own side.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION desired again to refer to the Auditor-General's Department. He felt that the irregularities could have been and should have been prevented. He cited certain sections of the Audit Act to back up his arguments, which gave the Auditor-General very wide and extensive powers. Under the circumstances he felt that the Auditor's Department was primarily responsible for any discrepancies in the past few years. The honourable member felt that Mr. Crumney, Major Howley, and others doing audit work in the Post Office should be attached to the Auditor's Department. Furthermore he advocated that the Auditor-General should be given the assistance he required and a sufficiently large staff for his requirements.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE was in full accord with the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks about the necessity of requiring all assistants in the Audit Department and the appointment of a sufficiently large staff to fulfill the duties demanded of the Department by the Audit Act.

Having finished the vote for the Department of Posts and Telegraphs the Committee rose, reported progress and were given leave to sit again.

The remaining orders being deferred the House adjourned at 11.30 p.m., until Tuesday afternoon.

April 7th.
The House met at the usual hour.

PETITIONS.

MR. HALFYARD presented a petition from English Harbour, T.B., on the subject of a canal, Mr. Hickman and Mr. Godden supported the petition.

HON. M. S. SULLIVAN presented a petition from the people of Boat Hr., P.B., on the subject of a courier between Baine Hr. and Boat Hr. Formerly the courier carried the mail from Baine Hr. to Boat Hr. on arrival of the 'Argyle' from East and West but for some reason this has been changed. As Boat Hr. has neither telephone, telegraph nor steamer connection it was most important that the courier service as it was continued and that telephone communication be installed, as soon as possible. Mr. W. J. Walsh and Mr. Sinnott supported the petition.

HON. W. S. MONROE presented a petition from the Nfld. Light and Power Co., Ltd., relative to certain legislation. The petition was referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, Mr. W. J. Browne, Mr. Halfyard and Mr. Scammell.

HON. W. J. BROWNE presented a similar petition from the Nfld. Power and Paper Co., Ltd., and the N. P. & P. Utilities Corporation Ltd. This position was referred to a Select Committee, consisting of the Attorney General, Hon. J. J. Long, Mr. Power, Mr. Hickman and Mr. Grimes.

NOTICE OF MOTION.
THE MINISTER OF FINANCE gave notice that he would on to-morrow move the House into Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.
In answer to Mr. Hickman the Minister of Marine and Fisheries stated that the lighthouse was placed at Ballyhack, C.B., at the request of the men returning to and from Bell Island and that land was purchased on which to build same for \$20,000.

THE MINISTER PUBLIC WORKS in reply to Mr. Hickman stated that no contracts for land had been given to any person in Harbour Grace District by his department. The Minister also stated that no moneys had been allocated to Harbour Grace District by his Department since January 1st, 1925.

MR. HICKMAN asked the Prime Minister to lay upon the Table of the House all correspondence between the Government and other parties, including the High Commissioner's Office in London, in reference to the four million dollar loan raised in England. To explain why the tenders were asked for in dollars instead of pounds sterling and why it was afterwards accepted in sterling. To explain why the highest offer was not accepted. To explain why Messrs. Glyn Mills & Co., Financial Agents, were not consulted as in the past.

In reply the PRIME MINISTER



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TER tabled the following

The only correspondence which I am aware was between the Minister of Finance and Bank of Montreal, copy of which is herewith tabled. There is no correspondence on the subject of the loan with the Commissioner in London. Orders were asked for in the Department as to whether the Government wished to take any risk on the exchange. This decision only altered when the Imperial Facilities Board agreed to assist the purchase of rails. The best possible return was obtained. The Government have no connection with Messrs. Glyn Mills & Co., and prefer dealing through their Bankers (Bank of Montreal). A resolution from the Committee on Supply on the subject of the Telegraphs vote was read a first and second time and agreed to.

SUPPLY

The House then went into Committee of the Whole on Supply and the vote for the Department of Customs was considered.

MR. ALFYARD raised the point that the public thought that the Customs Department was overstaffed and underpaid and that a good many could be done without. The public had a peculiar idea of Government Departments due to the misrepresentations of politicians. Work could not be done without help and the abroad were erroneous.

THE MINISTER felt this was a fact. In his opinion the Department as to quality of officials was understaffed and underpaid, and that when one official was absent, the fusion and extra work thrown on the shoulders of the others was very great. There were many occasions when the work was light, but on other occasions there is such a rush for goods that there is insufficient help.

THE LEADER OF THE POSITION inquired as to the duties of the Harbour Master and felt that there was much room for improvement in work done by this official, since there is no provision for restricted moorings, etc., in the Harbour. He advocated the appointment of a Harbour Commissioner.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said that the Harbour Master himself found the present legislation too restricted and that the Justice Department had the matter of fresh legislation in hand. The Government was considering the appointment of a Commissioner, such as, but not as extensive as the Montreal Harbour Commission. Such a move had been advocated by the Board of Trade and had been suggested in Colonel Mitchell's report. In fairness to Captain English himself it should be pointed out that he was only too well aware of the limitation of his powers.

Replying to a question raised by Mr. Halfyard, as to why the Department of the King's Printer had not been inaugurated last year pursuant to the Act in that respect, THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said that mature consideration had shown that the creation of this sub-Department would entail a lot of needless expense. The King's Printer now controlled the "Newfoundland Gazette." All Government advertising had been cut down to a minimum and only two local magazines to-day were receiving any Government patronage and even that was reduced to a very large extent. It was hoped to even further reduce it. It would be found that the printing bills of the different Departments for 1924-25 were the lowest for a number of years.

On the vote for the officials of the Pension Department MAJOR CASHIN said he had been asked to make a plea on behalf of the officials in this Department. He felt that as an increase had been made in other salaries and that these officials had done as well in civil life, irrespective of their military services, as any others in the civil service and they deserved the increase. There was one increase made and others deserved it as well as that one. They had rendered good service to the country overseas and they should be given just treatment in the civil service.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said since the Estimates had passed the Executive he had received a communication from the Pensions Board on this matter which he read. He trusted that the Minister of Finance would be able to give this matter his consideration.

MR. W. J. BROWNE desired to support the suggestion, and said that he had been approach-



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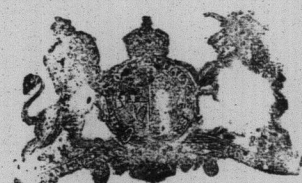
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