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ST. JOHN'S, N.F.L.D., FEB 5, 1914.

POLITICAL STUMBLING BLOCKS.

"Compulsory Education is theoretically right, but practically impossible"—so says The News. Why? "Oh, because machinery for enforcement is necessary," says The News. Why not make it?

"Public opinion must first be more pronounced," says The News. Procrastination! That's all the News argument amounts to. Parents who send their children to school believe in Compulsory Education. So do people who, having no children, regard the matter dispassionately. Those parents whose children play truant are not likely to clamor for Compulsory Education.

This is a subject on which the legislator should lead, not follow; should be a thinker, not a shirker.

Through the F.P.U. the fishermen are demanding Education; it is the politician, who blocks the way.

COMPETITIVE EXAMS.

The Government surely cannot be serious in the stand they are taking on the question of competitive examinations for filling positions in the civil service.

There is not the slightest doubt that the move advocated by the Union members in the house is the only one that will make for absolute competency in our various departments.

As things go now position and pay are determined by political pull which is also responsible for the disgraceful discrepancies in salaries so effectively scored by Mr. Jennings yesterday.

The attitude of the Government is determined by one particular objection and not by general difficulties, and the particular stumbling block in the way of the adoption of this reform, as Sir Edward Morris regards it, is the fact that to institute such a system for the filling of Government offices would be to abolish the old patronage system under which a man's claim to any particular job is determined by his services to the party or by his wire-pulling abilities.

The result is that as things now go, the departments contain many misfits and incapables. Competitive examinations constitute the only medium through which un-

biased and impartial appointments can be secured.

More than this, such a reform would constitute a great encouragement to our educational authorities and to the people generally, inasmuch as they would know that the better the education a child obtained the better its chance to obtain employment under the Government.

Our present educational system is quite capable in the larger centres anyway of preparing children for competitive civil service examinations of a fairly high standard, as witness the thousands who, every year, sit for the examinations of the Council of Higher Education.

Suit your examination standard to your educational standard and all will have a fair chance. Then as time goes on, and the one standard is raised, the other may be made to do the same.

PETITIONS PRESENTED

At the House yesterday Mr. Stone presented a petition on behalf of the inhabitants of Hatched Cove and St. Jones Within, asking that a sum of money be allocated to improve the condition of the roads between the different settlements. He also insisted upon the Government to take action and try and do something for the petitioners. The petition was strongly supported by Mr. Targett.

Mr. Targett presented a petition from the residents of Heart's Desire and Heart's Delight, regarding the three mile limit, which was backed up by Mr. Stone.

WHAT WE PAID FOR COAL

In answer to Mr. Stone's question on order paper dated Jan. 30, 1914, re coal supplied Green Island Light-houses, during year 1912 and 1913: 1912—

Jan. 5th—W. H. Hynes:	5 tons Anthracite coal at \$9.50
67 empty sacks	6.70
per ton	47.50
Labor filling	1.50
Oct 1st—P. Templeman:	24 tons coal landed at Green Island at \$9.00 per ton
1913—	216.00
Sept. 11—P. Templeman:	20 tons coal landed at Green Island at \$9.00 per ton
	180.00
5 tons Anthracite coal at Green Island at \$15.00 per ton	75.00
	\$225.00

WILFUL WASTE.

Every day the questions asked in the House by the Opposition are eliciting answers that prove that the Government have all along been making ducks and drakes of the public funds.

Consider, for instance, the way in which Magistrate Scott has been allowed to pile up payments for extra services in connection with his regular duties as well as for acting as Returning Officer in the recent General Elections. This should not be permitted. The regular salary is sufficient to cover charges for services and the expenses incidental to travelling on magisterial work figure out at much less than Five Dollars per day.

The story of unnecessary and extravagant expenditure is repeated in connection with every Government department. Take for instance, the cases to which Mr. Coaker called attention in the House yesterday in which one man, three women and a girl "worked out" a grant of \$50.00; one John Moss got \$25 which was spent "repairing a house"; coal is said to be short or to have disappeared altogether before it reaches the lighthouses it is destined for and so right on down through the whole list.

Business system is needed in every Public Department. Economy should be wooed and won back again to scenes that know it no more. The interests of the wage-earner and taxpayer should be protected, not exploited as at present to make graft and boodle for political friends of the Government.

UNNECESSARY EXPENDITURE

There is not the slightest doubt that the sum of \$5500 paid Bishop & Sons for the charter of the Earl of Devon to do election work in St. Barbe last fall was altogether out of proportion to the services this steamer did for the country.

Mr. Coaker was quite right when he stated in the House that the service could have been done much quicker and for a great deal less money.

Motor boats or land messengers could have been availed of to get the boxes to a very few harbors where the Earl of Devon could have called or picked them up.

This, we understand, was done on the northwest coast and the steamer did not, as claimed by the Premier, "have to call at every cove."

More than this the regular mail steamers cover, in a fortnight, the route it took the Earl of Devon almost two months to get over, and make a great deal more calls than the election boat made.

The charge of \$100 per day for the boat was altogether too great anyway and, all things considered, this Colony paid \$5,500 for services that should not have cost us more than \$2000.

Opposition Continue to Score Government Debating Estimates.

Coaker Takes up Educational Question and Advocates Free and Compulsory Education.—Point out many Leakages in our Public Expenditure.

(Continued from page 1)

How comes it that Bishop Sons & Co. were paid \$5,500.00 for hire of the Earl of Devon, while engaged distributing and collecting the ballot boxes in St. Barbe District? He, (Mr. Coaker) thought that this service could be performed quicker and cheaper than at \$100.00 per day for 55 days.

Fogo District has also a strong advocate in the F.P.U. President. He backed up Mr. Halfyard in his claim for better treatment of this district. Every man in Fogo is industrious and independent and the Government must do the right thing by those people. Outside islands want prime men for light keepers and as present keepers advance in years they should be moved to the main land.

Educational Matters.

The question of Free and Compulsory Education was next introduced and spoken to by Mr. Coaker, the Prime Minister and Mr. Kent. The member for Bonavista stated that no change was sought or desired on denominational lines—by free education he meant that all school fees should be abolished—a poor man after a bad year was often compelled to keep his three or four children home from school because he was unable to raise the money, small as the amount may be, with which to pay the teacher's fees.

His further contention was that every child had a God-given right to some education. The selfish or indifferent parent, who neglected or refused to send his child of a certain age to school for seven months of the year should be compelled by law to do so. He recommended that the experiment be tried in towns having a population of 1000 and upward, where the necessary legal machinery already existed for carrying such a law into effect.

Saw Difficulties.

The Premier saw insurmountable difficulties in the way; Mr. Kent thought the problem, big though it was, should be tackled; but he believed any system of compulsory education would be found unworkable in this country.

Mr. Grimes followed Mr. Coaker and made a very interesting speech. When the member for Port de Grave takes the floor he says things that count. He told the House that the Government's extravagance, those numerous increases in salaries had very much to do with the "increased cost of living" to the poor man and the taxpayer. He did not think that the country could afford at the present time to increase even the Governor's salary by some \$2500.00—he wanted to know what the majority of the people of this country had to do with providing the wherewithal to carry on the "Social Functions" at Government House.

Disgraceful Condition.

Some references were then made to salaries generally and increases—the Government was the largest employer of labor in this country and it pays the worst wages; this was a disgrace and ought not to prevail—things were going from bad to worse, and a civil service on a competitive basis should be inaugurated by the Government. If it wanted to lay honest claim to the title of "progressive," Civil service efficiency could only come through a system of competitive examinations.

No man should be placed ahead of another in any department of Government because of political pull. If we are to have honest, industrious and qualified civil servants, merit, and merit only must be the recognized qualification to promotion. The present system was responsible for so many defalcations.

Port de Grave, Mr. Grimes contends must have a motor ferry to ply between there and Brigus.

The leader of the Opposition, Mr. Kent, also strongly advocated a system of civil service whereby appointments would be made irrespective of the political pull of the applicant.

Sir Edward in reply said the Country has not been discovered long enough to think of introducing such a reform.

The Executive met last night to discuss the hospital charges and an inquiry will likely be announced in a day or two.

House adjourned at 6.30 p.m. to meet this p.m. at the usual hour.

President Coaker Does Some Very Hard Hitting.

Declares that Graft and Grab have to Cease at Once as Far as his District is Concerned.—Deals with the Hospital and Demands an Investigation of its Affairs.

In the House on Tuesday Mr. Coaker asked the Prime Minister if anything had been done in the matter of municipal boards for out-port districts, and received a reply that the question was under consideration. The F.P.U. Leader told the Committee that the Union districts would be satisfied with nothing less than absolute control of all local and special grants up to \$1000.

In the District of Bonavista, which he had the honor to represent, and where the per capita local grants amount to the munificent sum of 29c. per head, he had been told the road boards would refuse to accept it and resign. Giving \$100 to a special commissioner and a \$50 to dig a well on the recommendation of a defeated candidate might as well end here and now. The system was pernicious—it had already caused no end of trouble and would create very much more if persisted in by the Government. Now-a-days every man wants his share of every dollar of Government money spent in the various districts, and he won't be happy till he gets it; while the Government would be well advised if they give the matter of municipal road boards their favorable consideration this season.

Organize the Boards

The magistrate or a J.P. could be utilized to organize such boards. He has the power to call a public meeting and there and then let the people of the settlement elect their road board—5 or 8 or any number agreed upon, by private ballot—the board to hold office for two years; at the end of this period another election to be held; the old board accounting in detail for the expenditure of the past two years. The Government under the direction of the Government Engineer should have control over all expenditures of grants amounting to \$1000.00 and upwards. The County Council at Burin he (Mr. Coaker) understood had given satisfaction, and he felt sure that the simple and inexpensive plan which he had suggested would also suit down north.

The money now was not spent as it should be. A gets \$50 to dig a well and \$50 to build a road to his cabbage garden—the returns show "To contract building well (in our sack yard) that all. Let all the money go to the boards. When it is found that it has to be strictly accounted for we shall have three times as much work done.

The Hospital Sensation

Three-fourths of the people in St. John's were on the qui vive yesterday about the goings on at the General Hospital. Mr. Coaker, on Monday evening, in the fearless discharge of his duty, drew the attention of the Prime Minister to a letter which he had received and in which certain serious charges were preferred.

Yesterday Mr. Coaker again drew the attention of the House to the matter, and asked Sir Edward Morris if he had received a reply from Dr. Keegan, to which Sir Edward retorted that he had not. Continuing Mr. Coaker paid a high tribute to Dr. Keegan's professional skill and congratulated the Doctor on the high state of efficiency to which our hospital had been brought under his superintendency. Dr. Keegan would be a hard man to replace even at a salary of \$5,000 for, of 113 cases for appendicitis, 117 operations had been successful—this was a wonderful record; but in justice to Dr. Keegan and all parties interested, he demanded that this matter be taken up.

Goose Bay Ferry

The people of Goose Bay, some 6 or 7 settlements, representing a population of 1400 people want a motor ferry at a cost of \$500 or \$600, to connect with Brooklyn and the railway at the latter port. This service would relieve the Dundee considerably and enable her to call at several additional ports. The cost of building the motor boat would be probably \$1000.00, but if given a subsidy for 10 years he had no doubt that some enterprising constituent of his would undertake the contract and give general satisfaction all round.

Scores the Government

Mr. Coaker roundly scored the Government for the acts complained of by Mr. Clapp—dismissing faithful servants on the representation of disgraced and defeated candidates—a tremendous howl would be raised. While he (Mr. Coaker) retained his health there was no possible chance of returning any other, but a Union candidate north at any rate. Money he did not want. He had no use for lucre and what he received as session

indemnity he intended to give away to deserving cases similar to the one referred to the other day by his colleague, Mr. Winsor.

He (Mr. Coaker) was not worth twenty cents, but he felt rich and contented—as rich as W. D. Reid with his millions, who with all he had was not contented and wanted more. The Councils of the F.P.U. say if their road moneys were not expended in some such manner out-lined above, or if attempts were made to spend public monies through commissions appointed at the instance of men who had been driven from public office by tremendous majorities, that the men of the north do not intend to allow it.

The Premier followed. He intimated that Coaker's plans for municipal boards were being considered. The local councils at Bell Island, St. Lawrence and other places were working all right and he thought the present law adequate for the establishment of elective road boards.

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