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HOUSE of ASSEMBLY

Opposition Worrying the Government—Kent & Clift Storming the Redoubts and Silencing Their Guns.

The Speech from the Throne occupied the entire sitting of the House yesterday. Mr. Clift presented petitions from St. Patrick's, Luke's Arm, Collet's Arm and Wood's Harbor on the subject of roads and a wharf, and the replies to the questions of the previous day were deferred until they were ready.

The Colonial Secretary informed Mr. Kent that the Reid Nfd. Co. had not taken up any land under the 1910 Contract.

Supply was granted on motion of the Minister of Finance, and the rest of the matter on the order paper was deferred.

Mr. Bennett then moved the adoption of the report of the Committee selected to draft the Address in Reply.

Mr. Clift taking up the Speech from the Throne gave it a searching criticism, taking it paragraph by paragraph, which he submitted to a close analysis. Among the interesting things he said in the course of his speech was that we would suppose that since its advent to power the present Government had done something by which this great reduction in taxation was rendered possible. He said not see what the Government had done the past four years in order to enable them to remit these taxes. The remission of the taxation on these articles was the policy of the Bond

administration, which placed the present Government in a position to relieve the taxpayers of this duty, and it was the fruits of the seeds sown not by the present Government, but by their predecessors. Such being the case, the Premier and his colleagues could not for a moment say that they were responsible for being in a position to hand back this revenue. The next paragraph referred to the "substantial progress made by the Contractor with the construction work." That declaration conveyed nothing new. It was well known he had been so engaged the past two years, that the roads had been laid to Bonavista and the rails laid towards Trepassay and Heart's Content. They knew, however, that these five branches would cost a great deal more than they were told by the Premier they would cost. He (the Premier) said in introducing the Bill that they would cost \$4,000,000. Mr. Clift thought by the time they were finished the cost would be nearer \$8,000,000. The Speech said the work on the Trepassay and Heart's Content roads would be resumed early next summer, and the construction work on the Bay de Verde, Fortune Bay and Bonne Bay lines would begin this year and completed as early as possible. All the work possible they knew would be given on these branches before the day of reckoning came—before

the day when his friends opposite would be judged by the people. Work galore would be given on them so that when the time arrived for the marking of the ballots this would be fresh in the memories of the people. Two of the branches would be finished in the early summer and the construction work on the other three would be done as soon as possible. These three are Bay de Verde, Fortune and Bonne Bays, and the other two, Heart's Content and Trepassay. Bonavista branch would be the sixth. He (Mr. Clift) thought that five was the number contemplated in the original contract. The Premier no doubt would be able to give an explanation accounting for the sixth branch. The Old Age Pension scheme was not new to them and he could not see why it should be given a particular place in the Speech. That measure had been in operation two years. When it was introduced the number to participate in the benefits of its provisions was to be increased at the rate of 400 a year. This year an additional 400 would be added to the total, and would pretty well complete all those entitled to receive it up to 75 years. Personally he was very much in favor of the principle of the scheme, but he contended that the benefits of it should accrue to a man before he was 75. If a man could eke out an existence till he reached that age, then he would somehow or other find enough to carry him along the rest of his days. If this principle of old age pensions was a good one, then he (Mr. Clift) held that the benefits for these worn-out toilers should accrue before they were too old to enjoy them, and if the principle be admitted, the amount should be more than that given to-day, and without the strict enquiries made at the present time. Granted that the principle was good, and that the Colony could afford it, then every man arriving at a certain age should become entitled to it. The Government discriminated between two men of 75 because one had some little assistance from his family which the other had not. The man lacking the assistance might not, however, be in as great need as the other. There should be no discrimination, therefore he did not think there was much in that paragraph. Then they were told that they would have to consider a measure to create a fund to relieve the dependants of bread winners who lost their lives battling with the seas in fishing and mercantile vessels. One could not well discuss the merits of the proposal before it was brought before the House. It struck him, however, that this must be something in the nature of an insurance scheme. It must be so in order to be equitable to the people of the country. The Workmen's Compensation Act covered this matter in connection with other industries and they covered their liabilities by insurance. They were old in the Speech that certain capitalists were about to undertake the erection of factories on the S. W. coast for the manufacture of glue from fish offal and dogfish. An excellent idea, but he would like to see the factory in operation before placing any confidence in it. In the speeches which they had had from time to time, so many of these institutions were exploited and placed up in the Statute Book with a flourish of trumpets as if a great boon was to be conferred on the people, that he could not but be sceptical when he saw little, if anything, being done in this direction. It savoured in his (Mr. Clift's) mind of that kind of legislation known as "Cold Storage." They were next informed of the advantages of the daily train service, and that the movement justified its existence. He did not think anyone who took cognizance of that service he first four months could see anything satisfactory about it. First it was fair, but the transportation facilities for mails, passengers and freight were unsatisfactory altogether. They were also told of the extension of the Northern Labrador steamer service. When the report bearing on the matter was received they could judge of the facilities it afforded. Now they knew very little about it. After reciting the benefits to be derived from the Harbor Grace dock, made possible by the guarantee of the interest on the expenditure by the Legislature, and which it is now plain the Government must make good, encouragement, they were told in the Speech should be given for the creation of shipyards and docks in other parts of the country. He feared that if the Government undertook any similar guarantees in other places they will not enjoy freedom from liability under the guarantee clause. Railway docks in Harbor Grace had been a paying proposition up to the present time, but great difficulty was found in the required capital, and if he was correctly informed all the capital for the dock now there had not yet been subscribed. As regards the paragraph in the Speech dealing with the 500 miles of telegraph wires that it is to be continued, and completed, it was hard to express an opinion until he had the Postmaster General's report on the new offices and the general service of the Postal Tele-

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graphs in the Colony. In some of the many offices established, he was informed that the annual income of the office was not sufficient to pay for the fuel consumed. There was such a thing as overdoing this matter of the extension of telegraphs. Personally he believed in extension and furthering the facilities of our traders in every possible way, because they were in the interest of trade and commerce, but there was a limit, and it should be observed. The Speech then dealt with the dredge. A dredge in certain sections was a godsend. He knew harbors that would be refuges of safety if dredged, and he hoped the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who was so interested in the dredge, would see that steam was kept up on her all the time from now until the 1st of November to get round the Colony to do as much dredging as possible before that date, so that all may have the benefits of this work. Further provision, the Speech says, will be made for education and night schools established for young men. This was laudable and he hoped would be taken advantage of, and when they knew the amount of subsidy for this later they would be able to discuss the merits or demerits of the proposal. The question of education we must look straight in the face and treat upon a more business like basis. Though large sums were spent on the encouragement of education, they had accomplished very little comparatively. Sufficient had been voted to supply many settlements with new schools. If we had not to divide the grants up there would be sufficient to build new schools in places now lacking them. But the amounts were doled out to each denomination to three different creeds, often when one school should be sufficient. The time must come when this will cease, as it will be viewed from a business standpoint and not from one of sentiment. As regards the surplus of \$211,000, that surplus would have been much more if greater regard were had for the economical carrying out of the Colony's services. For the past three or four years very considerable increases had taken place in the amounts voted under the heading of "Civil" (Continued on 6th page.)

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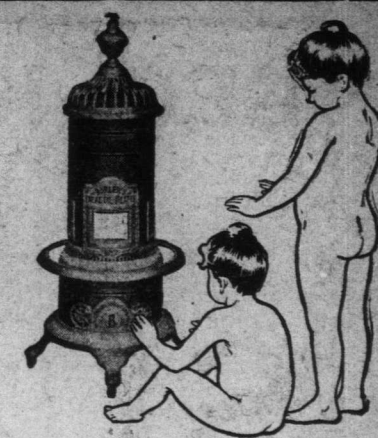
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