

House of Assembly.

TUESDAY, May 10th.

The House met at 3.15 p.m.
Petitions were presented by Messrs. Targett, Winsor and Abbott.

The following motion was introduced by Sir Michael Cashin to move for the appointment of a Select Committee of the House, consisting of five members, "to enquire and report upon the appropriation and expenditure of public money in 1920 for the purchase of Fish and Salt, and into all matters concerning the charter of vessels, the hiring of stores, the purchase and sale of Fish and Salt, and the whereabouts of the said Fish and Salt, and the control and management thereof; with power to employ Counsel to take evidence, papers and things necessary to the said enquiry; with an instruction to the said committee to hold an enquiry in public, and to have the evidence taken stenographically, and to publish the same from day to day in the newspapers of this city."

In introducing the Motion Sir Michael said it was not necessary to go into details concerning it. An enormous amount of money had been taken from the Treasury and an explanation must be given. If the Government's hands were clean in the matter there was no reason why an enquiry should not be conducted. It was seconded by Mr. Bennett.

The Prime Minister did not think the Motion was necessary as the matter referred to could be received by a searching enquiry when the House goes into Committee on Supply, Ways and Means, etc. The motion would mean a vote of want of confidence in the Government.

Mr. Higgins expressed his great surprise at the Premier's action. He did not think it possible that such an enquiry could be thought of. A member asks for enquiry into the expenditure of enormous amounts. It was ridiculous to say that this request could be construed into meaning a vote of lack of confidence in the Government. There was no direct charge against anyone in the motion and if there were, it was the bounden duty of those concerned to have the matter unequivocally disposed of. If it be true that everything is clean, and he did not say it was untrue, then why should there be any hesitation towards having a full enquiry into the matter. How could it be possible to get together if a thing like this were put up insensitively and without any change being made, and yet it turned out to be rotten in it and the Government were afraid for it to be touched. The thing was so unusual and the amounts involved so great that the whole matter should be cleaned up. If it were attempted to thrash the matter out in debate, it was quite likely that a Minister about to be pilloried would absent himself from the House. Was it decent for the Government to lock up this information? He could only conclude that it was the spontaneous thought of the Prime Minister that it should be thrown out. Not one sentence of the Motion implied wrong doing. If this thing were all the Government appeared to suggest it was, why did they funk this committee. He had never thought that such an important matter could be left without enquiry. The House should set a pattern to the country on a point of law. The Prime Minister could not be serious when he hesitated to have an enquiry into the matter. There was not a country under the British flag that would boast of having a thing like this done and hesitate for the slightest moment to have it enquired into. If the Minister of Marine and Fisheries were the man he thought he was, he would be the first to court an enquiry. Were the facts such as should be hidden. He appealed to the Government not to turn down the motion for their own good. If the Minister failed to support the Motion the impression would be created that he had done something wrong. So sure as he failed to support the Motion, the people would be satisfied that there was "something rotten in the state of Denmark."

Mr. MacDonnell was not satisfied with the Prime Minister's attitude. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries had on Monday welcomed an enquiry. Was there to be a barefaced back-

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down now. He could only place one construction on it and every right thinking person could not but do likewise. Somebody either in or out of the House was afraid of the truth. The killing of the Motion would not kill the cause, and some day the searchlight of public opinion would be cast on the Government. The matter would never be dropped by the Opposition until it had been entirely investigated.

Sir John Crosbie said that if the Government could see its way clear to grant the request for an enquiry into the Sugar Question why should there be any objection to the Motion before the House. He believed the Minister of Marine and Fisheries would welcome an enquiry and asked him in his own interest to support the Motion and have the thing sifted. If he courted publicity why did he not let the Select Committee go on, but he didn't, and he was afraid of it. No effort had yet been made to bring in any legislation which might save the country from the blackest position it was ever in yet. They were denied this enquiry. No one in the Opposition could attempt to associate with the Government until everything was enquired into. The debates would be prolonged if the Select Committee asked for, were not appointed.

Mr. Walsh regretted the Prime Minister's action, but hoped a vote would not be taken on party lines. He referred to similar instances in the past. Here was an opportunity for the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to clear himself. Let the Committee consist of all Government men but let it not be said that the Minister was afraid to court an enquiry.

Mr. Fox was not surprised that the Government had decided to vote down

the Motion. One would think that only the Government was decent and everybody else was pariahs. They had taken the power to themselves and used it to forward their own private, selfish, political aims. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries was surrounded with suspicion. He didn't want an investigation because he was

frightened. He did not think the personnel of the Committee, if appointed, should be all Government members. It was impossible to find five good men in the Government. The country was to be destroyed and they with it. He ridiculed the idea of associating with such a crowd as the Government who had used public offices for private ends. The Government were the only ones to have any confidence in themselves.

Mr. Vinnicombe thought the country should know all that was going on. If, however, a committee of enquiry were appointed, Mr. Coaker would wriggle out of it as the Prime Minister had done with the Woodford Affidavit. He thought it the duty of the Opposition to keep the House open till next October to prevent the Government from further blundering.

Mr. Moore briefly supported the Motion.

A division was then taken, the vote being a strictly party one and the Motion was lost by 16-13 as follows:—
For—Sir M. P. Cashin, Sir J. C. Crosbie, Mr. J. R. Bennett, Mr. W. J. Higgins, Mr. C. J. Fox, Mr. N. J. Vinnicombe, Mr. W. J. Walsh, Mr. M. S. Sullivan, Mr. E. J. Sinnott, Mr. J. MacDonnell, Mr. P. F. Moore, Dr. Jones, Capt. Lewis.—13.
Against—Hon. R. A. Squires, Hon. W. R. Warren, Hon. Dr. Barnes, Hon. W. W. Halfyard, Messrs. Winsor, Abbott, Targett, Guppy, Gosse, LeGrow, Hibbs, Small, Sampson, Jones, Jennings, Seasmith.—16.

Hon. Mr. Foote, Mr. Chessman, Mr. Cave, Mr. Archibald, and Hon. Mr. Brownrigg were not present in the House when the vote was taken.
Hon. W. F. Coaker remained in his seat during the division, which was

however tantamount to voting against the resolution.
Answers to questions were then tabled.
The Prime Minister gave a most unsatisfactory reply to a question of Sir Michael Cashin's referring to supplies sent to men cutting pit props for the Government.
Sir Michael Cashin said the men up North were allowed to cut pit props? The Prime Minister—"Good for them."
Sir Michael Cashin said it was because they were the Prime Minister's only hope and recently he had got up and fawned all over them for that reason. He read a letter from Salvage charging that 370 barrels of flour and 70 barrels of meat were sent to a place where only three families were in need. Wasn't it his business, said Sir Michael, to ask questions.
The Prime Minister—"Yes, if they are intelligent ones."
Sir Michael Cashin—"I asked so intelligently that I got under your skin. Even though we are 'wooden heads' we've held you up to ridicule this afternoon. What a lovely position the great Pooh Bah of Newfoundland is now in!"
The House went into Committee of the Whole on the Bill to Repeal the Codfish Exportation Act.
Sir John Crosbie rose to speak again to the Bill. He first referred to the fact that Mr. A. H. Salter was getting over \$1300 from the Board of Works Department and he had given orders to the Royal Stores amounting to nearly \$35,000. He wanted a stronger word than hypocrisy to describe the Government's actions. The excuse of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries about Penney and Sons of Ramea, that their lack of business ability put them down, was ridiculous. The Minister had informed Penney last year that if he sold his first he would seize the cargo. It was a case of persecution of the worst kind. He named men in Spaniard's Bay who still had fish in their stores. The Minister of Education allowed Government extravagance to go on, whilst his district starved. If the Minister of Marine and Fisheries went to the West Coast as he had threatened to do, he would be swamped. Referring to the cargo of the "President Coaker," Sir John said it fetched \$36,000. He had lost faith in Hon. Mr. Coaker. The "President Coaker" affair could not bear investigation by a Select Committee. An investigation would take place over the heads of the Government. Over 20000 copies of a fancy circular had been printed to advertise a bankrupt railway. Fish, sugar and salt, had cost the country over \$2,000,000. The Minister had not told the story of the cargo down at Brazil with a claim of 30s. a qtl. against it. He didn't believe the F.P.U. could sell a cod's tail in Brazil. He ridiculed the experts of the Advisory Board and finally appealed to Hon. Mr. Coaker to have a Select Committee appointed.
The Minister of Marine and Fisheries defied anyone to find anything wrong in connection with the "President Coaker."
Sir John Crosbie—"Then the only thing to do is bring in that Select Committee."
The Committee rose and reported progress.
The House was then adjourned until 3 p.m. to-day.

Mainly About People.
King George's life insurance policies total something like 2,000,000.
When a seventh son is born in Argentina the president of the republic, Hipolito Irigoyen, becomes his godfather.
To commemorate their world tours with the Prince of Wales, members of the Royal Marine band have been granted the privilege of wearing the prince's plumes as cap badges.

It is understood that one of the first offices to be resumed by the Duchess of Devonshire on her return to England will be that of mistress of the robes, which has been performed by the Duchess of Sutherland in her absence.

William J. Crane, 97 years old, of Augusta, Me., is "teething" for the third time in his life. Teeth are gradually working up through the gums, with four teeth already in sight.

A woman for the first time in the history of the Protestant Episcopal church in Massachusetts has been elected to the administrative office in the diocese; held by a member of the Bishop's Council, to which she was elected by the recent annual diocesan convention at Boston.

Mrs. Rosalie Loew Whitney, wife of Travis H. Whitney, former public service commissioner of New York City, has just been appointed a member of the newly organized state industrial commission by Governor Miller of New York. The salaries of the labor commissioner and members of the industrial board will be \$3,000 a year. Mrs. Whitney's term of office is for two years. This is the first time recorded that a woman has held an office in that capacity in the State.

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