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The Mail and Advocate

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ST. JOHN'S, N.F.L.D., APRIL 22, 1915.

The Vote on Prohibition

YESTERDAY the House sat from 3.30 to 6.30 and from 8 to 11.30 p.m. discussing Mr. Hickman's temperance resolutions, and it was the best debate of the session.

The Government made it and it was the best debate of the session. The Government made it a party question and refused to say more than assure their supporters in the House that they would bring in a Bill providing for the taking of a plebiscite. When the vote was taken at 11.30 the Government in a body voted against Mr. Coaker's amendment to Mr. Hickman's resolutions.

Mr. Coaker's amendment covered the grounds supported by several speakers on the Government side, as well as all the speakers but one on the Opposition side, yet out of pure cussedness they refused to permit a unanimous vote and insisted upon cracking the Party Whip, and even men like Mr. Currie, hitherto a vowed temperance reformer, actually stated that he would vote against the amendment although he approved of every word it contained.

Mr. Currie left the House a discredited temperance man, for no intelligent man in future will ever regard him as having an ounce of pluck worthy of a place amongst true temperance reformers. He received one of the greatest dressing down from Mr. Coaker that any man received that ever sat in the House, and it was no wonder that he (Currie) turned as white as a corpse and lost entire confidence in the man he hitherto knew as J. C. Currie, a so-called temperance advocate, and behold him revealed in his true colours—weak, cowardly, weightless and two-faced.

Burin District will never return John C. Currie to the House of Assembly again, for last night he constructed his political coffin as complete as his strongest political opponent could do it, and when his constituents get an opportunity to talk to him they will administer to him the same medicine as Stone administered to that other political sneak—R. A. Squires.

The speeches on the Government side of the House were anything but creditable. Some of them highly offensive and ridiculous.

The Premier and Colonial Secretary delivered speeches that would be considered silly if delivered by even school boys. Their speeches are unworthy the occasion, the place, the audience, and the great uplifting subject. They never spoke worse and their utterances were never so worthless.

Mr. Morine delivered three speeches during the day which were the equal to the best ever heard in the House on temperance reform. He made chips and porridge of the statements of every man who spoke against the amendment. He wiped up J. C. Currie and W. J. Higgins, the Premier and Colonial Secretary in a manner that easily convinced his hearers that the Government were a miserable crowd of nonentities, cowardly and incapable of an act-

ion above what might be attempted by any few grabbers who got together with no intention of doing right only when wrong could not be attempted with impunity.

The best speech from the Government side was that of Mr. Higgins who as usual got in a tangle with Mr. Coaker and received once again a few hard blows from the leader of the Union Party that will no doubt have the effect of preventing him in future from making statements about Mr. Coaker that he was forced to confess were groundless.

How such men as Currie, LeFevre, Moulton, Emerson, Crosbie, Parsons, Goodison and Piccott will be able to face their temperance constituents after their conduct of yesterday in connection with this vote, is very difficult to comprehend, for they will not have a leg to stand on.

Will the Premier and John Bennett and Mr. Kennedy succeed in ever again bluffing the temperance people of St. John's?

Will temperance workers again be so blind as to put their trust in those shallow and morally weak men?

The clergymen who were present during the whole debate yesterday will now have to admit that this temperance question is nothing more to the Premier and his colleagues than a plaything to be utilized at election times to secure votes and treated with contempt when ever temperance reform demands some material assistance.

Mr. Hickman's speech was worthy of the occasion and no speaker attempted to refute one of his statements. He deserves the best regards of temperance reformers and they will never forget his heroic conduct of facing this great evil in the brave manner in which he did it yesterday.

The amendment to Mr. Hickman's resolutions proposed by Mr. Coaker was defeated by a Party vote, every Graball member voting against it, while every member of the Opposition except Mr. Clift voted for it. Mr. Clift was not present when the vote was taken. Mr. Clapp who had attended an important Church meeting got back to the House before the division and recorded his vote for the amendment. Dr. Lloyd supported it strongly. Delivering one of the best speeches he ever delivered in the House, which made small potatoes of Mr. Bennett, the Premier and others who had attempted to once more play with this vital question. Dr. Lloyd demonstrated that he possessed abilities as a debater that few in the House can equal. Mr. Kent's speech was fair and moderate and he strongly urged the Government not to make a Party question of this great issue and strongly supported Mr. Coaker's amendment.

Mr. Hickman's resolutions read thus:—

- (1) That the importation and sale of spirituous liquors and wines be prohibited—
- (2) That the manufacture in the Colony of spirituous liquors and wines be prohibited.

Mr. Coaker's amendment reads as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce—

- (a) A Bill prohibiting the importation, manufacture and sale of ales, wines, beers and similar beverages, and all spirituous liquors with its dependencies—
- (b) Containing provisions for taking a plebiscite vote of the electors on the question, during 1915.—
- (c) Containing also a provision that the Bill should come into force, July 1st, 1916, if a majority vote in favor of the Bill.

The Government was forced by this amendment to take some action. They had to do something—they intended doing nothing—they were rudely awakened from their temperance slumbers and as a pretext they said they would bring in some sort of a Bill, but we venture to say that Bill when brought in will prove a delusion and a snare to the cause of temperance, had the Government felt inclined to do something material in the way of prohibition it would have accepted Mr. Coaker's amendment, by refusing to do so, it refused to bind itself to anything, and don't intend to, and all this froth from the Government speakers yesterday was but playing another game of BLUFF.

The Governor's Travelling Expenses

YESTERDAY the citizens of St. John's were amazed as they read in this paper our remarks in reference to the action of the Governor in drawing monthly the vote passed by the Legislature last year as travelling expenses. The people were astonished to find that for every month since July \$208.33 has been paid over to His Excellency out of this vote, for travelling expenses. That vote should not have been expended for any other purpose than that of paying the travelling expenses of the Governor, and if but \$500 was expended, the balance should, like all other Treasury balances, have fallen back to the Treasury.

Mr. Coaker asked for all requisitions for payment in connection with those amounts, but none was tabled. Presumably, none exist.

What can be expected by the people from Morris, Cashion, Crosbie, Bishop and others, or how can Inspector Dee be blamed for wasting \$9,000 for spawning lobsters, when His Excellency the Governor is so unmindful of his high duty and example to every civil servant as to accept from the Government money which should not have been paid him except to recoup himself for expenses incurred in travelling through the Colony. It would be as well for His Excellency to ask the Home Government for a transfer, for there will be a considerable lack of confidence in him in the future.

Another Piece of Bluff

LAST month, when Mr. Coaker secured an advance of 75c. on the price of seals, The News' editor came out denying that any such offer had been secured and saying that the price was \$3.75. On that same day Mr. Coaker announced that Job Broome had agreed to pay the 'Nassopie's' crew the \$4.50 he had demanded. The News further stated that the only true offer being made to secure an advance in prices were being made by the Premier, and went on to insinuate that in the future all would be well as the Premier was about to arrange with the British Government for the use of whitecoat skins for Army purposes. There were some Graball heebers who actually began to sing high about the Premier's action in securing a sale for skins for Army purposes and further stated that Sir Edward's action had raised the price of fat just as the steamers were about to sail.

The News to-day very kindly published correspondence between the Premier and certain parties in England concerning the use of seal skin. The correspondence reveals from the first that there was absolutely no hope of skins being used for Army purposes and all that the Army authorities could do to help the sealskin industry was to utilize them to bind valuable books, and for such purposes twelve skins would be required.

The Premier's efforts in securing a market for twelve sealskins will no doubt have its effect upon the price, and there will not be any need in the future to worry over a high price for fat. What bluff! What brazen-faced impudence!

We were told that the future of the sealing industry would be assured because the Army would require a large number of skins for the use of the troops and this was stated at the time when Mr. Coaker was engaged in compelling the buyers here to give up the 75c. which they had attempted to take from the scalers.

Mr. Coaker did compel them to pay the 75c. and the whole Country knows how he did it. The Premier started out to outdo Mr. Coaker's efforts, and after using all the departmental machinery available in this Colony and in England, he secured an order for twelve sealskins!

Is it any wonder that Mr. Coaker stated in the House last night that the Union Party had found him a great man to make promises but a poor man to carry them out, and that in view of their last year's experience of the Premier's promises, they had no longer any confidence in his bare word and required something in black and white that could bind him?

The News to-day very kindly furnishes the public with a strong proof of the wisdom of Mr. Coaker's conduct last night in absolutely refusing to be bluffed any longer by the Premier and his greedy hangers on.

The following letter, which was sent to the Government by the Home authorities in reply to the

Proceedings at the House of Assembly

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21st, 1915

No sooner had the Speaker taken the chair this afternoon than the gallery and floor of the Assembly Chamber were filled with eager and anxious listeners, inside the Bar being seated many prominent members of the W.C.T.U., besides several of clergy and noted temperance leaders of the Laity. The attraction of course was Mr. Hickman's resolutions hearing on the question of Prohibition.

Proceedings opened by the Colonial Secretary tabling various reports, amongst them being the report of the commission on hospital matters.

Mr. Bennett also tabled replies to previous questions of members.

Minister of Fisheries Piccott tabled reply to question of Mr. Jennings as did also Minister of Finance Cashion on questions of various members.

Notice of Questions were given by Messrs. Grimes, Abbott, Stone and Jennings, and then came the "Order of the Day."

The "Act to amend the Customs Act 1898" passed its third reading and was sent to the Legislative Council for its concurrence.

House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on Mr. Hickman's resolutions, Mr. Parsons chairman.

In introducing the resolutions Mr. Hickman said he did so with the idea of stamping out the liquor traffic in our midst, not as a teetotaler himself, but having regard to his more unfortunate fellow-man who could not resist the temptation to over indulge. The resolutions did not include beer, but if the resolutions were adopted it was paving the way to a bill for total prohibition which was the desired end. He instanced the deplorable effects of strong drink on the labor market, as gained from personal experience when he stated that there were some of our very best men walking the streets, or at the best earning only \$3.00 per week, that if sober, might be earning from ten to twenty dollars. Mr. Hickman depicted the sober and industrious man of over 70 years of age with the bright clear eye and upright form, as against the habitual drinker of 60, the latter a miserable stunted specimen of manhood. He also spoke of the various public institutions, viz.—the Lunatic Asylum, Poor Asylum and Penitentiary that were flooded by this drink-curse and predicted that if prohibition became law in this country, in 20 years time, one institution instead of three would be ample.

The member for Bay de Verde also spoke of the questions from the revenue stand-point and in closing a forcible speech, wished it to be distinctly understood that it was not a party question and that he had not solicited the support of any member of the House.

Hon. C. H. Emerson had listened with interest to the Hon Member for Bay de Verde and he was entirely opposed to the resolution before the chair. He (Mr. Emerson) had seen it in the papers about the responsibility of voting etc., and he considered that every man had a right to vote as he pleased, it had been stated that the Government had received a mandate from the people last year, and with that he took issue. The petitions presented last year were very different. It was that liquor should be prevented from going into local option districts, and that a measure should be considered of how to give the people a plebiscite. Since last year there had been no agitation, therefore there has been no mandate. Mr. Emerson expressed himself as being in favor of the matter.

Mr. Morine said emphatically that he would vote for the resolutions in their present form, or would vote for them in any form that meant the total prohibition of liquors of every description. Much had been said about a mandate from the people. He himself had a mandate from the people of Bonaville Bay to vote on all matters in this house, based on his own convictions and if they were not satisfied then they could turn him out as their representative.

The Government had no mandate from the country to send away 1000 men for war purposes, and now about to send off another 200, and yet they said it.

The Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Emerson had said the time was not opportune, and why was that. If the needs of the case demanded it and if the \$550,000 revenue comes in, it makes no difference what kind of good are taxed so long as we get the revenue. It was very obvious that on account of the big diff something must be done, and some radical changes in Tariff made in order to provide for the future.

He utterly attacked the Hon Member for St. John's East (Mr. Higgins) as one who was almost persuaded to be a total prohibitionist. The abuse of liquor was inseparable from the business and you must cut it out altogether. The Local Option districts are calling out practically for prohibition and he believed that a majority of the people were in favor of it, then why not give it them.

Referring to a plebiscite that had been mentioned—Well, if we had a

giving the people a chance to vote on the matter, and if they decided by a majority that they want it, why then give it to them.

However, he didn't think it an opportune time to deal with the matter and could not support the resolutions.

Mr. Jennings had not the slightest hesitation in giving his earnest support to the measure. On principle and from the moral standpoint he was prepared to vote for any measure that would tend to elevate his fellow man. The last speaker said that he had no mandate and with that he disagreed, because every voter district had voted for Local Option. He (Mr. Jennings) stood there with a mandate from his constituency, for he had a resolution sent on from Twillingate to show how they stood on the question.

The open sale of liquor in St. John's had counteracted Local Option in the outports, and there was no other action to be taken but to cut it out altogether. There would probably be a loss in the revenue for the present, but let the advocates of temperance be prepared for this. He (Mr. Jennings) was only a poor man, but he was prepared to pay 50c a barrel more for flour in order to help out the revenue. He instanced the effects of the great war, stating that during the first six months there had been 100,000 British casualties, 20,000 of which had been killed, and that during the same period, 25,000 persons had gone to an untimely grave through strong drink. Mr. Jennings concluded a practical timely speech by stating that it might open our eyes a bit as to what it really meant if we got the statistics of St. John's.

Mr. Higgins said that the attendance at the House and the interest evinced must convince everybody that it was a momentous question we were considering. Such indeed it was, had been, and would continue to be. No man in this house, whether he voted for or against the resolutions, would dare to champion the abuse of strong drink, because all must admit that liquor of any kind taken to excess was an evil. We must be prepared to grapple with the evil, but we must do it in a way that the people would have a chance of deciding for themselves at the polls. He himself was practically a prohibitionist. His own district of St. John's East was against Local Option, but that was no reason why he should be against it. Mr. Higgins wanted proof that the evils from the drink traffic had increased. Conditions are improved and are improving in St. John's because men are becoming more and more jealous of their own self-respect, and this was being accomplished in an educational manner by the organizations that had been the promoters of temperance petitions to the Legislature during the past few years. Concluding, the Hon Member said that he had carefully avoided the financial aspect of the question. He could not give that as a reason for voting in favor of keeping the people drunkards. He thought that the resolutions should not be pressed, but that the people should be given a chance of deciding the matter.

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Referring to a plebiscite that had been mentioned—Well, if we had a

plebiscite properly constructed, he (Mr. Morine) would give it his hearty support.

The Prime Minister had listened with interest to the various speakers, and thought we might congratulate ourselves as dealing with the question as statesmen. It was useless to discuss the question from the standpoint of the results of the abuse of liquor. We all admit it to be an evil, and on us rest the responsibility of how we are to use the pruning knife. There were public rights to be considered, and we should consider the question calmly, and in a dispassionate manner.

The Premier then in a lengthy speech reviewed the question before them from all standpoints, his main argument being that it was a mandate from the people that was wanted.

The Government had been looking round and considering the advisability of having a plebiscite and had decided to bring in a Bill this Session providing for such. In any case the resolutions before them could not have their support, because it did not include ale and beer and therefore was class legislation. The Premier wanted to assure the house that he himself in favor of total prohibition, which was the only solution and he quite agreed with the Hon Member for Bonaville, Mr. Morine, that the duties could be made up by an increased tariff on other goods.

Mr. Coaker said that if this thing is a curse to the country, why hesitate to cut it out altogether. However, from all that had been said on the other side of the House he Government had made up their mind to do nothing in the matter at all. If such was the case, then of course we are not going to get Prohibition.

Mr. Coaker is an ardent prohibitionist and spoke strongly in favor of such a measure, with the knowledge and consent of Mr. Hickman, and in order to test the Government's sincerity as regards their intention of providing for a plebiscite on the matter he proposed an amendment which included ales and beer, and provided for a plebiscite to be taken in November next, when, if a majority of the electorate decided in favor of total prohibition, it would become operative on July 1st, 1916.

Mr. Currie rose to explain his position. He had been known as a temperance worker and he intended to support the Legislation that the Government intended to bring in. With regard to the entire question he agreed largely with Mr. Morine on the principle that they could legislate but felt that the real solution was to submit it to the people themselves.

Mr. Downey expressed himself as being in sympathy with, and a supporter of any measure that would in any way alleviate some of the misery that existed because of the Liquor Traffic. He could not however support the resolution as it was class legislation.

Mr. Clift made a few observations. He did not propose to discuss the evils of intemperance, as there couldn't be two opinions on that score. He preferred to view matters from a temperate stand-point. He thought that the temperance workers should not distill to others what they should do. The resolutions brought in were of a valuable nature, but he felt disposed to wait for the Legislation as proposed by the Government. If he had to speak only for Twillingate district he could have no hesitation but as representative of the whole of the people he would like to have the voice of the people on the matter.

Dr. Lloyd said if he was asked the straight question yes or no, on the

question of prohibition, he didn't know first how he could answer, as he hadn't made up his mind. A member of the House was not there to obey the dictates of any constituency he was there to use the dictates of his own conscience.

He (Dr. Lloyd) was there, not only as a representative of Trinity but of the whole country. He complimented the introducer, Mr. Hickman for bringing in the resolution because if he had at least doing something towards the desired end. At the same time he was prepared to vote against the resolutions, because the people should be consulted, and he was prepared to take the vote of the people.

They had the statements of the Premier, backed up by Mr. Currie, that the Government were bringing in a bill, providing for a plebiscite and with which, if properly carried out they should be satisfied.

Mr. Kennedy would support any measure to stop the drink curse. He was a temperance man all his life, and since he heard the Premier state that a Bill was coming in dealing with the matter, he hoped to be able to give this his hearty support when it came in.

Mr. F. Morris wanted to have this "hardy annual" as he called it, treated in a proper manner by the temperance people, and instanced the denominational aspect of the question, the whole was in favor of leaving the vile matter to their own conscience.

Mr. Kent was not in favor of total prohibition, and in any case thought that matter should be left to the people. If the Government were bringing in an assurance it ought to be a final one, and he believed that the amendment of Mr. Coaker's was one that could be of material benefit in helping out the Government in the Legislature they were aiming at.

The House then adjourned for recess.

Reply to Mr. Halford's Question.
Reply to question asked by Mr. Halford for the cost of Public Buildings to date as named below:

Cost of Buildings To-Date April 16/15	
Harbor Grace Building.....	\$32,349.28
Spaniard's Bay Building.....	8,136.28
Bay Roberts Building.....	17,550.77
Channel Building.....	7,500.00
Freshwater Building.....	5,500.00
Dept. Public Works.....	
April 16, 1915.	

MR. ABBOTT.—To ask the Rt. Hon. the Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture and Mines, to lay upon the table of the House a statement showing (a) how much was paid yearly for the maintenance of the agricultural bull at Wesleyville; (b) if any money received from the sale of the bull by the party in charge was forwarded to the Government; if so, how much?

Reply to Mr. Abbott's Question.
(A) \$98.00 for four years keep of bull.
(B) No money received, as the accompanying letters give full explanation.

The Agricultural Board has not yet received a reply to their letter addressed to the Secretary of the Wesleyville Agricultural Society, dated 29 March. If none arrives within a reasonable time the Board purposes asking the Magistrate to investigate.

March 29th, 1915.
Mr. Wm. Sainsbury,
Secy. Agric. Society,
Wesleyville, B.B.

Dear Sir.—The statement of expenditure received from you is not a correct account of the cash you have on hand belonging to the Agricultural Society. According to the account furnished by you in 1912 you had a cash balance of \$20.68. In your account for 1913 you did not account for that balance but from the cheque of \$50.00 sent you showed a balance of \$30.00 on hand which must be added to the previous year's balance thus making a total of \$23.68 in all on hand at the end of 1913. That is the sum to be accounted for in the statement. No

(Continued on page 5)

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