

House of Assembly
Proceedings

March 24th.

HON. MINISTER OF JUSTICE presented a petition from the residents of Bay of Islands on the subject of a launch and which.

Notice of question was given by Mr. Brown and various members of the Opposition.

The House went into Committee of the Whole on an agreement between the Government and the N.M. Textile Manufacturing Co. The Prime Minister stated that the concessions proposed were similar to that given to the N.M. Knitting Mills some years ago, with the exception that there is no such guarantee of 5 per cent. given to the new company as was given to the Knitting Mills. He stated that the company hopes to be in operation in St. John's West within the next five or six months and would employ quite a number of people.

MR. WARREN raised the question as to the scope of Section 1 of the agreement and the committee rose and asked leave to sit again.

The Bill entitled "Of Legislative Disabilities and the Vacation of Seats in the House of Assembly" was read a first time.

The Bill "An Act respecting a Tax on Certain Incomes" was read a first time.

Replies to questions on the Order Paper were tabled, after which the House went into Committee of the Whole on Supply.

In introducing the Estimates the MINISTER OF FINANCE reviewed in detail the Estimates in all the various Departments. Brief reference is made to them in another column.

MR. HICKMAN said last year the Opposition expected that the railway would be included; he noted that it was not in the estimates this year and unless they had all the information required they were not prepared to proceed.

The Committee rose and reported progress.

The House then went into Committee on the Dry Dock resolutions.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION said they were opposed to the bill as the Governor in Council authority to enter into a contract in respect of the Dock and he asked why the contract could not be made in the House. He thought that the Government was inconsistent in their attitude and in reference to a proposition to borrow money for repairs, he was of opinion that the Government should know near about the proposed cost. He did not know what was the reason of the increased cost and believed the proposed expenditure was too much. He proposed that the Dock should be only taken to a state of safety until they were better prepared to go on with a larger scheme. He thought that whilst the old system at the premises in the Dock we have, provided it is made safe, is good enough. Our geographical position should be considered and that the Government should do its utmost to make the Dock safe for larger shipping. He thought that in connection with the Dock we should have a foundry so that we would not have to send away for large castings and thus delay repairs. He concluded by asking what the Government proposed to do with the men employed in the machine shops.

HON. MINISTER OF JUSTICE feared that the Leader of the Opposition missed the real point in making his objection. In the first place the Government could enter into a contract and then come down to the House with it as a party measure and the hon. gentleman in the very position which he is in now, and the Government could have made this contract and put it through as a Government measure and the hon. gentleman's position would be the same as he is going to take now, apparently. In this case it is not what has been done at all. "The Government," said the Minister of Justice, "has gone to work and put the whole matter before the House as to the condition of the Dock. It has been made absolutely clear that the Dock had to be closed. No person can attempt to take any other position with regard to it and it seems to be sheer schoolboyish to ask that it is to be done with the men on the Dock. Of course we cannot do anything up at the Dock unless we start them swimming around in the water, but as soon as possible the Government proposes to put these men at the one thing that they know about, their own avocation at the work on the Dock. The Government says that the Dock demands immediate attention and these resolutions have been put before the committee, and it seems to me that if ever there was a time where the Government has gone out of its way to particularly tell the committee that it is going to be made, and the arrangements that are being made, it is now. What ordinary happens is that the private members of the House hear nothing of this sort of thing until the closest deal is brought down by the Executive Government. In this case the opposite nature of information has been furnished and laid before the House, which would lead the only arrangement here that the Government can suggest is the idea of making some contract or agreement with the people with whom we have been dealing. Every one would say that it makes no sense to have two people, because these are

the only people who have been bothered about it, whom the Government has been examining the Dock; and the Government comes in and says that this firm has told us alright, we will do this dock, and our fee is seventy thousand dollars. It does not matter to us whether it is going to cost you half a million or a million—that is our fee for doing this work."

"If that is the position, what contract can the Governor in Council enter into? Nothing but the contract which the members of this House know we have got to enter into. And what is the difference between going out and going into the Executive rooms to-night, drawing up a contract and signing it, and then coming in and laying it on the table of the House and saying, 'Here is our contract; pass that?' What is the difference? But the position would be different if we had the arrangement made in the House and the Governor in Council has come down and is asking power to make arrangements, after having laid all the information that it has before this House. There can be no doubt in the mind of anyone as to what is going to happen. We have got to make the arrangement and fix its terms quickly. I understand that with regard to this second proposition which it is proposed to work out it will give employment to between five and six hundred men for eight months, giving a total earnings for these men of about half a million dollars. Surely there never was a case in which a Government was more justified in saying that we ought to lose no time in doing that."

"As regards the amount that the Government will need to meet this proposed work. It is true that certain amounts were voted, and set aside in last year's Loan Bill, for this Dock; certain amounts were specified for this purpose. That amount will be used on this work, but there will be a balance over and above that amount—and the Governor-in-Council will have to go out and borrow the money to meet that balance. What is the difference between that and what was done last year, when the Governor-in-Council was empowered to go out and raise six million dollars?"

"That is a considerable improvement upon the idea of the Executive Government going and making a contract, and then coming in and saying to the House—'This is a Government contract, and as a Government contract it is a Government measure, and as it is a Government measure we are not at all concerned what view the Opposition takes of it.'"

"As regards the fitting of the Dock for the class of trade that we are likely to get—I may say, as a layman, that I was very much impressed with the attitude that was taken by the Engineers who made the report for the Dock, that they were of opinion that the Dock should be only taken to a state of safety until they were better prepared to go on with a larger scheme. He thought that whilst the old system at the premises in the Dock we have, provided it is made safe, is good enough. Our geographical position should be considered and that the Government should do its utmost to make the Dock safe for larger shipping. He thought that in connection with the Dock we should have a foundry so that we would not have to send away for large castings and thus delay repairs. He concluded by asking what the Government proposed to do with the men employed in the machine shops."

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"As to the permanent result, I may say that the feature which has the strongest appeal, is that idea of the amount that will be expended on labour—that out of that million dollars nearly one half goes directly in wages to the workmen and the people here in St. John's; and surely there was never an occasion when a Government, and indeed, an Opposition, would be more justified in availing of the chance of having this work done—surely there was never such an occasion to do that as we have to-day."

THE PRIME MINISTER stated that last year he did not know of the condition of the Dock and thought that the amount voted for repairs would cover it. As for employment for the men he thought that considerable employment would be given the boiler-makers in the construction of pontoons. He thought that Mr. Hickman's contention that they were not being consulted was absurd, as the Government had laid all the information available on the table of the House.

MAJOR SULLIVAN referring to the cost of the original building of the Dock said that wages have increased 400 per cent. from what they were 40 years ago and besides, in the proposed rebuilding there will be many improvements which will make for doing work economically. He pointed out that during the close time there would be sufficient employment on railway and other jobs to take care of all the mechanics.

MR. HICKMAN, replying to what the previous speaker said, said he did not intend to take anything back, and was sure that the contract he made and laid on the table of the House, is

figured out that the W. I. Bishop Co. was to be paid about \$20,000 more for overseeing the repairs than what was estimated last year for repairs. He thought that local men should have been employed to build a coffer dam to find out what repairs were necessary. He agreed with the member for St. John's East, that labor was required, but he thought that making a deal to repair the Dock was another matter.

MAJOR CASHIN, being a member of the Railway Commission, said that to any ordinary man pursuing the reports, the proposition by Colonel Bishop was the only proposition to be considered. The next thing to consider was would it be a profitable undertaking? He thought that it would and was prepared to suggest that we go further and spend money on putting in the machine shops as well as the Dock. He thought that the premises plant he thought that the premises should be managed efficiently and he urged that there should be an efficient man put in charge of this and the railway. Such a man could be found in Commander Howley. He was of the same opinion as the Minister of Justice that we should give the power to Messrs. Bishop or Crandell to go ahead right away with the Dock repairs.

CAPT. RANDALL thought that nobody had any doubt of the necessity of having repairs done at once to the Dock. He did not agree with the way the Government had gone ahead with the work and he would have brought in some one independent or disinterested in a repair job. He was not reflecting on those brought in by the Government. In his opinion, the Dock, as it is now, can take care of all the shipping we will get for the next 15 or 20 years. He felt that in regard to the reports that Mr. Mitchell had not been given all the data available else he would not have been in error in reference to the drafts of report of the ship mentioned in his report. His own opinion was that there was no need for deepening the Dock, and he understood that this would form a considerable item in the bill. He believed that the Dock should be wider, but he did not know if we would get work to justify the cost. He thought that the Dock, at its present size, be repaired for \$100,000, but that consideration should be given to the idea of enlarging it and the possibilities of its being a paying proposition. If it only made \$41,000 last year, he did not see how profit would be made when one million was spent on it. He agreed that as the Government had decided to go ahead with the repairs they should make a good job of it and replace woodwork with concrete where possible.

MR. HALFYARD suggested that in view of the errors made by Colonel Mitchell in referring to the draft of some ships, might there not be other errors? He saw that this work and the work on the railway would do much to lessen the unemployment that exists, but he Opposition had not sufficient confidence in the Government to support their proposal to borrow more money. He couldn't support the Resolution, but he wanted to see the Dock repaired. As it was then 6.30 the chairman left the chair until 8 p.m.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

MR. SCAMMELL asked the Prime Minister to table the expenses of the T. Hollis Walker Enquiry held in 1924.

THE PRIME MINISTER tabled the following reply—

Amount paid for services through High Commissioner's Office	\$16,063.95
Amount paid High Commissioner's Office, passage to Nfld. of Commissioner Walker	381.46
Furness Withy & Co., passages	230.00
Amount paid Nfld. Government Railway, passages	371.67
Amount paid Crobie Hotel Board	717.71
W. Antle, Doorkeeper	122.50
Miss M. Bartlett, typing	25.00
Miss H. Balfour, typing	225.00
W. J. Crotty, reporting	420.00
Mrs. Crocker, Charwoman	47.00
Miss M. Edens, reporting	410.00
V. L. Godden, typing	88.75
Hugh Garland, reporting	420.69
Miss Healey, Charwoman	47.00
C. E. Hunt, B.L., Legal Fee	4,475.00
H. A. Winter, Legal Fee	4,475.00
Miss M. Kelly, typing	105.00
Mr. Nolan, Doorkeeper	117.50
R. A. Parsons, B.L., Clerk to Commissioner	625.00
James Farrell, Fireman	157.50
Richard Ryall, Doorkeeper	105.00
Miss M. Ryall, reporting	370.00
P. J. Summers, K.C., Supervisor of reporters	250.00
Miss E. M. Tobin, typing	350.00
Robert Walsh, caretaker	232.50
TOTAL	\$30,963.44

MR. CRIMES asked the Colonial Secretary who constitute the Board of Pension Commissioners for Newfoundland, and what in each individual case is the amount of salary and any emoluments paid individual members of the Board.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY tabled the following reply—

The Board of Pension Commissioners for Newfoundland is at present constituted as follows:

Dr. W. H. Parsons, M.C., Chairman—Salary \$1,100.00.

Engineer Commander R. A. Howley, Commissioner—Salary \$750.00.

Mr. J. C. Pratt, Commissioner—Salary \$750.00.

The above amounts constitute the total payment to members of the Board in respect of their services.

NIGHT SESSION.

House resumed after recess, MR. HALFYARD continued his remarks, and dealt with the financial aspect of the matter. He regarded the Dock as an urgent necessity, and provision would have to be made for its proper upkeep. He would like to know what value we would get for the \$70,000 it was proposed to pay Mr. Bishop and also the nature of the contract. He thought that the Government Engineer or the railway engineer could have given sufficient information to show what was necessary in the way of repairs. He presumed the Government was not intending to ask for tenders on the job. Before closing, Mr. Halfyard said the country would be shocked if they hear we are borrowing more money.

THE PRIME MINISTER said the contract would be the same nature as the Armstrong-Withworth Company gave for the building of the Main Dam on the West Coast. The case was simply the contract made with the commission would not exceed a certain amount. It is exactly the same proposition with the dock. In the work they will supply their best men and see that the work is done to the best of their ability. They will probably bring down their own machinery and charge us hire for it. Both Mr. Joyce and Mr. Harvey said that they were incapable of deciding as to what should be done. They said that they were not sufficiently experts on the work and advised somebody else should be called in to give an opinion.

We will follow the work and all the expense in connection with it. We will have the work checked up even as if we did not think that Mr. Bishop and his associates were going to give us a square deal. But we are satisfied that they have a great reputation to keep up and they cannot do other wise than give us the best service that can be given. The only other point that has been suggested by the Hon. Member is the deletion of section three. The object of this section is the borrowing of the money. It is only an ordinary rule of thumb to see that if you have \$500,000 put aside for a coal shed and another \$100,000 left after building the shed it can be seen that there is \$600,000 for the enterprise and if the expenditure that is involved is a million then it can be easily seen that you are \$400,000 short. A chair could see that. As if we are \$400,000 short we want the power to borrow it. It is most pathetic to see the tears running down the hon. member's face at the idea of borrowing \$400,000. He was a member of a Government that borrowed fifteen million dollars in three years and have not one single thing to show for it. We have got the permission to borrow six million dollars and we show the country that the money is spent in the pursuit of a regular policy. In other words we are going to give the country something to show for it. We are going to spend two million on the roads and we are going to see that the money is well spent. Again we are going to spend money on the railway. And we are going to spend money on the dock and everything is properly earmarked and is of a constructive nature, and it is pathetic to see that a member of the Government who had not a word to say and cannot show one iota for the fifteen million dollars which they borrowed shed tears over the borrowing of four hundred thousand dollars for the completion of a job for which we have six hundred thousand dollars on hand.

We considered the we could construct the dock for \$500,000 we would do it. We do not want to waste \$500,000. We want to see a dock that will be a credit and a lasting credit to the country and be able to handle the ships that may come in here, and then I think that we will be able to get some good company like Vickers to take the dock and run it. In conclusion the Prime Minister said in our geographical position it is almost essential that Newfoundland should have a dock that can be approached by ships in distress from the Atlantic. If we had new dock properly run with the suitable machinery and the work done reasonably cheap he believed that we would get twice as many vessels to come into St. John's as we do at the present time.

MR. HALFYARD, replying, thought it was unjust for the Prime Minister to hold the past Government up to ridicule because they borrowed \$15 million dollars and got no returns to it. He thought that all Governments were alike. Millions of pounds had been spent in England and billions in the United States without getting returns during this period.

MR. WARREN thought that there was no other course for the Government to pursue than to go ahead and make the best possible bargain in regard to the Dock, but in reference to giving authority to the Governor-in-Council power to enter into a contract, he felt that there was grounds for criticism. There has been very few bills similar to that contained in the resolutions under consideration. Two he remembered were in 1919. One of these was in relation to the contract with Bowring Bros., the other was in relation to the A-

lon Telephone Company. The latter was an operating contract. The only objection he had to the Loan under the resolutions, was that there was no limit placed to the amount. He was prepared to support the measure should a division of the House be called upon it.

MR. ASHBORNE suggested that if we tried it is possible that some other engineering firm may come in and give a lower estimate than that given by Messrs. Bishop or Crandell. The question to his mind, was whether the increase in revenue will warrant the expense we are going to. He would like to know who is going to superintend the construction of the Dock. Another question was, did we need an increase in the size of the Dock? He thought that the Dock we require is one that can take care of our coastwise shipping and the shipping that it cares for at present. He wanted to know if the operating company would use our dredge and about how long it would be used. He thought that he said last time to consider the matter and draw up plans and call for tenders; also we might make a counter offer to the Bishop Co., and perhaps we might get the job done for a considerable sum less. He suggested that we should limit the sum raised under the resolutions.

THE PRIME MINISTER said he agreed that it was acceptable to the Government to put in Clause 2 a limit to the amount needed and he thought that \$500,000 would be agreeable.

MR. GODDEN referred to the attitude of the other houses in relation to bills passed up and he thought it did not reflect creditably on them as legislators. He thought that bills going through the House should be debated by both sides. As to the dock being a commercial asset he thought that this was one aspect that should be given more consideration.

Viewing the various propositions, he was at a loss to understand why proposition No. 1 was not given more consideration. The question to him was whether the difference of a half million dollars between No. 1 and 2 proposed by him justified the return to bills passed up and he thought that this scheme (No. 1) be given more consideration. As under the dock will be widened and there was provision for suitable machinery. He agreed that the dock was a menace to public safety and it should be reconstructed immediately but he thought that this could be done for a sum not over a quarter of a million dollars.

COL. SULLIVAN replying said that No. 1 proposition had been fully considered. It was simply a reconditioning of a wooden dock, and it did not include widening or deepening. The many other features of No. 2. To accept it would mean that we would for the future have to keep a wooden structure in repair.

MR. K. M. BROWN thought the Government acted wisely in closing the dock. It should have been closed two years ago. He did not know if it was necessary to deepen the dock. Regarding the Engineer's Report, he thought that we should get an disinterested party to make an independent estimate. He quite agreed that the Government was making a right move in repairing the dock but he did not see why the old dock stood for 40 years we could not put it back in its former condition. He thought that some of the money borrowed for repairs to roads should be used instead of borrowing money for the repairs.

HON. COLONIAL SECRETARY, as a member of the Railway Commission, and one who saw the opening of the Dock, felt the old Dock gave good service. Simpson, who built it, only gave a guarantee that it would last for twenty years. It was only a short while ago that the Railway Commission put the Crandley Co. to report on the Dock. Not satisfied with having but one report they secured the services of the W. I. Bishop engineers in which fact they were very fortunate. The question to be decided about the Dock is an economic one. The Government appreciated the fact that the expenditure was large. Deductions have been made from the different plans and it has been found that No. 2 Plan has most to recommend it. He thought that the House should realize that the Government was sincere in whatever proposition they accepted, and were not running into the arms of Mr. Bishop by accepting proposition No. 2. He believed that they would get a better return from the Dock than the old one and it may, in the course of time, be a source of considerable revenue.

MR. HIBBS agreed that all were sure we must repair the Dock, but the question that should be considered was whether we should repair the present structure or make a more modern Dock.

Another question is, can we, by making a modern dock, attract shipping here. Personally, he was of the opinion that if we had the facilities, ships would come here if we could repair them as cheaply as they could be repaired elsewhere. On the matter of finances, he thought it was a matter which the Finance Minister was not pleased with to have to again go to the money market and he suggested that some of the two million dollars earmarked for the roads. This, he said, could be refunded in the course of a year or two by means of increased revenues which are in prospect. At the risk of differing from some of his colleagues he expressed the view that

any repairs should be made permanent (concrete.) He supported scheme No. 2 in preference to scheme No. 1.

MR. W. J. BROWNE said he was familiar with the dock since he was a child, but he did not remember when there was not a leak in the dock. He was sorry to see from the discussion that some of the Members of the House did not give consideration to the different propositions submitted. He agreed that the dock should be a national asset. We here should be the repair shop of the North Atlantic. He thought that the Government had done the right thing in getting expert opinion on the dock as soon as it was ascertained that its condition was dangerous. As a student of engineering Mr. Browne gave it as his opinion that the report of Mr. Mitchell could not be equalled by one engineer in a thousand. He went into the matter with great care and had made a most exhaustive report. Scheme No. 2 which he recommends Mr. Browne thought was most suitable to our requirements. The dock repairs, he thought, would be a benefit to the whole country, and the ex-

penditure of one million should not be any burden in view of the increased earning power which it will have.

The discussion was continued by Messrs. Grimes, Scammell, Duff and the Leader of the Opposition. All agreed to the necessity of repairs to the dock, but not to giving authority to the Governor-in-Council to enter into a contract.

At the conclusion the PRIME MINISTER said that as the Opposition said they would oppose the resolution the matter would be put to a vote. MR. HALFYARD moved and Mr. Scammell seconded a motion that Section 3 be deleted. The motion was defeated.

The Committee rose shortly before 1 a.m. and reported passing the resolutions with some amendments. The Speaker then put the amendment proposed by Mr. Halfyard and it was defeated. The original motion was then put and carried in the affirmative, after which the Bill was read a first time.

The remaining Orders of the Day was deferred and the House adjourned until this afternoon.

DO NOT DELAY!

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