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[Bond, (Sir) Robert]

THE PREMIER'S SPEECH

On Moving Second Reading of Education Amendment Bill.

RIGHT HON. THE PREMIER (Sir Robert Bond)—I beg leave to move the second reading of this Bill. I have been greatly pleased to notice the very keen interest that has been manifested by my friends of the opposite side of the House in reference to the introduction of the measure. Of course there could be no mere selfish or party motive attributable to them in the matter, their anxiety and impatience was born of a desire to see a measure introduced that would meet with the unanimous approval of the House and merit the commendation of every person outside of it. I trust that my honorable friends would not be disappointed in their desires or expectations in relation to the Bill. The question is one of more than ordinary importance, and therefore it was not surprising that so much interest had been manifested in its introduction. The Bill, Mr. Speaker, has in view a three-fold object. First, the consolidation of the acts of 1895-96-97-98-99-1901-02. Secondly, the adding to the present Legislative vote for educational purposes the sum of \$10,000, and to provide that that sum shall be distributed in the following manner: namely, that \$7,000 shall be placed at the disposal of the Boards of Education outside of St. John's to help destitute places, and that the sum of \$3,000 shall go to augment the salary of teachers throughout the island. In the third place, the Bill is intended to amend in some particulars the existing law as regards education. The first amendment has reference to superior schools. It is considered that at present there is not a sufficient safe-guard against the grant for

superior schools being devoted to purposes other than those which it was set apart by the House. The special object of the amendment then is to provide for the expenditure of the grant for the specific purpose for which it was allocated, viz., superior or higher education. The second amendment is intended to harmonize the schedule having reference to the grading of teachers with the syllabus of the Council of Higher Education. It is the opinion of the Superintendents of Education that at the present time teachers advanced too rapidly to the A A degree in order to obtain the grant of \$100 per year that attaches to it; that there is not sufficient time allowed for those teachers to mature. For instance, a third grade teacher may pass from the third grade to the A A degree and not have the qualifications of a first grade teacher who got only \$75 on his grade, and the object that this Act has in view in this regard is to make the A A qualification superior to that of first grade, which is not the case at the present time. The third amendment has reference to the Teachers Pension Fund and to section 59 of the Act of 1895. That section provided for the granting of pensions at the age of 60 years. The Superintendents of Education have recommended that a pension should be granted to female teachers at the age of 55 years. The reason for this I think will be obvious to the House. The female teachers are the weaker portion of the profession and are more susceptible to the ill results of a too sedentary life than are those of the stronger sex. They are liable to break down at an earlier age. It was therefore only proper, only ordinarily considerate that preference in this