

HOUSE of ASSEMBLY

Messrs. Kent and Clift Drive Coach and Four Through the Estimates—"Third Degree" Methods Still Used With Success.

In the House of Assembly, yesterday afternoon, Petitions for roads, fog alarms, etc., were presented by Messrs. Downey, Piccott, Devereux, Hon. C. Emerson, Hon. Col. Secretary (Mr. Watson), and Mr. Clift. The latter presented two petitions, one from the members of the Fishermen's Protective Union of Twillingate, for a sum of money for general utilities for the District, and from the Local Council of Troy Town, for a similar accommodation. Mr. Clift, in a speech of some duration, gave the prayer of petitioners his most earnest support and hoped the Government would see its way clear to grant the request of the petitioners. Hon. the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Watson), laid upon the table the Report of the Postmaster General and also that of Judge Knight, into the burning of the mail car and contents, on the railway some time ago. The statement of expenditures and receipts of the Municipal Council for the year 1911-12 was also tabled by him. Most of the information sought for by Messrs. Kent, Clift and Clapp, appearing in the 10 questions on the Order Paper, was furnished. The Minister of Public Works (Mr. Woodford), being ill, the Premier promised that the required information sought for from him would be forthcoming in a short while.

Consideration of the Bill for the construction and operation of a railway through Labrador to connect with Newfoundland by a ferry, was deferred until to-day.

THE SUPPLY BILL.

When the House went into Committee of the Whole on Supply, the strenuous work of the session began, and as with preceding sittings, Messrs. Kent and Clift, occupied the centre of the stage and continued their task of a searching enquiry into the estimates. The Hon. the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Watson), in his opening remarks, stated that the history is replete with examples of the kind, that emergencies beget the men when abnormal conditions prevail, and at present the Government are possessed of consummate ability as parliamentarians. Their work in opposition is a pleasurable surprise to their friends and admirers, and certainly redounds to the credit of both Mr. Clift and the Minister of Finance. If he had made provision in the Estimates for the various contingencies referred to in the Report of the Auditor General, for instance, there was a sum of \$5,760 for increase in salaries for which no vote had been taken. These should be in the Estimates for the coming year. The appeared to be covered under Orders in-Council and overdrafts. The Auditor General had pointed out the payments had been made under Orders-in-Council for increases in salaries, pensions and other expenditures not authorized by the Legislature, and payments on account not allowed by him. As he had refused to reimburse all payments from the Exchequer account he was indebted to the Bank of Montreal until the Legislature should make provision for such payments. The various payments referred to in the Auditor's Report, were A. J. Crocker, late Sub-Collector, pension \$300; P. late Locker, St. John's, \$400; Mr. Tracey, messenger, \$260; Mr. Fudister, increase, \$100; F. J. Cahill new vote, \$600; A. Crocker, Clerk of Shipping, new vote, \$600; J. W. Collins, tidewater, Botwood, new office, \$400; C. J. Nichols, Customs Boat, St. John's, increase \$120; C. Wright, P. Reardon, increase \$100 each; W. H. Parsons, increase (tidewater) \$210; J. W. Carroll, C. Clarke, W. Cummins, A. Gooby, increases \$210 each; S. Garland, increase \$140; B. Miller, increase, \$100, and Messrs. Lampin, Kelly, Mullins, Russell, White, Turk, Peet, Perry and Major, increases of \$100 each. Three others, acting boatmen, no vote were voted, \$420 each. Five supernumeraries were placed at \$300 each. All these amounts had been paid without proper authority, with no votes by the House, and with no authority save a minute of Council. He submitted this was not sufficient authority. These votes should have been taken the last session of the House and the increases also made then, and the pensions should

not have been made until they were passed in the regular way in the House. He would ask the Minister of Finance if these salaries, for which no vote had been taken last year, would be taken at this session and if all the increases were provided for in the Estimates now before the House, and if the pensions were also provided for.

Hon. Minister of Finance and Customs (Mr. Cashin) said that the salaries not shown would be brought down in Supplemental Supply. As to payments to tidewater and supernumeraries they were going on for all time and they did not estimate the proper amount to be voted as salary.

Mr. Clift understood that those various increases in the Customs Department were for extra services and could not therefore be provided for in the General Estimates. That they came out of General Contingencies, and he (Mr. Clift) still maintained this to be a most improper practice. He would be told that that sort of thing had gone on from time immemorial and was the custom of late and preceding Governments. If so he again held it was a most improper custom. If it was the custom all these years to make extra payments to officials for extra services and for overtime it would be very easy for the Minister to vote a round sum and include it in the Estimates, they would then know where they were and the Auditor General would not have occasion to draw attention to these things and refuse payment of such amounts. These payments were made by advances from the Bank of Montreal and he did not think the Bank should be asked to make such; they should be made here and the authority certified by the Auditor General, before that or any other Department should be allowed to overdraw its accounts. The Minister said the amount was not uniform but it was not so. There were several sums of \$200, \$140, \$120 and \$100 and they did not seem to be like expenses for overtime but more like bonuses or increases of salary. The speaker some other and better methods were adopted for such payments the better. If this continued he (Mr. Clift) did not see the object in bringing down votes in the House at all, for when next session comes they were to find they were paying more than they had voted for and without authority except that which came from a Minute of Council. The House was there to fix the salaries of servants for a year. It stood to reason if a Minister had the power to increase any one salary, no matter how small, he would have equal power over all so that every salary might assume a different complexion the day after the House closed and the whole of the votes passed here might be changed. The same as to Pensions which should be on the regular pension list and voted for. Why a vote was not taken for these he (Mr. Clift) was at a loss to know.

The Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Cashin) said that complaints similar to Mr. Clift's had been going on in the Auditor General's Report and the same charges made against the Government. Certain overwork was done and he justified the action of the Government who if they could not pay from contingencies account should pay by Order in Council. The gentleman (Mr. Clift) was merely trying to put up a case against the Government. Anything unprovided for would be found in the Additional Estimates.

Mr. Kent.—From the explanation given by the Hon. Minister it was about time some one made out a case against the Government. They had his explanation and the evidence of the Auditor General to go on and he thought the complaint of his friend, Mr. Clift, was very proper and well taken. He did not think they would allow any precedent or any report of the Auditor General with complaints similar to that now being dealt with. As the increases to which Mr. Clift referred were made before the 31st of January last and the date of the Auditor General's Report 6 or 7 weeks before the Estimates were brought down. When brought down there was no statement in the Estimates, they were left the same as last year though these increases had taken place, being made by a special

Order in Council. Every item to which Mr. Clift had referred was an increase of salary, permanent increases going on from year to year. A special vote of the Governor-in-Council would be required next year to provide for these increases. If these increases were put through now there was no provision for them and they should be voted for month by month by Order in Council of special order and as such were not secure and he, Mr. Kent, did not think it fair to the officials to leave them to the mere whim of the Governor-in-Council. They should go into the regular Estimates as the other salaries did. He then took up the votes re Contingencies Account and criticised them severely. There was an amount of \$1,310 in addition to \$5,760 referred to by Mr. Clift, and in each Department the same thing had occurred. There had an increase in the Colonial Secretary's Office of \$1,090; Marine and Fisheries including transfer, of \$10,920; in Public Charities in aid of forest fire sufferers, \$10,025; Postal Telegraph increase, \$8,890; for Public Works Department, \$24,369. What Mr. Clift had alluded to was the increases in the Customs Department on account of salaries. The Minister would no doubt, find precedents for expenditures made on Executive Responsibility. If they wanted to make increases in salaries or new salaries permanent in their permanent accounts then unless they put them in the ordinary Estimates such could not be done until next session. They should come in under Supplemental Supply or Additional Estimates under the head of Customs. He also criticized the vote of \$1,000 to the Registrar of Shipping, Thomas R. McGrath, and said it was unfair to have the various votes put in in such an irregular manner. Salaries of public officials should not be left to the tender mercies of the Governor-in-Council for such action left scope for discrimination, and the Minister should make the change that the Auditor General's Report called for during this session. The Estimates as they stood at present were not correct. It appeared to be ridiculous for the Committee to discuss these Estimates, knowing they were wrong, and he thought it only fair to ask the Minister to have them brought down in regular and proper form. There were charges in his own Department to the amount of \$5,760 in a vote of between \$40,000 and \$50,000 or nearly one-fifth of the vote for which no provision in the Estimates had been made. Provision should be made for pensions for those who were leaving the service and they should not be subject to the haphazard of events.

Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Cashin) said that any mistakes would be repaired in the additional Estimates to which Mr. Kent replied it was about time Mr. Cashin remarked they could do as they pleased about it, and Mr. Kent retorted that it was easy for him to talk that way as they (the Government) could vote down any proposition coming from him, Mr. Kent's, side of the House.

Mr. Clift here called into the Governor in flying style, asserted that the Estimates had been made and comment or any suggestion that the thought proper on matters coming before the House and he would point out what he (Mr. Clift) took to be improper in these Estimates, when he had done this his duty was done, the responsibility rested with the Government. Under the head Orders-in-Council they had increased the annual charge upon the Colony by the sum of \$27,000 in a period covered by the Auditor General's Report from January 1st, 1912, up to February 28th, 1913, or 15 months. They had increased in that time an annual obligation of \$27,000 in increase to salaries, new positions and pensions without authorization from the Legislature, included in which was \$10,000 paid over to the Game and Land Fisheries Board. Here he read extracts from the Auditor General's Report objecting to pass an amount of \$17,364.37 and showed how it was made up. It came from the claim of Butler and Kent, \$400 for extra services; \$460 to Mr. Lodge, Supt. of Methodist Schools, for extra services; \$500, Mr. Voulton's salary in the Premier's Office, type writing, \$800 for Mr. Simson, fish and oil expert (whatever that might mean). If he an expert Mr. Clift thought his salary small for expert work; typist, Supreme Court, \$40; several pensions, \$250 and one of \$80; increase of \$100 each to Butler and Kent of the Supreme Ct. and so on almost indefinitely. He again drew attention to Mr. Cashin's Department to the several increases of salaries there, the amounts paid without being voted and the pensions, and which the Minister said were for amounts in many cases of work done as overtime by officials. He would let that assertion stand side by side with the statement of the Auditor General who said that these payments were increases in salaries. He went into the payments made under the Head of Marine and Fisheries which showed a new office for Mr. S. K. Bell with a salary of \$800. No doubt the Minister or Marine would show why an extra survivor for ships was wanted. It should have been given long ago. For Dr. Grant as Quarantine Officer at Chamel, there was \$200 per year; \$250 for Dr. Jones, and in the Post Office for increases of salaries and for new offices amounts altogether of \$8,990. Very few of these amounts appear in the Estimates. The Postal Telegraphs would necessarily show an increase, and he held that all these amounts should show in this year's estimates. Both Mr. Clift and Mr. Kent went through the votes for salaries, pensions and increases in the different public departments showing according to the Auditor General's Report a total expenditure of \$77,664.37, which large sum had not been provided for by Legislative vote. Their criticisms were comprehensive and caustic and they showed that they would not be satisfied until they had secured their right to full and complete information concerning all matters of a debatable character before the House, demonstrated the status of those in Opposition and asserted that the presence of the Opposition as a party was as necessary to the well being of the body politic as that of the Government. The Premier came to the rescue, imparted all the information at his command especially about the ap-

Deputation To The Government.

On Saturday, March 15th, a deputation consisting of delegates from the Roman Catholic, Church of England and Methodist denominations waited on the Government. The deputation consisted of the following gentlemen: The Rev. Dr. Kitchen, the Rev. Dr. Whelan (unavoidably absent owing to the day on which the interview took place), V. P. Burke, Esq., and T. Hanrahan, Esq., delegates of the Roman Catholic denomination; the Rev. Canon Bolt, the Hon. John Harvey, D. M., Browning, Esq., and W. W. Blackall, Esq., delegates of the Church of England denomination; the Rev. Dr. Curtis, the Rev. Dr. Fenwick, Charles R. Steer, Esq., and John Leamon, Esq., delegates of the Methodist denomination.

The purpose of the deputation was to present a memorial to the Government concerning educational matters. The memorial sought—

1. To have the grant to Boards of Education for general purposes raised by at least twelve cents per caput, of population in order that the Boards may be in a position to pay better salaries to deserving teachers and, to keep school properties in a better condition.
2. To have the grant for training teachers increased to enable the several Boards of Examiners to make better provision for this fundamental branch of the service.
3. To have the grant for Industrial and Manual training increased, that provision may be made for girls, and that this important class of educational work may be extended to some of the larger centres of population throughout the Colony.
4. To have a further capital sum voted for the erection of school buildings.
5. To have the question of attendance at school, investigated.
6. To have some provision made for a measure of medical inspection for our schools.

A memorandum was appended, signed by all the delegates, excepting the superintendents of Education, asking that their offices be amplified and provision made for their travelling expenses.

The Rev. Canon Bolt, as Chairman of the Committee, presented the memorial and spoke in support of it. The Rev. Dr. Fenwick, T. Hanrahan, Esq., and the Hon. John Harvey followed him.

Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council of the Government, most of whom were present, the Rt. Hon. Sir E. P. Morris, Prime Minister, thanked the deputation for calling upon the Council, and for the great interest manifested by them in education. He also expressed his high appreciation of the voluntary services rendered by the host of clergy and others throughout the Colony in the cause of education. To his mind it was truly magnificent. Referring more particularly to the memorial, he pointed out that having regard to its content, the colony was making a pretty good show in the amount allocated to education, and yet he recognized that there was much more to be done. The Prime Minister intimated that he would lay the memorial, as well as the memorandum, before the Council and felt sure that they would receive very careful and sympathetic consideration. Just what the Government would be able to do he could not say, until he had had an opportunity of conferring with his colleagues, but he was convinced that they would do all that was possible. The Government had determined to do something in connection with industrial education, and under the management of the new organization in connection more particularly with inspection of schools would be undertaken. The question of attendance was a difficult one and he noted that the deputation only sought at present an enquiry.

The Rev. Canon Bolt, on behalf of the deputation, thanked the Prime Minister and the Council, and the deputation then withdrew.

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pointment of the cod oil expert, r. Simmon and generally threw a species of (cod) oil over the troubled waters. After making another severe attack on the methods of the Government and Minister of Finance on the Estimates, Messrs. Kent and Clift thanked the Premier for his courtesy and the Committee rose. Discussion of other matters on the order paper was deferred until to-day.

Several notices of question were given by Messrs. Clapp, Mr. Kent and Clift after which the Premier in an affecting speech introduced Resolutions of Sympathy to the family and friends of the late Hon. James McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Kent who made a very eloquent speech and paid a tribute to the deceased. The House then adjourned till 3 p.m. to-day.

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