

# House of Assembly

## SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES

WEDNESDAY, April 2nd, 1919.  
His Excellency having fixed the hour at which he proposed to open the present session of the Legislature at three of the clock of the afternoon of this Wednesday, the second day of April instant, the members of the House of Assembly met in the Assembly Room at a quarter to three of the clock in the afternoon when Mr. Speaker took the Chair.  
At three of the clock a message from His Excellency the Governor

**Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council: Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

It is with mingled sentiments of pride and thankfulness that I greet you to-day; pride in the wonderful success of the Allied arms in the Great World War which ended in November last; and thankfulness at the termination of a conflict which has caused untold miseries to the greater portion of the human race. I trust that from the wreck and devastation of the War, better, more enduring and happier conditions may arise, ushering in a new era of peace and contentment, which will in some measure justify and atone for the great sacrifices of blood and treasure which have been poured forth so freely and unselfishly upon the altar of Liberty.

At the time of the last session of this Legislature it will be remembered that the fortunes of the Allies were most critical, and the War situation was of the utmost gravity. Under those circumstances a Bill was introduced to postpone for a second time the General Election, and the Legislature then determined that the term of the present Assembly should be limited to April 30th, 1919.

Thanks under God, however, to the almost superhuman exertions made by the Allies, the tenacity and sustained gallantry of the soldiers, and the continued pressure of the Navy, the situation underwent such a change during the latter part of the summer and autumn that armistices have been signed with the enemies. The victory for which we have been hoping and praying has been achieved. The Peace Conference, which followed the conclusion of hostilities, has been in session some months. Problems of international significance and far reaching importance, which may call for legislative action and approval, are in course of settlement at the Conference and my Ministers feel that the Government must be in a position to call the Assembly together whenever necessary without any undue delay.

There are many problems of first-class importance connected with the demobilization of our soldiers and sailors, their re-establishment in civil life, the making of provision for War debts and obligations as well as questions of transportation by land and sea, which call for a new mandate from the country, and a newly elected and full House of Assembly to deal with them. These problems are urgent.

The object for which the Legislature is now called together is to make provision for that immediate appeal to the electorate which the legislation of last Session necessitates, and to enable the use of the last voters' lists, which was taken over twelve months ago.

The work of completing another list would throw unnecessary expense on the country, and cause delay in appealing to the electorate.

Your consideration will be invited, therefore, to proposals for amending the Election Act, in order to legalize the use in the forthcoming General Election of the Voters' List taken in 1917. Care will be had to ensure that the electoral qualifications of Newfoundlanders who have been serving in His Majesty's Naval and Military forces shall in no way be affected by their absence abroad on active service during the period of the War, and you will be asked to approve an amendment to the Act to this effect.

You will be asked also to extend the franchise to Newfoundland sailors and soldiers, under the age of 21 years, who have been overseas with His Majesty's Forces.

**Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

I am happy to be in a position to inform you that there was a substantial excess of Revenue over Expenditure to the amount of One Million, One Hundred and Seventy Thousand, Six Hundred and Twenty-seven Dollars and Ninety-four Cents, for the past fiscal year, and it is gratifying to know that a surplus of revenue over expenditure for the current fiscal year may also be anticipated as the Customs' Revenue for the eight months ending on February 28th shows an increase of One Million, Four Hundred and Fifty-four Thousand, Six Hundred and Twenty-three Dollars over the receipts for the same period last year.

You will be invited to vote the necessary funds to defray the expenses of the forthcoming General Election.

**Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council: Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

The tidings of the death of Prince John stirred the sympathetic feelings of Their Majesties' devoted subjects throughout the Dominion. It was my sad duty to convey to the Royal Household an expression of sorrow and sympathy of our people in their affliction, which has knit even closer together the ties of love and loyalty which bind us to the Throne.

In response to a summons from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies the Prime Minister attended during the summer the sittings of the Imperial War Cabinet, and represented the Dominion in the discussion and determination of vital issues connected with the conduct of the War. He also participated in the deliberations of the Imperial Conference which dealt with varied and complex problems affecting the present and future policy of the Empire.

In November last following upon the signing of the armistice, the Prime Minister was recalled to London by the British Government to take his place in the Imperial War Cabinet in connection with the discussion and formulation of terms of Peace. Later he proceeded to Paris with the British Empire delegation and took part in the Peace Conference there, actively interesting himself in all matters affecting or likely to affect the Dominion. Before returning home he represented Newfoundland's position to the Imperial authorities and received an assurance that our interests would be very carefully safeguarded.

My Ministers decided to endeavour to raise locally and in Canada the moneys required for the continued prosecution of the War and issued a Victory War Loan. Their faith in the patriotism and public

spirit of the people was fully justified by the magnificent result achieved, the amount of the issue being considerably oversubscribed within a very short period. This response is most gratifying as an evidence of the confidence of our people in the resources and possibilities of the country.

The continual growth and expansion of our trade and commerce of late years, combined with the increasing importance of our relations with the Mother Country, having emphasized the necessity of adequate representation there, my Ministers arranged for the appointment of a High Commissioner in London to look after the trade and commercial interests of the Dominion.

I avail of this opportunity to extend a hearty welcome home to our soldiers and sailors who have represented Newfoundland so valiantly and well during the past four years amid the changing fortunes and bitter hardships of War. Mere words cannot express our feelings of appreciation and admiration of their wonderful work. Their deeds are eloquent and pass to judgment before them. On land and sea and in the air their worth has been proven and their fame has spread far and wide. Those who have died for the Right have bequeathed us a precious legacy—the undying memory of duty performed even to the death, and the eternal fragrance of that love which exceeds all others—that a man lay down his life for his friends. Their loss to the country can never fully be estimated, because it is impossible to compute the value of the chivalry, honour, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty which these men possessed in the highest degree. We can only endeavour to prove worthy of the glorious heritage which they have purchased for us at such a price.

In taking leave of you I trust that your deliberations may conduce to the further welfare and prosperity of Newfoundland and that Divine Providence may guide you in the performance of your duties.

MR. DOWNEY, in moving that an Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency, spoke on the war and the prospects of lasting peace being restored in Europe and an end to despotism. He eulogized the grand part played by Newfoundland and the heroism of our young soldiers and sailors. The country should do everything possible to place them in good positions and otherwise provide for their future welfare. He was pleased to find that the Revenue was so much in excess of expenditure. It was fitting that we, being the most ancient Colony, should keep up our reputation for loyalty and extend sympathy to the King and Queen on the death of Prince John.

MR. LEFEUVRE seconded the motion, having performed the same duty in the first war session, 1914. That was a war session, this a peace session. He referred to the Election Act and the amendment now proposed in order that the Voters' List taken in 1917 may be used at a great saving to the taxpayers. It was only right that young men, even under 21 years of age, who had fought in the war or enlisted should be given the privilege of voting. He paid a high tribute to their heroism, which gained worldwide fame for Newfoundland. Reference was made also to the good financial state of the Dominion and the Government congratulated thereon. After four years of war, in spite of all the heavy financial strain, we were entering on peace as a prosperous country, largely due to the splendid protection of the British Navy.

MR. MORINE congratulated Messrs. Downey and LeFeuvre on their speeches, also Sir Michael Cashin and Sir William Lloyd on their Knights, and made some witty and jocose comments on the way those honours came to Newfoundland politicians. He had no doubt that in these instances they were well deserved as an acknowledgment to the great part Newfoundland had taken in the war. A sympathetic reference was made to the death of Prince John. He could not agree with previous speakers in regarding the war as being ended. There were no such indications in Europe. Germany, though believed to be defeated, had not changed in respect to the public mind. He paid a warm tribute of praise to Lloyd George, President Wilson and Clemenceau, the three great outstanding figures of the peace conference, also the deceased Roosevelt, the embodiment of all that was good and great in American character. These three great nations acting in union could preserve the future peace of the world. Mr. Morine was strong in his opinion that we could not possibly do too much for the returned soldiers and sailors, so that they may be put in the way of earning their living and given sufficient pensions in cases where they are unable to work. As to a general election in the spring, he did not agree with the idea. It should be put off till the fall, so that the voters would be able to know the merits of the policies and the candidates that they are asked to vote for.

THE PRIME MINISTER said though Mr. Morine was recognized as "the father of the House" in point of time, still this advice to defer the election till the fall was one in which the "children of the House" did not feel justified in following. Sir William complimented the previous speakers and expressed his appreciation for their complimentary references to the honor that was bestowed on himself. He deprecated taking any merit to himself in this and regarded it wholly as a compliment and tribute to Newfoundland and the part that we as a people have taken in the war—the brave deeds of our sol-

THURSDAY, April 3rd.

Petitions were presented by Mr. Walsh from St. Shotts for a ferry, from Branch for a breakwater, and from Trepassy for a road; by Mr. Morine, from Wesleyville and vicinity for a branch railway from Gambo to Carmanville. He pleaded for the construction of branch railways to St. Barbe and on the Straight Shore in Fogo District. St. Barbe had rich agricultural resources which should be developed. The main railway or trunk line which was known by all to be in a wretched condition should at once be attended to. It would have to be made safe for the travelling public and re-railled from St. John's to Port aux Basques with heavy metal. If not it would soon have to be abandoned.

HON. W. F. COAKER said that all the branch lines would have to be completed and the F. P. U. in their Councils had already decided that when funds are available the road from Gambo to Carmanville would have to be completed, also a branch from Little Bay via Hall's Bay to the main line at Howley, and a branch to St. Mary's. All this, it was recognized, would require the expenditure of millions of money. There was also the need of big expenditure for the

development of the fishery and the export of fresh fish, and it was questionable if this should not come before further branch railways were built. He was always prepared to give railway building his hearty support, but it was just now a question of funds.

HON. MR. HALFYARD said he was glad to see that the railway branch to Carmanville was receiving such support and to have Mr. Morine pleading for its construction. He hoped that it would be built as soon as the finances of the country could afford it. He was strongly in favor also of improving the main railway line and recognized that something should be done at once to put it in safe condition for the travelling public. We all know it is in a bad condition and should receive first consideration. The Straight Shore in Fogo District is now entitled to its branch, as they are cut off nearly half the year from the outside world.

MR. WALSH said he was pleased to see the Government members expressing themselves in favor of branch railways including one to St. Mary's, but his people this time would not be satisfied with mere empty promises. If the Government say seriously that they can business he will give them his hearty support in this matter. It is time to improve the trunk line, and also to have a report on the railway accident of 1917.

MR. CURRIE said he was glad to see the members of the Government recognizing the bad condition of the main railway line. He wondered what converted those members on the Government side now who were so much opposed to railways the previous session. He did not think that the financial condition of the Colony would at present allow more branch railways. If there is any money to spend it should go on the main line. The Colonial Secretary, he noticed, freely admitted that the road was in a bad condition. The Railway Engineer should be made do his duty. He would support any measure that would aim at making this road safe for the public.

THE PRIME MINISTER said he would make no promises re immediate building of branch railways, but would assure the House that the trunk line would be attended to and everything possible done consistent with our financial status to make the line safe. We have worked hard to keep that line open while the war was on, recognizing its importance in view of a possible blockade of the East Coast by enemy submarines. This however was only for temporary relief and security. What could be done and when it would be done he was not in a position to say.

MR. MORINE suggested that the question of the main line railway be submitted to the whole House, either in a secret session or in public debate, in order to get the opinions of both sides of the House and gain such information of its condition as would help the better to solve this serious problem.

MR. CURRIE, taking up the thread of the discussion of the previous evening on the Address in Reply, congratulated the Prime Minister and Sir Michael Cashin on their knight-hood honors. He thanked God that the war was over, and relating some of his personal experiences while in France, eulogized the brave work done by our soldiers, which had been spoken of so highly by the great generals of the army. He did not think that the Government had done enough in the interests of our soldiers and sailors. It was a poor policy to wait and see what Canada was going to do. The National Government was formed to make all these things right, but nothing satisfactory has been done yet. He made no objection to a spring election, but thought it should be held later in May. He believed with the Premier that "the people had ample time to know the Government." They knew them too well. They, the Morine wing, had been well advertised for seven or eight years in the paper controlled by Mr. Coaker and vice versa. The people were ready for an election, he believed, and would know what to do. He believed that the surplus revenue this year would be small and the country's financial condition was cause for deep concern. After three years' of abnormal prosperity we have taken on new obligations and have now a permanent annual expenditure of 7½ million dollars to face, with, no doubt, increased taxation.

The motion to adopt the Address in Reply was put and carried.

A Bill to amend the Election Act so that the Voters' List taken in 1917 be used and soldiers and sailors have additional facilities and privileges extended to them in voting, was put through all its stages on the suggestion of Mr. Morine. He suggested that Barbe election be given a later date, in order that candidates and officers be enabled to get around that district. He also proposed that a supplement-

ary list be made by the Militia Department of all soldiers and sailors, which should stand on the same footing as the regular Supplementary Voters' List. These suggestions were embodied, but his proposal to divide St. Barbe and St. George's into two women districts was allowed to stand over till a future time.

MR. MOORE presented a petition from Witless Bay for repairs to a wharf there.

Supply was granted to His Majesty on motion of the Minister of Finance, who also gave notice that he would on to-morrow move the House into Committee of the Whole on Supply.

The House then adjourned till to-morrow at 3 p.m.

FRIDAY, April 4th.

Petitions were presented by Mr. Stone, supported by Mr. Targett, from Trinity Bay South for branch railway, from Hopeall and New Harbor for roads; by Mr. Abbott, from Openall for a bridge, from Bayly's Cove for a road; by Mr. Downey, from Seaton for a ferry, from Summerside for a road; by the Premier, from Rencontre for telegraphs; by Mr. Morine, from Port Blandford, Openhall, Charlottetown, Bunyan's Cove, St. Brendan's, Fair Island and Tickle Cove to have the s.s. Dundee returned to the old route.

MR. MORINE said he did not wish to have any steam facilities now enjoyed taken away from Port Union, for the advantage of which the change was made, but he was strongly of the opinion that the petitioners would be treated very unjustly if they did not have their steam freight and passenger service restored as it was before. He showed up the hardships, loss of trade and absurd inconvenience of the present system and the loss of time to those who were obliged to travel by the route.

THE PRIME MINISTER promised to take up a consideration of the steamer service on the Northern Bays and go minutely into the whole subject, with a view to making the best arrangements possible to serve the public interests.

On motion of the Prime Minister the second reading of the Election Bill was taken up. The amendments included the legalization of the Voters' List of 1917, and gave to soldiers and sailors special facilities to have their votes recorded. He hoped to have them all home to vote by Polling Day. The suggestion of Mr. Morine to avoid delays in their voting would be availed of by having a list from the Militia Department for use on Polling Day.

MR. MORINE did not agree with having the election this time of the year but he was in accord with all the provisions of the Bill. To save time he proposed that it be put through this afternoon and sent to the Upper House.

MR. CURRIE agreed to this as matter's stood, but said that it was a novel and unique situation for such a proposal to be coming from the opposition side of the House.

MR. PARSONS, in rising to support the Bill, took occasion to bestow warm encomiums on the conduct of our Newfoundland soldiers and sailors and was glad that they were recognized in this Bill by special privileges in voting.

MR. WALSH favored the holding of a general election now, same as he did last session and was fully prepared for it. It would be strange news to him to be told that the people are not prepared and have not taken due interest in the coming contest. As far as the expectation of the people is concerned, he believed that the Government was justified in holding the election.

MR. CURRIE was in favor of the Bill, especially as it made special provision for our soldiers and sailors who had returned. Provision should also be made for those still overseas so that they may be able to vote. He thought that the election should be set for a later date in May, as the Premier said an effort was being made to bring them home and they may not be able to get here at the early date set down.

HON. MR. WOODFORD argued that quite a number of voters would be leaving for Labrador and Sydney about the 10th and 12th of May and it was necessary to have the election thus early to give as many of these as possible an opportunity to record their votes.

MR. DOWNEY favored an early election for the same reasons.

The Bill was then passed and the House went into Committee on the Supply.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE introduced resolutions for a vote of \$45,000 to cover election expenses. He pointed out the reasons for holding the election, which measure was so strongly forced on the House last session, when the Government's tenure of office was so strictly limited to April 30, 1919. We are ready now to go before the people and have nothing to cloak in our financial transactions. He alluded to an article in to-day's date of the Telegram insinuating the country, written by one who

on the occasion of the raising of the loan, was put in possession of all the correct facts as to the Colony's finances. His statements are in direct contradiction to what he knows to be true. Sir Michael then went on to give the history of the loans and to show the necessity of a mandate from the people before the last of June, when it will be necessary to have in hand a loan of \$5,000,000. He showed how the Government had financed the war up to this time and intended to provide for the soldiers and sailors. There were also other serious and pressing obligations, such as railways and steam services, all of which must be attended to within the next six months. If the people are going to turn us down, he agreed with the words of the Premier, "now is the time to give them a chance to do so." Those who come back will have big problems to handle. It will take nearly \$5,000,000 to clean up our obligations to soldiers and sailors and \$700,000 for pensions.

MR. CURRIE did not believe in Sir Michael Cashin's alarming cry about the raising of the required loan. He was too old a financier not to have this secured already, seeing that he was in Canada last winter, no doubt making arrangements for same. He was throwing dust in the eyes of the people in showing this up as a difficulty.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE (Sir Michael Cashin) replied that while he was in Canada he did not make provision for a loan. He had no authority to do so and the proof of this is the Government now intends to ask for tenders. Financial men in Montreal did call on him, talked money matters and made offers, but he did nothing because he had no authority. He could show Mr. Currie documentary proofs at his office of what he was now stating.

MR. MORINE said that he had always refrained from criticism in financial questions of this kind. They were dangerous and might affect the credit of the Colony. He thought that he might well leave this matter in the hands of the Finance Minister. He was surprised that the criticisms in the Telegram should rattle him. For his part he was anxious to save time and get the Bills through and would gladly do anything to help the financial work of the country.

The vote was then passed for \$45,000 to defray election expenses, went through all its stages and was sent to the Legislative Council.

Mr. Currie asked the following questions:

What salaries are paid to the Chairman and other members of the Pension Board, individual, also a detailed account of the expenses incurred by the Chairman of said Board during his trip to Ottawa to study the Canadian pension scheme.

For a detailed account of the Food Control Board, together with salaries paid to members, and a detailed account of collections made by the said Board.

What salary was paid to Capt. John Lewis for acting as Fishery Representative abroad, also a detailed account of money paid to him for expenses.

The amount paid to the Newfoundland Produce Company for Patrol Service during the years of 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918.

The Minister of Fisheries replied that no money had been paid to Capt. John Lewis by his Department for acting as Fishery Representative abroad. To all the other questions the reply was they were being prepared.

Mr. Walsh gave notice of a question regarding Old Age Pensions, after which the House adjourned.

MONDAY, April 7, 1919.

House met at 3 p.m.

Petitions were presented as follows: By Mr. Bennett (for Mr. Speaker) from Flatrock, re landing; Mr. Morine, from King's Cove, Keels, Plate Cove, Indian Arm and Southern Bay, re Bay steam; Mr. Stone, from Shoal Harbor, re wharf; St. Jones within, re telephone, from Catalina, re timber reserve; Mr. Targett, from Hant's Hr., re breakwater; Mr. Jennings, from Twillingate District, re branch railway, from Nipper's Harbor, 7th Cove, Indian Burying Place, Round Harbor, re telephone, from Moreton's Hr., re bridge, from New Bay and Stanhope re roads; from St. Augustine's, re coastal service; Mr. Abbott, from Keels, Princeton, Charlottetown, Squid Tickle, St. Chad's and Alexander Bay, re lighthouse, from Hare Bay and Bonavista re public wharf; Mr. Winsor, from Flat Islands, Puffin Island and St. Brendan's re lighthouse; Mr. Parsons, from Upper Island Cove, re wharf, re well, re road; Mr. Young, from Tilton, re office, ex-corp. Gosse, re office, ex-corp. Collins, re office; Mr. Kennedy, from Chapel's Cove, re dredge; Mr. Morine, from Summersville, re telephone; Hon. Mr. Woodford, from Topsail, Long Pond, Chamberlain's, re harbor; Hon. Col. Secretary, from Bereneed, re road, from Gros Is. and re coastal service, from Doting Cove and Musgrave Hr., re railway extension, from Musgrave Harbor, re breakwater; Mr. Mr.