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House of Assembly

A little excitement relieved the usual monotony at yesterday's sitting, brought about by a discussion on the dismissal of the light keepers at Bonavista, without any notice, over a year past.

The following bills were read a third time and were ordered to be sent to the Legislative Council for their concurrence:—"An Act for the more effective transfer of certain Properties to the Congregational Home Missionary Society of Newfoundland"; "An Act to Authorize the Raising of a Sum of Money by Loan for Naval and Military Purposes"; "An Act to Amend and Amend the Act 8 George V. (1913) Chapter 26, entitled 'An Act Respecting the Preservation of Beaver.'"

The Committee Stages of the following Bills were gone through and the Bills adopted without amendment: "An Act to Amend the Weights and Measures Act, Cap. 10, 6 Geo. V. (1916)"; "An Act to Amend the Act Respecting the Weights and Measures of the Newfoundland Regiment and of the Newfoundland Branch of the Royal Naval Reserve and other Volunteers, Cap. XVI, 8 George V."

The second reading of the Bill entitled "An Act to amend the War Pensions Act, 1917," was deferred as was the second reading of the Bill entitled "An Act to amend the Shipbuilding Act, 1914."

Legislative Council

The Parliament Extension Bill passed its second reading yesterday by a vote of 12 to 7, and will be considered in Committee to-day.

Hon. Mr. Bishop opposed the second reading and spoke at some length. When the House was asked to consider the Bill jointly with the Military Service Measures, it did not encourage unity, but instead provoked opposition. The only argument in favor of its passing was that the turmoil of a general election would continue all summer and until the counting of the ballots, and the Government in consequence would neglect the carrying out of the Military Service Act. He did not take this argument seriously. The fear that the Ministers would neglect their duties if an election were on, should not be considered. The very people who are now anxious that no election be held, were preparing for one up to a few weeks ago. Conditions were worse at that time than now. There were no recruits coming in then. Since, through the efforts of the Volunteers, matters were changed. He would like to know when the turmoil talked of ever existed during an election. Why were not the vacancies filled, so that the Legislature would be fully represented. Members had taken permanent office under the Crown, but they did not go back to their constituents for endorsement. There was no desire on the part of the Government to open these seats. They were losing no opportunity to gain political and personal advantages at the cost of neglecting matters of vital importance to the State. The Military Service Bill, the Government said, was introduced because of the demand of the Secretary of State for reinforcements for the Regiment. The number asked for was 300 by the end of April and 60 a month. The former number had been secured by voluntary enlistment and it ought to be possible to secure the monthly call of only 3 a day, without disarranging the whole work of the Government. If we were called upon to supply 1,000 or more at one time, there might be some reason in the arguments of those who supported the Bill, but to say that recruiting two men a day would demand the undivided attention of the Government, was, in his opinion, an insult to the intelligence of the House. The Bill might pass, but as it stood it gave no assurance whether an election would be held in 12 months, or at the end of 1919. He did not think one would be held until the war ended, or until such time as the Government elects to go to the country. If the Bill passed, the Government could extend the life of Parliament indefinitely, and in his opinion that was the intention.

Hon. Mr. Mews, who supported the Bill, said he enjoyed Hon. Mr. Gibbs' speech of Constitutional Law and practice the previous evening, but was somewhat mystified in looking through the official debates of last year not to find him on record as opposing extension. He would like to

disagree with previous speakers regarding the salary of the Prime Minister, who, he thought, should be satisfied with a much smaller sum until after the war. The Minister of Militia, also, said Mr. Walsh had done well, with \$3,000 for the office and \$1,000 for Deputy Censor. The Deputy Heads of Departments should be better treated than they are. Mr. Walsh also pleaded for Mr. Eli Whitehead who filled a most trying position with entire satisfaction. He regretted that some very necessary votes, particularly those for Roads and Bridges, had not been increased, and again referred to the need for increased aids to navigation on the Southern Shore and in St. Mary's and Piacentia Bay. Mr. Bennett having explained how he came to receive the salary of \$5,000 as Militia Minister, and that of \$1,000 for being Deputy Censor, Mr. Currie replied, after which the Committee rose, reported progress and asked leave to sit again, whereupon the House adjourned until the usual hour this afternoon.

set the hon. member right as to some figures quoted on Tuesday. He gathered from what Hon. Mr. Gibbs had said that considerably more than 100,000 of the population were not represented in Parliament. Following a like basis laid down by Hon. Mr. Gibbs he would only figure 60,000. (Hon. Mr. Gibbs, 90,000), and he did not longed. As regards the extension of Parliament, he said the Government were not afraid to go to the country, either last fall or now. He did not see why they should. What extension meant was giving the Government opportunity to work out the regimental problem and other serious matters facing the Colony. All would agree that a crisis existed, both on the battle fronts and at home and what was needed was harmony, not discord.

Hon. Mr. Squires, in opposing the second reading of the Bill, said that the only argument put up in the defence of the measure was the regiment. No one, he said, was more anxious than he was to see the regiment kept at the front in full strength, and with an ample supply of reserves, and in his opinion, the Extension Bill was in any way essential in carrying out the Military Service Act. It would have his most hearty support. The House stood as a check against unwise legislation. All legislation should be passed by an assembly properly elected and constituted, and with full endorsement of the people. The present Government was in power more through political intrigue than by the dominant will of the people of the country. The present Premier, he considered, was not there by the mandate of the people. When he went to the polls in 1913 he came back third on the ticket, and though he had been made Premier, his colleague, who had had the ticket, was not even given an executive seat, and he and his other colleague only belonged to the rank and file. The people of Trinity evidently did not intend to make him Premier. He held the position merely through accident. When extension was granted last year and the National Government was formed, the Legislature was not dissolved as it is to-day. Ex-Premier Morris, no matter how much he might be disliked politically was a statesman of wide experience. He was a superior man to the present incumbent. When the extension Bill was passed a year ago it was with the understanding that it was only for a year. The Bill before the House had been passed in the Lower House with only one-third representation voting and even two members of the Execu-

tive Government absent. It had been passed by a depleted chamber and a Premier without a mandate. The arguments that the defeat of the Bill would interfere with the carrying out of the Conscription measure did not appeal to him. By the Fall the Bill would be working automatically. The proclamation would be issued and the working out of the Bill would be in the hands of an impartial Military Board, as named by the Premier, and the Judges of the Supreme Court, and the idea that an election would interfere with it was absurd. He could not at all agree with the defenders of the Bill that there would be political turmoil. He had contested these elections himself and had not as much as seen the slightest disorder, and he did not think there would be any this Fall. The idea that more than Class 1 would need to be called was not within the calculations of the Government. There was no possibility of any unpleasantness or political trouble. The argument that the passing of the measure was imperative to the carrying out of the Military Act is not in keeping with the facts. The Conscription Bill was joined up with the Extension Bill in the hope that, by waving the flag of patriotism in the Council and throughout the country, they could extend their political lives. Reference had been made that the life of Parliament had not been extended in England. That was so, but Parliament was not depleted, elections were being held almost every week, and in constituencies larger than the whole of the Dominion, and he had yet to hear of any disturbances, despite the fact that conditions over there were much worse than here. It was impertinent to send the Bill to the House at all. If ever a time was at hand to prove that the Chamber is an important factor in the protection of public rights, it is now. To prove that when Parliament was extended in 1917, it was only for a year. Hon. Mr. Squires pointed out that a voters' list was taken last September and all arrangements made to hold a general election. The somersault from an election to an extension was not due to any crisis. When the big offensive was at its worst during the early spring, an election was being provided for, and the crisis was not considered. When the election was held in the Dominion of Canada, there was no turmoil talked of, on the other hand Sir Robert Borden came back with a representative Government to assist in carrying out the war programme, which he had outlined to the country. The House should stand between the Government and the people and see that the latter's rights are not denied them.

Hon. Mr. Ellis congratulated the speakers, and took exception to the remark that the Government was the result of a corrupt bargain. He did not associate himself with the Government through any corrupt bargain. He joined the Government with the understanding that an election would be held within a year. When the demand was made for more men by the Imperial authorities, and it was seen these could not be supplied without enforcing a War Measures Act, the enforcing of it made the extension of Parliament a necessity. It was our first and most important duty to get men. If under ordinary conditions the life of Parliament was being extended, he would have resigned his seat.

The question of the second reading being put, was carried by the following vote:

FOR—Ellis, Murphy, Winter, Harvey, Mews, Bell, Cook, McNamara, Ryan, Templeman, Anderson, Power.

AGAINST—Skilton, Bishop, Gibbs, Goodridge, Squires, Milley, Knowlton.

With the passing of several items on the Order Paper, the House adjourned until the regular hour this afternoon.—Daily News report.

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