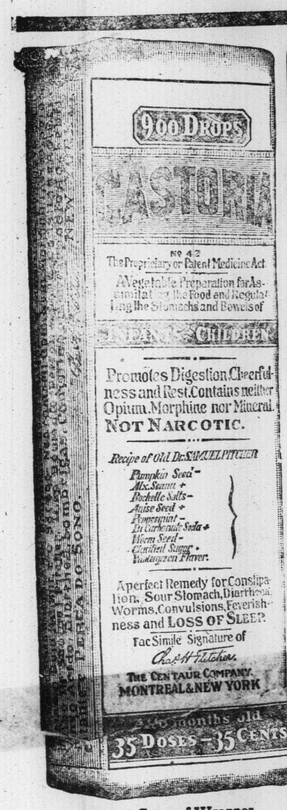

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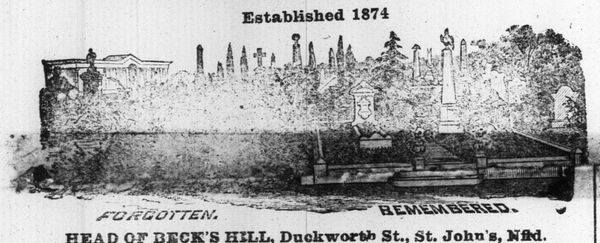

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

SYNOPSIS

Wednesday, April 21st, (Contd.)

HON. COLONIAL SECRETARY thought the debate had got rather off the point, Prohibition was a very serious matter, and should receive the most careful consideration. He was not prepared to dictate to anybody what he should or should not drink. Members of the House should not put their own views into force without considering the views of their constituents. The Government had for some time been considering legislation on this matter, which would satisfy every fair-minded man.

MR. KENT thought there was not much in difference between the two sides of the House. He thought the Premier really meant to carry out his promises. But, if that was so, why not adopt the resolutions as amended? They covered just the ground the Government promised to cover. He was sorry the matter had become a party question. He repeated that the question should be decided here in the House, and upon the independent opinions of every member.

MR. LLOYD said the Goverment had evidently decided to make the matter a party one, which had never been done in the past. The proposals of Mr. Hickman, as amended, would not interfere with the revenue for fifteen months to come. Apparently, the Colonial Secretary was prepared to vote for a plebiscite on prohibition, if it was proposed by the Government, but not if it was proposed by the Opposition.

MR. HICKMAN said it had been hinted that his resolutions were intended to embarrass the Govenment. They were not. He had consulted no one in his party; he was absolutely independent in the matter.

MR. MORINE said there was a great difference between the Goverment and the Opposition positions. The Government offered a plebiscite only, with no means of enforcing the result. The Opposition desired that, if the plebiscite favored prohibition, it should automatically go into force. That was what they wanted, and they would not be bluffed. They desired an effective bill.

MR. COAKER desired to repeat that Mr. Hickman said nothing to anybody in the Opposition about supporting these resolutions except to ask Mr. Morine to second it. Nothing had been arranged; everybody was voting with absolute independence.

A vote being taken, the resolutions and the amendment were lost.

THE PREMIER, moving the adjournment, referred to the death of Hon. John Ayre, a member of the Upper House, and formerly a member of this House. Though of a retiring disposition, he possessed sterling qualities of wisdom and industry, which had been freely given in both branches of the legislature. His prominent position in commercial matters was well known; his activities in church, educational and charitable matters were wide and constant. He himself felt that he had lost a close personal friend. He moved an adjournment till to-morrow at 4 o'clock, as a mark of respect, and to enable members to attend the funeral.

MR. KENT joined with the Prime Minister in deploring the loss of a valuable and respected citizen, one of the pioneers of our modern commerce, who was a great loss to the public life of the Colony, notwithstanding the quiet way in which his work was done. He seconded the motion to adjourn.

MR. MORINE had long been closely acquainted with the late Mr. Ayre, and desired to be joined in the expressions of regret.

The House adjourned till tomorrow at 4 o'clock.

Thursday, April 22, 1915.

The House met at 4 p.m. pursuant to adjournment.

Various questions were asked and answered.

The Bill to amend the Death Duties Act passed Committee.

THE PREMIER moved House into Committee of the Whole to consider resolutions in connection with the establishment of industries by the Nfld. Products Corporation Ltd. This company was being formed by a Mr. Wilson, a well-known and wealthy chemist and inventor in Canada and the United States. He was associated with the Reid Nfld. Co., who were giving him certain concessions. It was proposed to carry on at Humbermouth a very large industry in the making of certain chemical products, useful for fertilizer and other purposes. In conjunction with our own limestone rock, there would be used phosphate rock imported from Florida, pyrites from Spain, and other materials. It was estimated that it would be possible to produce about $10,000,000 worth of this fertilizer per year, of excellent quality and at a cheap rate. Even this would be only about 5 per cent. of the world production of such material. As a re-product of this chemical industry there would be produced a great quantity of sulphuric acid, which would be utilized by setting up there an extensive pulp industry, which would manufacture sulphite pulp, of the most valuable kind. The Company's engineers had spent a year in the country, and reported that by an expenditure of $6,400,000 a power of 119,000 horse power could be developed in the Humber region. It would take all its power to manufacture the proposed product to the value of $10,000,000. At Grand Falls there was only 30,000 horse power; here we would have 119,000, which would cost nearly seven million dollars to develop. It was reckoned that it would mean an expenditure of sixteen to eighteen million dollars in the country. He proceeded to read a series of notes explaining the chemical process and the materials it was to employ. He also explained the various sections of the proposed agreement with the new company. The estimates at $18,000,000 or thereabout were proposed by a famous engineering firm, and had cost already, he was told, about $100,000.

If this industry got under way it must be a great thing for the Colony. The Government had been in negotiations with the promoters for some eight months. Capitalists of this kind would not come to such a country as this unless they could obtain some privileges and concessions. This was our first opportunity of developing on a large scale our dormant natural resources. It was quite true that for many years past we had had many failures in our attempts to establish industries, and no one could be blamed for doubting them now; but it did not cost us anything to make the attempt, because people did not get these concessions unless they spent in the country a fixed amount of money. He could not even now be certain it would succeed, but he had great hopes of it. As to the proposed extensions of the business to Labrador, no doubt if the business was a success in Newfoundland, it would be an easy matter to extend it to the Labrador. He quoted some statistics relative to water powers available on Labrador.

These concessions were absolutely conditional on the expenditure of enormous sums of money; if these were not spent, the concessions were not given. If these industries were established, it would mean an enormous labour bill spent in the Colony; it might mean that many of our people who had gone to Nova Scotia or elsewhere would be able to come back and make better wages at home.

MR. MORINE did not think the labor bill of this industry would be as large as was expected, nor did he believe that any of our people would come back to work in these industries. The work would only fall to the cheap foreign labor, which was easily obtainable. He would, however, support the measure if it appeared likely to be a benefit to the Colony.

MR. LLOYD also considered that labor in the new industry would be reduced to the minimum. He hoped that all possible information would be given before the matter was discussed.

MR. KENT also hoped that all available documents would be tabled.

THE PREMIER said he would give all possible information. The matter was adjourned until Wednesday next.

The House adjourned to to-morrow at 3 o'clock.

Friday, April 23rd, 1915.

The House met at 3 p m. pursuant to adjournment.

Petitions were presented by Mr. Young, Mr. Morine, Mr. Stone, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Clift, Mr. Abbott, and Mr. Target.

Various questions were asked and answered.

The Death Duties Bill was read a third time.

The House went into Committee of the whole on supply.

MR. MORINE thought it would be a good idea to have the Budget Speech before Supply this year, on account of the gravity of the financial situation, and so that members would be able to discuss the Estimates more fully. It might be that we should have to make a general cut in expenses as was done in 1894, after the Bank Crash. The situation was abnormal. Before any votes were passed, the Minister of Finance should give a general statement as to how he proposed to finance next year.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE did not consider the conditions were sufficiently unusual to warrant departing from the regular course. All the usual information was before the House.

MR. MORINE said we had a larger deficit than ever before; that the whole financial situation was absolutely unprecedented. The information on the Table covered nothing since the commencement of the war, but it was well known that conditions were very serious.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE said he would give all possible information as the vote went along.

MR KENT asked for the Estimates to be deferred until members had time to study the Public Accounts more closely. He agreed that, under these conditions, and, indeed, under any conditions, some general statement of the finances of the Colony ought to be given before the Estimates were voted.

MR. COAKER said something ought to be done to facilitate public business The session was already very late.

MR. LLOYD agreed that the Government ought to give such a general statement as they could before the Estimates went through, so that the House might know how the Colony was to be got out of the present tangle.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE said he intended to pass the Estimates as usual, but he would give all reasonable information as he went along, and would defer the matter until Monday, if desired.

Mr. Morine, Mr. Clift, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Stone, further pressed the same argument.

The Committee then rose until Monday next.

Committee of the Whole on Stamp Duties.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE explained that this was merely to enable the Government Departments to issue cheques without stamping them; there was no revenue to be obtained by the Government stamping its own cheques; and, also, to put a 2c. stamp duty on receipts for more than $2.00.

Continued on third page.

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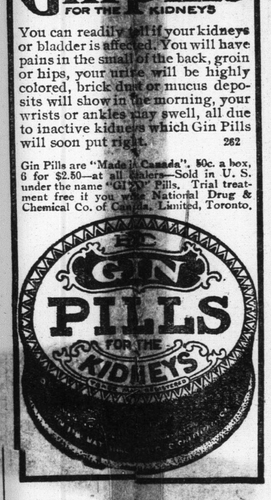

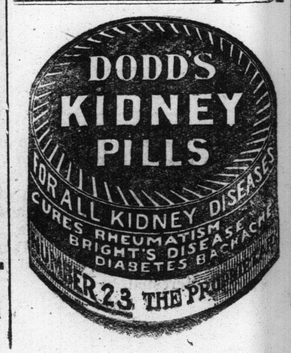

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H. J. B. WOODS,
Postmaster General.

General Post Office,
St. John's, Nfld., Nov., 1914.

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Postmaster General.

General Post Office,
St. John's, Nfld., June, 1914.