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Office: 137 Water Street. Factory: Water Street West.

...use of Assembly.

(Yesterday.)

...ouse met at 3.30. Petitions ...esented by Mr. Jennings. No...questions were given by Mr. ...d Mr. Walsh.

...iccott asked the following ...:

...o ask the Hon. Minister of ... and Customs to lay on the ... the House the report of the ... General on the investigation ... him re the shortages in the ... Department of the Custom ...uring 1918.

...o ask the Hon. Minister of ... and Customs to lay on the ... the House a statement of all ...aid by all departments of the ...ent to Moore & Co., for work ...e since January 1st, 1913.

...o ask the Hon. Minister of ... and Customs to lay on the ... the House a statement of all ...paid to Mr. P. T. McGrath, ... P. T. McGrath, either as sal...penses, or commissions, since ... 1st, 1913.

...o ask the Minister of Militia ...n the table of the House any ...ndence that passed between ...and Majors Montgomerie, Pat...Macpherson and Parsons with ...o the hospital accommodation ...itting up the Empire Wood ... Building and the disciplin... the above officers.

...o ask the Minister of Ship...lay on the table of the House ...f all correspondence between ...ernment of this Colony and ... Companies at North Sydney ... to the importation of coal in... Colony for the year 1918.

...o ask the Hon. Minister of ... and Customs to lay on the ... this House a detailed state... the expenses incurr...d by the ... the Prime Minister during ...nce from this Colony attend... Peace Conference.

...o ask the Hon. Minister of ... to lay on the table of the ...a), copy of all correspondence ... the Department of Shipping ... owners of the S. S. Eskasoni ... to the purchase of the said ... (b), a detailed statement of ...ings and expenses of the said S. S. Eskasoni; (c), if the said S. S. Eskasoni is to-day the property of the Government, if not, who her present owners are and the price paid for her purchase.

(8.)—To ask the Hon. Minister of Shipping to lay on the table of the House a detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures of his Department from the commencement of that office to date.

The bill to prevent the introduction of Rabies into Newfoundland passed its third reading, and was sent to the Legislative Council.

The House then went into Committee on Supply, Mr. Goodison in the Chair.

In opening the debate for the Opposition, Mr. J. S. Currie (Burin), Leader, made some criticisms on the several votes they were asked to pass. The estimates for last year were $1,600,000 lower than those they were now asked to vote upon, and he could not help asking the question, where we, as a country, stood? Only eight years ago the budget was less than half of what it is to-day. We are now asked to vote about seven million dollars for supply, and he predicted that, before the year had ended, nearer eight millions would have been spent. For the Auditor General reports that on the 28th of February this year all money voted last session had been expended, and in a few days the House would have to vote considerably over a million dollars to Supplemental Supply to cover the amount that had been expended on Executive responsibility. A policy of economy was needed. The Finance Minister last year had said so, and the Auditor General had pointed it out. The vote for Soldiers' Pensions would have his hearty support, and his only regret was that it would not be greater. There were some items to which he could not give support. The Government had gone along the line of "to him that hath shall be given," and the greatest increases were to some of the largest salaried officials. The argument that, becauses Judges in other countries received more salary than those in Newfoundland, an increase should be granted them, was insufficient reason. This is a small country and cannot afford the salaries paid elsewhere.

The advances of $2,000 were out of all reason. Then there was the salary of the Judge of the Central Court. Last year it was increased from $2,400 to $3,600 and it was now increased another 15 per cent., or to $4,140 a year. The Government Engineer, who last year had a nice sum of $700 added to his salary, was to have another $600 added, making his salary $4,800 per year. The High Commissioner's Secretary at London also had the nice fat salary of $3,500 a year, or higher than that paid the Premier, and fifty per cent. higher than those of the Colonial Secretary or other departmental heads. The Bay steamship service was then dealt with, and he showed where an increased subsidy was paid the Reid Nfld. Co. for the Notre Dame Bay service of $26,000, or double what the contract called for. The change of the service was not in the interest of the people, but only in the interest of one business concern operating at Port Union. It was also a breach of the contract with the Reid Co. The Government also allowed the Reid Co. to increase the freight rates and the passenger rates, the latter in direct violation of the contract. He drew attention to the fact that in the estimates there was no provision made for the salaries of the Ministers of Militia or Shipping or other staffs, which was not, he thought the right thing. He asked that a report be received from the Minister of Shipping and laid on the table.

The Minister of Finance and Customs, in reply, said that the Auditor-General's report could not be taken seriously in relation to overdrafts, especially since the war started. He said when the war started some wiseacres held up their hands in holy horror about the expense of sending the first five hundred men across to fight.

Mr. Currie—I was not one of those.

Mr. Cashin—I don't know.

Mr. Currie—You had better look on your own side of the House for them, they are sitting behind you.

Mr. Cashin said Mr. Currie had pictured blue ruin for the country, but he forgot we had twenty millions in the Savings Bank belonging to the fishermen. He was asked by Mr. Currie if he intended to take that out, to which he replied they would have taken it if it had been necessary to carry on the war. In regard to the Civil Servants, he said he heard no complaints from them about the increase being insufficient. He justified the increase in the Reid subsidies by contrasting the increased cost of running steamers.

Mr. Currie—If the cost of running steamers had gone down, would the Reid Company be satisfied for the Government to reduce their subsidy accordingly?

Mr. Cashin—That is another matter.

Mr. Currie—The principle is just the same. Bowrings' had not received any increased subsidy.

The Minister replied that they had made no application for any increase, and it was not the Government's place to suggest it. He justified the increases to the Judges and the Government Engineer by explaining the superior work they were called upon to do. In speaking of economy he said the Auditor-General talked of it, but he, himself, was asking for an increase and got it, too. He was expecting the departments of Shipping and Militia to go out of existence soon, therefore the need of placing their votes in the estimates was not apparent.

Mr. Moulton thought that as all Civil Servants had been given an increase, that the Pensioners should be given the same consideration, and asked the Government to give these poor men some favorable consideration, as they were a deserving class of retired civil servants.

Mr. Currie replying to the Minister of Finance said that he had been somewhat misrepresented by the Minister. He was advising the Minister to be cautious in expenditure of monies, and quoted the report of the Marine and Fisheries Minister to the effect that our prosperity was exceptional, and that a year of bad fisheries and bad prices would have a bad effect on the country. He pointed out to the Minister the absurdity of some of the votes, and quoting that for legislation predicted a large overdraft, because it was absolutely inadequate. He asked the Minister how he could justify the payment of sessional pay last year to the Hon. S. D. Blandford, a Sheriff of the Supreme Court, a civil servant, for sitting in the Legislative Council about one hour during last session when he had no business whatever to be there. No one on the Government side attempted to defend it.

Mr. Coaker then jumped to the defence of Port Union, the bay steamship service and the Reids. He told of the losses of the latter, even though their rates and subsidies had been increased, and pictured the poor Company trying to make two ends meet, which they had failed to do, but had sunk $656,000 during the last twenty months. He told of the spur line, how valuable it was to the Reids as the Trading Co. had paid them $40,000 last year for freights, to which Mr. Currie retorted that the Company should have built the line themselves and not saddle the country with its cost, considering it was so valuable to them. Mr. Coaker continuing, said the only people protesting against the present bay steamship service were a few business men, who wanted to see things drift along as they were 50 years ago. He then told of the troubles and trials of the National Government had to undergo to get the country along.

Mr. Currie—What do you know about it? You were sulking at Port Union all last summer.

Mr. Coaker—I was there attending to the Trading Co.'s business. He said the Northern Districts had awakened, and would not be dictated to by St. John's. He complained of the newspapers criticising and persecuting him, the Union and the Trading Co., and asked for fair criticism.

Mr. Currie congratulated him on becoming the apologist for the Reid-Nfld. Co., and said it appeared that with Mr. Coaker and his criticisms it all depended on which side of the House he was sitting.

Mr. W. J. Walsh (Placentia) congratulated the Finance Minister and Mr. Coaker on becoming political bedfellows, but reminded them that it was not always so. In speaking of the votes they were asked to pass, he criticized the salary of the Secretary to the High Commissioner, but thought that the occupant of the position was a good man for the job. He thought the salary was altogether too great. The Pension Board salaries, amounting to $14,710.00, he thought somewhat high, especially when the chairman pulled down $2,400.00 of this—and asked if there were no Cartys or Marchs or any others of the men who went across to fight, capable of filling this position. An officer of the Regiment should have been given the position and not the present holder. Men who were thought worthy to fight, and who brought distinction and honour to our country, should be good enough to fill the position. As for Capt. Parsons, he had offered his all to his country and was the right man, and nothing was too much for him. He deplored the increases to the four Judges, amounting to $6,540.00 per year, and until some 251 old worn-out fishermen who were applicants from all over the country for the old age pension, were given the consideration they deserved, he for one would utter a strong protest, and would vote against the above increase for only four men, as he thought it was very unjust dealing. If the Government cannot see their way clear to give to the 251 fishermen the sum of $50.00 per year, then he would like to know how they could justify the voting of $6,540.00 to four people.

Mr. Cashin—We know all about that. Some of these men have bank accounts.

Mr. Walsh—They are not in my district, but I know some people also who have very large bank accounts and who did not earn it like the 251 fishermen who are asking for the pension, and some of the big men who are getting their salaries increased also have bank accounts. He thought that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries should be a member of the Executive and be able to fight for the rights of the fishermen on the Executive Board. He noticed that ten new lighthouses were to be built, and asked that his district be given consideration, and instanced Point La Haye in St. Mary's Bay. Mr. Walsh then made a particularly strong plea for the consideration of his district by the Government, and told of the needs of roads and bridges, ferries, etc. The grants were altogether inadequate for the needs. Western Rd. had only $50.00 allotted to it, although it was 300 miles long. He had made strong recommendations to the Government during the past two years, but they were all turned down cold. It was all to no purpose for him to talk about his district to the Public Works Department, as his requests were completely ignored. He read a letter to the House that he had received from Rev. Mr. Brett and others of Sound Island, telling of conditions there, and asked that the needs of these people be given some consideration. He also pleaded for coastal boat service between Trepassey and Placentia, and gave notice that as long as he had a seat in the House he would fight for the needs of his constituents whether it was displeasing to the Government or not. He supported the votes for soldiers' pensions and asked that full justice be done the boys who had fought and suffered for us, and that no such thing as discrimination be practised by anyone who had anything to do with pensions, but that every part of the country and every man's son be given the same consideration.

Votes for Civil Government, Pensions, Administration of Justice, and Legislation were then passed, after which the Committee rose, and will sit again on Monday.

On a motion to adjourn, Mr. Jennings gave some explanation re a question asked by Mr. Walsh earlier in the day about his (Mr. Jennings) salary as herring inspector, and appeared quite offended over the matter, but was told by Mr. Walsh that he had nothing personal against the hon. member, and that the information sought after was legitimate information for the country, and also reminded him that when on the Opposition side of the House no one objected to Mr. Jennings or the other members asking questions, and he did not see why he should object now that he was enjoying the luxuries of the Government.

Mr. Piccott dealt with a personal matter, after which the House adjourned until 3 o'clock on Monday.

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Information.

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