

## At the House

Petitions were presented by Mr. Emerson, asking that English Harbor West, be made a port of call; by Mr. Moulton, asking that New Harbor be made a port of call; by Mr. Jennings, asking for the appointment of a Road Board at Twillingate; by Mr. Stone, from New Melbourne; and Mr. Targett, from New Chelsea; by Mr. Hickman, from Bay de Verde, asking that measures be adopted for the abolition of the picking of unripe partridge berries; also that a date be appointed to pick ripe berries; Messrs. Lloyd, Stone and Targett presented similar petitions.

The House then resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on Supply.

Mr. Kent, in rising, gave a sound and logical criticism of the increased expenditure, emphasizing that the estimates, which are the cost of the upkeep and maintenance of the public service of the Colony, have not received the care and attention in preparation which they deserved. He pointed out that the total estimates now before the House was \$3,842,001, compared with \$3,393,919, which were submitted at the last session of the Legislature, or an increase of about \$448,082. A perusal of the estimates shows that we have this year the same conditions as prevailed in years past, because there would be necessity of additional estimates and a necessity for a supplementary supply. In reviewing the past four years, we find, said Mr. Kent, that the actual expenditure greatly exceeded the estimates. In 1909-10, the expenditure over the estimates was \$196,000; in 1910-11, \$299,000; in 1911-12, \$197,000, and in 1912-13, \$199,000, a total of \$895,000 or an average of \$223,750 expenditure over the estimates for each year. He believed that the differences between estimates and expenditures were the result of a prevailing system in vogue for some time, but it seems that no remedy is being made, and that this system is being accentuated. While the Finance Minister stated that he hoped that the present estimates would be more in accordance with the expenditure than formerly, yet there is an additional expenditure for the year 1914 to 1915 of about \$150,000. The people of the Colony, who are taxpayers, expect that the estimates be approximated as closely as possible to meet the demands of the public service. It is a matter that is becoming more and more important every year, and it is imperative that greater accuracy should be exercised either in the several departments in which the estimates are made up or by the Government in the compiling and finalizing of the estimates. He hoped that before the Committee rose, to have been supplied with the information from the Auditor General, which he (Mr. K.) has asked the Prime Minister for. He had noticed some changes in salaries, notably the increase of \$4,000 to the salary of His Excellency, the Governor. This Mr. Kent contended, was only adequate remuneration for the valuable services to the Colony, the King's representative has to perform. But, he continued, the Ministers of the different departments should have shouldered the responsibility themselves of granting the increase, and not brought the Governor's letter before this House. He then dealt with the police force and fire brigade. The whole country recognizes that, in view of the increased cost of living, the members of both these organizations are inadequately paid and suggested a move in this direction, hoping that the Government would consider the matter. In looking through the increases of salaries, he found it difficult to understand upon what basis the increases were made. He cited instances in which men of responsible positions in the civil service were underpaid, while others by reason of political expediency, got their salaries raised. He thought that such discrimination should not exist, and that increases of salaries should not be made in such a haphazard way. He dealt with the Deputy Heads of each department and did not see the reason why their salaries should be so unequal. Mr. Kent pointed out that, according to the Auditor General's report, which was presumably made out up to the end of September last, the \$150,000 voted last, partly to cover the cost of the General Election, had been overdrawn. What the elections cost cannot be estimated at the present

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time, but from previous experience, he believed it was in the neighborhood of between \$36,000 and \$40,000. He then referred to the way Section B. of the Audit Act is being abused, which section is entirely intended to provide for emergencies. He gave many examples how the contingencies funds were overdrawn and suggested the amendment of the Audit Act. He said he would like very much to see the report of the Auditor General on the accounts outside the ordinary appropriation accounts.

The Finance Minister.—He said he did not mind much what had been said, as in his 20 years' experience he had always listened to adverse criticism on the estimates. He admitted that supplementary supply would have to be voted in addition to the estimates because it always had been the case. Any information that he could give, he said, would be tabulated.

The Prime Minister.—He said he had no reason to object to any of the remarks made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, because his criticisms were reasonable and impartial. In referring to the salaries of the policemen and firemen, he took it that no one seemed to understand the correct position of the matter. He had heard the same question discussed year after year, and he was always in sympathy (that proverbial word) with the movement. He stated in statistical form that no member of the police force outside was paid less than \$440 a year and in St. John's not less than \$418, and emphasized that every member of the force had perquisites besides his salary. The greatest difficulty that this Government and every other Government were up against was the salaries of members of the Fire Department. They were paid from \$575 to \$600—including their perquisites—a year. Their splendid and commendable work warranted an increase, but was entirely a matter for the Municipal Council, which has control over the Fire Department, the Government only contributing an annual amount of \$12,000. Regarding the salaries of the Deputy Heads of Departments, their salaries ranged as follows:

Deputy Col. Secretary.—\$1,600 a year and extras.  
Dep. Min. of Justice.—\$2,000 a year and extras.  
Dep. Min. of Finance.—\$1,600 a year and extras.

Dep. Min. of Customs.—\$1,300 a year and extras.

Dep. Min. of Marine and Fisheries.—\$1,500 a year and extras.

Dep. Min. of Agriculture and Mines.—\$1,200 and perquisites on railway arbitrations.

He said that their positions varied in responsibilities as well as in the amount of work connected with the departments. As to the raising of Civil servants' salaries, he said that no discrimination had been made and that the present administration was only following what their predecessors had done. In his opinion the remarks contained in the Auditor General's special report of Section 33 B. was practically the same for the past 15 years. Yet he admitted the enormous expenditures over the estimates that had taken place within the past five years, but that a great deal of the expenditure was due to the fact that some unestimated expenditures in every department of the Government was going up. A somewhat lively discussion took place here between the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Coaker, over the public service being underpaid

and overmanned, so designated by Mr. Lloyd in the House a few days ago, after which the Prime Minister resumed his seat.

Mr. Lloyd.—With reference to the challenge of the Prime Minister, asking me to name the members of the Civil Service whom I'd dismiss, the Prime Minister had answered that question himself, when he said that he knew a head of a department who came to work at 11 o'clock in the day, spent two hours to dinner, worked one hour in the afternoon, and if he had twice as much to do would still have time on his hands. Therefore, he said, the leader of the Government had found out at least one to dismiss. He congratulated the Minister of Finance for the pluck he displayed in raising estimates some \$80,000 to \$90,000 to cover to some extent votes hitherto short-voted. But he had not gone far enough. If he had raised the estimates some \$200,000, or would be much nearer the actual expenditure. The Prime Minister had stated that every member of the Government had been working day and night perfecting the estimates, and yet the Finance Minister declared the estimates were of course imperfect, and they had been brought to the House to be perfected, and that the House was the proper body to correct them. On this, Mr. Lloyd observed, that the main correction was to bring up the estimates to what the Government intended to spend, and in this matter, the members of the House were helpless. No member had the right to move the increase of any vote.

The Minister of Finance.—That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Lloyd.—It is no matter of opinion. It is a matter of record. It is a matter of rules laid down by this House and by the House of Commons. No private member can move for an increase in a vote. The Speaker or Chairman would rule such a motion out of order, and properly so. Such a motion must come from a Minister of the Crown, backed by the responsibility of the Government which had to suggest the ways and means for raising money to meet these proposed expenditures. He did not believe in underpaying civil servants. It did not pay. He considered all should be properly paid, from the highest in the land to the humblest fireman or postmaster. Outside the civil service, the unions had forced up wages to meet increased cost of living, and the Government should be considerate with civil servants, who had no unions. Ministers were underpaid. In 1895, self-denial ordinance had reduced their salaries from \$2,400 to \$2,000, and in spite of increased cost of living, they remained the same. If they were paid as other civil servants they should be receiving \$3,000. He thought, too, the Deputies should be paid straight salaries and not have their salaries eked out in a supplementary way, and we shall not then have the spectacle we had that afternoon of the Prime Minister with the estimates before him, not knowing the gross salary of some of the Deputies. He was strongly in favor of their salaries being fixed in the estimates and not have a man drawing a certain amount annually with an uncertain and unknown amount, or perquisites. He endorsed the remarks of the leader of the Opposition that Section 33 B. of the Audit Act was being improperly used by the Executive for increases in salaries new salaries and foreseen expenditures. The report of the Auditor General on 33 B. occupied 17 pages in objecting to these illegalities, he did not object to any extraordinary and unforeseen expenditure, as pointed out by the Prime Minister, but he did take objection to the matters of expenditure that the Government went into with their eyes open, and could easily have brought before the House and provided for. He read from the Auditor General's report showing increases in salaries, etc., to the extent of \$48,000, made by the Governor-in-Council.

Minister of Finance.—Because it was election year.

Mr. Lloyd.—Now you admit our charge. Continuing, Mr. Lloyd asked what arrangements had been made regarding the Judgeship of the Central District Court.

The Prime Minister.—Judge Conroy has been on leave for two years. He is so ill, it would be dangerous for him to return and resume his duties.

Mr. Lloyd.—Why then have you not made arrangements for his pension and his successor? He did not envy the Prime Minister the effect of his admission that he had no recollection of any application for an increase in salaries being turned down. The Government would be flooded with other applications. The Auditor General's report showed a dozen pages of such increases.

Mr. Coaker.—He thought that Judge Conroy was an old man, had given good service and should be retired on a substantial pension, and a man appointed in his place. He had not the slightest objection to raising the Governor's salary, but why make a jump of \$4,000 of an increase. This was going to cause endless unrest among the underpaid servants of the Government. He asked

that provision be made for aged widows, and that their annual fee be at least increased \$10 a year. If they could give a \$4,000 increase to the Governor, surely they could do this for the aged widows.

The House adjourned at 6.30 until 8.15.

After tea, Mr. Coaker again resumed his speech. He said he had every sympathy for the policemen and the firemen of the city. They were underpaid. The outport policeman's lot was much better than their city brethren. He was prepared to go to his constituents and tell them he advocated increases in the pay of these deserving men. The P.P.E. would never take exception to justice being done to these men. The civil service was overmanned and he gave instances within his own knowledge of outport civil servants who had little or nothing to do. He cited his own experience and said he had been appointed to do the work of two or three men, and yet he found less than an hour a day was sufficient for all his duties when he was a civil servant. He had found it necessary to get out as he found he would be utterly useless for earning his own living at any other occupation, should he continue a life of idleness as a civil servant.

THE FIREMEN'S GRIEVANCE.

Mr. Lloyd.—He asked for a fuller explanation of the relations of the Fire Department to the Government. The estimates showed that the Government paid the salaries and they could appoint or dismiss the men and adjust salaries. Yet the Prime Minister had disclaimed responsibility for an increase in the salaries and the Mayor had ruled recently that it was none of the business of the Council. A clear statement of the position was due to the House, the public and the firemen.

The Prime Minister.—He admitted a fuller explanation was in order. He then gave a history of the Fire Department, beginning with its reorganization after the '92 fire. In consequence of the great revenue which had been derived by the Government from material imported to rebuild the city, the Government held that it was due to the city to build the three firehouses and pay about half the cost of running the fire-department, the City Council making a contribution of some \$12,000. He did not think the Government should be called upon to do more.

Mr. Moulton.—He objected to any further increase in the estimates for his purpose.

Mr. Kent.—He thought the situation disclosed was most unsatisfactory. To whom were the firemen to look for an increase. The Government disclaimed responsibility, so did the City Council. Both admitted the merits of the firemen's claim, but between the tools, the firemen fell through and got nothing. There could be no doubt that the Government was responsible. The estimates before them showed it.

Mr. Coaker.—He considered the position unsatisfactory. Why did the Government do nothing. All this talk was ending in nothing being done. Why did not the Minister of Finance add to the estimates and give the firemen their due. He was prepared to support him should he do so.

Mr. Bennett.—He admitted the anomalous position. He thought it unsatisfactory that the firemen should all between the two stools. It was over in reality a civic matter and when the City got a full charter, they would have the matter entirely in their own hands.

PUBLICATION OF DEBATES.

Later in the evening, Mr. Coaker drew attention to the delay and the general unsatisfactory way the debates were being published. In this he was supported by Mr. Halfyard.

At 11 p.m. the Committee rose and after notice of questions the House adjourned.

Found Corpse In Ice.

Joy Discovered Body While Skating.

Windsor, Ont., Jan. 27.—With limbs protruding for perhaps a foot above the frozen surface, the rest of the body encased in solid ice which completely hid it from view, the corpse of Mrs. Eleanor Baker, aged 45, wife of Charles H. Baker, of Detroit, was discovered in the Lower Detroit River, a short distance out from the shore of Fighting Island, Sunday evening. A boy skating in the vicinity, tripped over what he at first believed was an old stump which had floated down with the ice. As the skater picked himself up, he was horrified to discover that it was a woman's leg against which he had fallen. Further examination showed the body hanging head downward. Coroner LaBelle had the remains removed to the Janette morgue, and yesterday the woman's husband identified the body. Mrs. Baker disappeared from her home in Detroit on January 10, Baker stated, and that for some time she had showed signs of mental aberration, due to a proposed surgical operation, and he believed that she jumped into the river while in this condition.

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