

House of Assembly.

May 18, 1920.

The House met at 3 p.m.
On behalf of the Speaker, Messrs. Target, (Dr.) Jones and Warren presented petitions from Carbonar District on various local affairs.

Hon. R. A. Squires presented a petition favoring Modification of Prohibition. This was from St. John's West.

Mr. W. J. Higgins presented a similar petition from St. John's East.
Dr. W. E. Jones (Mr. Main) presented a petition favoring modification.

Mr. J. R. MacDonnell (St. George's); Mr. H. Small (Burgoe); Mr. Targett, (Trinity) presented petitions protesting against modification.

The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:

"An Act to amend Chapter 88 of the Consolidated Statutes of Nfld. (Third Series), entitled 'Of Stipendiary Magistrates and Justices of the Peace.'"

"An Act to amend Cap. 28 of the Consolidated Statutes of Nfld. (Third Series), entitled 'Of Death Duties.'"

"An Act concerning the Registry of Midwives."

"An Act to amend Chapter 157 of the Consolidated Statutes of Nfld. (Third Series), entitled 'Of the Fire Patrol.'"

"An Act to amend the Consolidated Statutes of Nfld. (Third Series), entitled 'Of the Encouragement of Agriculture.'"

QUESTIONS.

Sir M. P. Cashin asked the Hon. Colonial Secretary what responses, if any were made to the public notices appearing in the newspapers in December last, asking for tenders for four Coastal Steamers; and what is the present status of this matter.

Reply—No tenders whatever were received for any of the services.

Sir M. P. Cashin asked the Hon. Prime Minister to lay on the Table of the House copies of the correspondence between himself and His Excellency the Governor in reference to the appointment of the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs and the Minister of Education, and also any other documents in his office pertaining to the same matter.

Letters tabled.
Mr. Bennett asked the Minister of Public Works if the third clerk in his department, Mr. James Murphy, has been pensioned, and what is the amount of such pension. Also, if Mr. Manning, the stenographer, has been appointed to the vacant position over the head of Mr. Netten, the Assistant Road Accountant, who has been some years in the Department, and if so, why has this been done?

Reply—Mr. Netten, who up to the present has not been on the Civil Service List, has been appointed to the position of Assistant Road Accountant, and Mr. Manning, who has been a very competent fourth clerk in the Department, has been promoted to third clerk. Mr. James Murphy is to be pensioned. The amount of his pension will appear in Estimates which will be tabled within the next week or two. An examination of pay roll submitted will show how the employees have been listed in the past.

Secretary—James Harris.
First Clerk—W. C. Pearce.
Second Clerk—Thomas Kelly.
Road Accountant—Robert Joyce.
Asst. Road Accountant—
Third Clerk—James Murphy.
Fourth Clerk and Stenographer—R. Manning.
Asst. Stenographer—Lillian Sullivan.
Messenger—Thomas Lockyer.
Supt. Public Works—Wm. Churchill.
Asst. Supt. Public Works—S. A. Churchill.

Outport Road Inspector—Thomas Bonia.

St. John's East Inspector—James Parsons.

St. John's West Inspector—M. Bambrick.

Sir M. P. Cashin asked the Minister of Public Works to furnish a statement showing in detail the expenditure of \$408,000.78 allocated to his department from the Loan of 1918.

Reply—In course of preparation.

Sir M. P. Cashin asked the Minister of Public Works on whose recommendation did he allocate \$1,200 to Ferryland on account of the so-called "washout grant," giving the particulars of the work to be done, and to whom the money was allocated. If it was allocated to Captain Bonia, and if it is now in his possession.

Reply—Capt. Bonia is at present out of town.

The House then went into Committee of the Whole on the "Legislative Disabilities Bill."

Mr. W. J. Higgins (St. John's East) thought that the House should know where some of the members stood on such a matter. To the indemnification of Messrs. Halfyard and Barnes he raised little or no objection, pointing out that both gentlemen had gone to their districts at bye-elections and were returned to fill Departments which did not exist.

The Department of Posts and Telegraphs had been created at the present Session but the so-called Minister of Education had as yet no department. They had only been elected to acting positions and now without the passing of this Act they had no positions to occupy. As regards the proposal to let Mr. Cave retain his portfolio until December 31 next he thought it very unfortunate that it should be asked expediency. When Mr. Coaker said, "let us make more ministers" it was done in a hurry; when Mr. Coaker said let us confirm Mr. Cave in his Department without going to his district it was done at once. If we are not careful before six o'clock this evening we may all be made Ministers of the Crown if Mr. Coaker wishes it. All that gentleman has to do is say the word and we are made Ministers. He is the great power, he is the great Mogul, he is the man who makes and breaks Governments in Newfoundland today.

All others are as clay in his hands. He would ask Mr. Coaker not to flood us with too many Ministers before giving us a chance to find out how many Ministers are going to be in the House before making us all Ministers. If this thing is carried much further by the real Premier, Mr. Coaker, it will be a far greater honor to be a private member than a Minister. He congratulated Mr. Coaker on his great power of being able to make Ministers and unmake them at pleasure and being the real thing in the Government, as far as power goes. He thought Section 3 relating to Mr. Cave was an insult to that gentleman. He could not conceive that Mr. Cave would ask the House to violate all its laws and knock down the Constitutional Law of Newfoundland for the sake of letting him hold the Ministry of Shipping for a few months. The three points which he emphasized were: 1st. It was unfair to the man himself; 2nd. It was not in any way necessary; 3rd. It was decidedly obnoxious to put such a measure on the Statute Book. The Premier announced yesterday that Mr. Cave had resigned; if that was the case why reappoint him? Was there not another man on the Government side who was capable of filling the position? It is just as well to ask the House to continue Mr. Cave in office until 1923 as December 31 1920. We are asked to do an improper thing. Because it was unnecessary, because it is absolutely contrary to

all practice he asked that Section 3 be eliminated. Even if it does pass there is no guarantee that the Department will be wound-up. The Act only says it is desirable to wind it up. If there is no intention to float other gentlemen along indefinitely in the position it should be made perfectly clear in the Act that the Department will be abolished at the end of the year. Take care that these Bills don't like Mother Carey's chickens, come home to roost. A precedent is being established that some on the Government side may have to fight against in days to come.

The Prime Minister objected to certain words of Mr. Higgins in relation to floating members along. He said Mr. Cave was an independent gentleman.

Mr. Higgins. I am sorry that I created an impression that I thought of Mr. Cave in any other way than being independent, but if that is all that the Prime Minister can find in my remarks to take exception to from his point of view then the exception just taken by him doesn't do him any credit.

Mr. J. R. MacDonnell (St. George's) characterized the Bill as a whitewashing one and very reprehensible at that. The Prime Minister from his place in the Upper House for two years denounced the Government of the day for not filling vacant seats at St. John's West, Placentia and other places, but now he comes in here as Prime Minister and asks us to go much further than was contemplated by any Government to the past. He asks us to deliberately break the law to enable a man to hold a job that he was not entitled to. This Bill was sprung on the House in such a way that it was quite in keeping with the way the Departments of Posts and Education were sprung on the Country. He was a member of the Prime Minister's part last Fall and he never heard a word about these Departments until the new Executive were being sworn in. The Ministers of Posts and Education were elected to positions in the bye-elections that did not exist and were receiving salaries ever since that they were not entitled to receive. As regards the Shipping Department we were asked to let the Minister hold his seat until December 31st, next and then it would probably be extended still further. We are seriously asked as a Legislature to say that the Placeman's Act is not necessary. Why not let the Prime Minister be also Minister of Shipping? He would then be Prime Minister, Colonial Secretary, Minister of Shipping and half Minister of Militia. If that doesn't suit the party expediency why not make the Minister of Shipping a new man and put him in the Upper House as a chum for Dr. Campbell. If this does not suit why not appoint Mr. Gibbs. He was sure that gentleman would commend himself to the members on the Government side especially to the Prime Minister. Then again if that doesn't suit why not make Mr. Woodford Minister of Shipping. It would be only carrying out the pledge made to him if he would resign his seat for Harbor Main. Mr. Woodford would not doubt be easy to satisfy as regards a seat in either branch of the Legislature. In fact he thought Mr. Woodford would take the job without a seat at all, so there would be no trouble on that score. That could be easily arranged and he commended the proposition to the Prime Minister whom he had no doubt would be glad to accommodate either Mr. Gibbs or Mr. Woodford now that he couldn't find a man who was elected for him in November capable of filling the Ministry of Shipping. We had a year or two ago the spectacle of defeated candidates holding office but he thought this Bill was the limit. As regards Ministers it was the easiest thing in the world to be created a Minister. All the members on the Government side would soon be Ministers. The woods were filled with them. It reminded him of W. S. Gilbert's Couplet:

"Dukes and Kings were Common Things
Earls were three a Penny."

Prime Minister—O.E.B.'s are three a penny now, instead of Earls.

Mr. MacDonnell—Oh yes, they are coming too, and when they do arrive I hope you will have enough to go around.

Sir John Crosbie (Port de Grave) said that he had expected the Bill, as far as Messrs. Halfyard and Barnes were concerned, but had never expected that it would whitewash Mr. W. H. Cave. He was very sorry to find that it was the intention of the Government to abolish the Ministry of Shipping, which was now more necessary than at any time its creation.

He thought it was a great reflection on Mr. Cave to have him come to the House asking that he be confirmed in his job. It was putting the man in a unfair position. If nothing else could be done, and no man was on the other side capable of filling the position, he would suggest that Mr. Coaker take it over and run it in conjunction with his department. But he thought the Minister of Marine and Fisheries had quite enough to do already. He knew how great were his responsibilities and he could not be expected to so much overburden himself with the work of the Shipping Department, as it was necessary that work be done in that Department and not play. Talking about not needing a Shipping Department

to-day, the people who propose to abolish it do not know the needs of the country at the present time. There are three problems facing us to-day more momentous than ever faced us before. They are salt, coal and the coastal service. What is the salt situation? It is a most serious situation. The Hon. Mr. Coaker knows all about the salt situation. Most of the members of the Government don't know how serious it is, and Sir John suggested that they get the information from Mr. Coaker. If the Prime Minister and his executive colleagues don't know it then it is time they did and they should be well ashamed of themselves. He said without fear of contradiction that if the schooners began to arrive here in the usual large numbers for salt cargoes, there was not in the city a ten days' supply. There were no steamers on the way, not a tub was being loaded in Cadiz on account of the strike there. Some steamers are there awaiting loads but that does not help the situation any. In May, 1918, we had in the city 150,000 hds.; in May, 1920, we have only 15,000 hds. To show the serious position, he stated that only two firms, Bowring's and Baine Johnston's, had any salt and the others were drawing on these to outfit their dealers. Now what is going to happen when the 15,000 hds. are gone? Does not that call for a Minister of Shipping? It calls for more, it calls for a Minister who is in the Executive Council. As far as Mr. Cave was concerned, he was treated unfairly by not being given an Executive seat. The position was so important that he would not stay in a Government ten minutes which did not give the Minister of Shipping a seat at the Council Board so that he may be able to tell his colleagues about the difficulties he had to contend with. The coal situation was also serious. What was done or being done to relieve it? Nothing. At the present time there were schooners in Sydney Harbor lying up that could be utilized. Why weren't they? If something is not done this summer last winter's coal situation is not a patch on what is coming to us next winter. Then there is the Coastal Service. Not a word about it yet, and the House has been in session for a month. When is something going to be done? The Government, as appeared to him, had no defined policy with regard to either salt, coal or coastal service and the sooner it woke up to the situation confronting the country to-day the better for all concerned. He was called a pessimist when he told the country what was ahead of them, but he was not afraid to say that the present situation is appalling and without careful manipulation of the Ship of State a Black Monday was nearer to us than at any time since 1894. If we are not careful we shall have the whole structure tumbling down about our heads. He made these statements deliberately from his place in the House with a due sense of the responsibility resting upon him. He appealed to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and all concerned to take due note of what he was saying and if possible to put all heads together to find a way out. He would lend a helping hand if needed as far as his ability went. (Mr. Coaker here suggested that Sir John was fishing for a Coalition Government, to which Sir John replied that he had had enough of Coalition and National Governments, and as far as he was concerned he was through with them.) He appealed to Mr. Coaker to save his own friends that he pretended to think so much of, the fishermen—from the serious salt situation now confronting them. He appealed to the trade knes in the Government to Mr. Coaker because a section worth talking to about these matters. He asked that immediate attention be given to them. The position is so—what he prophesied is some time ago—we have a Black Monday staring us in the face.

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ment to-day, the people who propose to abolish it do not know the needs of the country at the present time. There are three problems facing us to-day more momentous than ever faced us before. They are salt, coal and the coastal service. What is the salt situation? It is a most serious situation. The Hon. Mr. Coaker knows all about the salt situation. Most of the members of the Government don't know how serious it is, and Sir John suggested that they get the information from Mr. Coaker. If the Prime Minister and his executive colleagues don't know it then it is time they did and they should be well ashamed of themselves. He said without fear of contradiction that if the schooners began to arrive here in the usual large numbers for salt cargoes, there was not in the city a ten days' supply. There were no steamers on the way, not a tub was being loaded in Cadiz on account of the strike there. Some steamers are there awaiting loads but that does not help the situation any. In May, 1918, we had in the city 150,000 hds.; in May, 1920, we have only 15,000 hds. To show the serious position, he stated that only two firms, Bowring's and Baine Johnston's, had any salt and the others were drawing on these to outfit their dealers. Now what is going to happen when the 15,000 hds. are gone? Does not that call for a Minister of Shipping? It calls for more, it calls for a Minister who is in the Executive Council. As far as Mr. Cave was concerned, he was treated unfairly by not being given an Executive seat. The position was so important that he would not stay in a Government ten minutes which did not give the Minister of Shipping a seat at the Council Board so that he may be able to tell his colleagues about the difficulties he had to contend with. The coal situation was also serious. What was done or being done to relieve it? Nothing. At the present time there were schooners in Sydney Harbor lying up that could be utilized. Why weren't they? If something is not done this summer last winter's coal situation is not a patch on what is coming to us next winter. Then there is the Coastal Service. Not a word about it yet, and the House has been in session for a month. When is something going to be done? The Government, as appeared to him, had no defined policy with regard to either salt, coal or coastal service and the sooner it woke up to the situation confronting the country to-day the better for all concerned. He was called a pessimist when he told the country what was ahead of them, but he was not afraid to say that the present situation is appalling and without careful manipulation of the Ship of State a Black Monday was nearer to us than at any time since 1894. If we are not careful we shall have the whole structure tumbling down about our heads. He made these statements deliberately from his place in the House with a due sense of the responsibility resting upon him. He appealed to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and all concerned to take due note of what he was saying and if possible to put all heads together to find a way out. He would lend a helping hand if needed as far as his ability went. (Mr. Coaker here suggested that Sir John was fishing for a Coalition Government, to which Sir John replied that he had had enough of Coalition and National Governments, and as far as he was concerned he was through with them.) He appealed to Mr. Coaker to save his own friends that he pretended to think so much of, the fishermen—from the serious salt situation now confronting them. He appealed to the trade knes in the Government to Mr. Coaker because a section worth talking to about these matters. He asked that immediate attention be given to them. The position is so—what he prophesied is some time ago—we have a Black Monday staring us in the face.

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