

Proceedings at the House of Assembly

WEDNESDAY, May 19, 1915.

The Assembly came into meeting at 3 p.m. A very large gathering of the public had assembled in the lobbies, whilst several ladies interested in the Prohibition movement (that Bill being included on the Order of the Day) were accommodated with seats on the main floor. The opening dealing was with a bill respecting the Bank Fishery, and introduced by Mr. Piccott, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

MR. PICCOTT spoke to the four items on the bill.

(a) Three life buoys to be kept on deck of each vessel.

(b) A sufficient life belt for every person employed on board such vessel in the prosecution of such fishery.

(c) A compass for every dory carried on such vessel.

(d) An approved patent fog alarm and advocated the specified use and service of the additions named.

MR. MORINE thought the Bill an excellent one, and knew that the whole house would agree to its humane requests. Would move that it be brought before the whole house on the morrow.

The second reading of a Bill respecting certain retiring allowances, was moved to a committee of the whole on to-morrow.

Notion of motion was then called.

RIGHT HON. PRIME MINISTER.—To move the House into committee of the whole to consider certain resolutions respecting the Prohibition of the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors.

The Premier advocated the Bill now before the House as an answer to the long existing petitions of a section of the community. As a matter of fact there hardly existed sufficient reasons for the presentation of the resolutions, seeing that as a people we are inclined to sobriety, the consumption of intoxicating liquors in other countries (which Sir Edward named) being for greater—per individual—than in Newfoundland.

He believed in moral suasion in controlling the situation, the teaching to youth the doctrine of total abstinence and the impression of its enactment.

MR. MORINE did not object to the Bill as a measure, or a whole, but saw certain details that were open to amendment. He (Mr. Morine) took exception to Sect. 17 of the Bill which reads as follows:—"Resolved, if the number of votes polled in the affirmative be a majority of the total number of votes polled at the election and amount to at least forty per cent of the total number of registered voters upon the revised list of electors taken for the purposes of the General Election of Members of the House of Assembly held in the year 1913—the Governor in Council, etc. &c."

This section was detrimental to the success of the Bill. It was unfair to the "working" advocates of the measure. It meant that the 2000 of our young men who have gone to the war must be termed anti-voters. It was throwing the burden of the work on an interested few. What about the illiterate, the careless, the people who will skulk in the work, whilst the friends of Prohibition bear all the burden, and show their colors?

The very absence of our young men abroad was an item detrimental to the interests of the Bill, for is their unavoidable action in not being able to enter the polling booth will class them as anti-Prohibitionists, and against the measure?

He (Mr. Morine) did not believe in this matter of securing forty per cent of the affirmative vote cast, as well as the majority. Why that very Government in the House had been brought into power with far less support, and it was to be remembered that during election time (general election time) influences had been brought to bear to secure support, which was really less than that now asked to the gaining of Prohibition. It for example any member of that Government had to depend on a forty per cent returns besides a majority vote, to secure his seat, how many such members would be entitled to sit as representatives in that Assembly.

'Twas the very same with Sect. 17 of this Bill. The Government demanded not only a majority, but a high percentage of the vote cast at the last election. How unfair this was to those people who were fighting hard for Prohibition. 'Twas unjust, fatal to the Bill, an underhand device that the Bill could not pass, when submitted to the country, hedged in by such a clause. Mr. Morine would also point out that a section of this Bill does leave a door open for the importation of spirituous liquors, though the Bill is in its entire-

ly supposed to forbid all importation. He (Mr. Morine) referred to Sect. 22 of the Bill, which provides "that it shall be lawful for all medical practitioners and druggists in the Colony to import liquors for medicinal purposes." This was loose. It meant that after a short time, Druggist shops would be turned into saloons and that medical men—if they so wished—could import liquors for any purposes. Mr. Morine made a suggestion to meet this difficulty, as follows: That a supplier (known as the Central supplier) be appointed by the Government to control all or any imported liquors. That such supplier be empowered to dispose of liquors to medical men of certified responsibility, that the individual known as Central supplier, submit to the Government, monthly, a list showing to whom such liquors had been sold, and how much. A proper officer should have to be appointed to deal with and check up records so submitted, for better we should have no Prohibition than a Prohibition that does not prohibit.

Mr. Morine concluded his fair and able remarks by asking the consideration of two principles:—

(1) That a majority vote on the Bill be sufficient to pass it, when it goes to the country, and

(2) That the importation of sale of all liquors be left entirely in the hands of a good responsible central agency.

THE PREMIER admitted to the force and wisdom of Mr. Morine's suggestions, the latter gentleman thanking Sir Edward, and making a further proposal that if a percentage of the total voting power of the country must be had, let it be 25 p.c. instead of 40 as called for in the Bill.

MR. COAKER perceived that the Premier had made a statement, which was like many of Sir Edward's statements, unfair, a blind and a deception to close the eyes of the Prohibition advocates to the truth. The Premier's statement was, "that if no great majority was forthcoming to the demand of the Plebiscite the dissatisfied might agitate for an appeal in a year or so."

This was—and the Premier knew it was—a most ridiculous remark. The people of the country would favor Prohibition, therefore let a majority carry. The clause in the Bill demanding the support of 40 per cent of the electorate was a mistake, an injustice, a blind to those interested.

With such a section as 17 left unamended, the Colony stood to lose \$50,000, which the Plebiscite would cost. In 1913 there were 21,500 who voted for the Government, that government now looks for a vote of 25,000 to support Prohibition, and forgets that over 2,500 men are out of the country, engaged in the war, whilst four or five thousand persons, who would vote at a political general election, will not trouble to support the measure now before the House, as not being interested one way or the other in the liquor question. Wherein such an event as a general election calls fourth the attention of the people as road boards, public officials, the party machine and papers create a big enthusiasm, yet only 21,500 voted for the Government in 1913, hence a 40 per cent limit spelt death to the movement.

He (Mr. Coaker) though favoring Prohibition, would say that the Union (F.P.U.) would not take a direct or active part in this matter, as the question of Total Prohibition had never been discussed by the Union, had never come before any of its Councils, and was not a union plank, yet personally all were free to take any part they wished. Mr. Coaker believed in the wisdom of the suggestion of Mr. Morine, that a central depot or agency should handle and control any liquors imported into the country. Such control depot to be under strict government jurisdiction. The objection which he had already made to the 40 per cent demand, he would repeat and ask the Government to re-consider the objectionable section with a view to its modification or removal.

MR. HIGGINS intimated that if any man in the house could see the force of the suggestions of Messrs Morine and Coaker, he (Mr. Higgins) was the man, but he could not support such suggestions, being a member for St. John's. He then subsided.

MR. MORINE, in his own calm humorous way briefly referred to Mr. Higgins as a very young gentleman, but saw great things before the youth in future. The member for St. John's East, had referred to conditions in the Old Country, forgetting that no comparison existed to base his (the Higgins) logic on.

the Government against their asking for a vote of 40 per cent of the Plebiscite. The movement would be lost, not because the people do not believe in, or do not favor Prohibition, but the measure was in danger of being lost, because the people might not go to the polls, owing to the stumbling blocked placed in the way by the 40 per cent limit. Herein was the danger. Cut out this unreasonable section, and Prohibition was assured.

He (Mr. Coaker) received 1,000 letters each week, and he had not read one line in any of them, against Prohibition. Don't endanger the Bill, don't put a stumbling block in the way of the success of the movement, but give it all the chances which it deserves.

Mr. Coaker thought that if the 40 per cent claim was removed that the vote recorded would reach 45 per cent, as the people would respond readily, believing the measure would be carried, but if a 40 per cent limit was insisted on, many would lose faith and give up hope, and the feeling of contesting and uphill fight would kill enthusiasm.

MR. GRIMES in a very fair speech referred to the absurdity of the offensive section (17). By conclusive figures, Mr. Grimes proved how detrimental the clause was. At the last election for example, 49,000 votes were cast by an electorate of 63,000, meaning that 14,000 did not trouble to cast any vote. About 3000 of our men had or would go to the war, and it may be estimated that 17,000 would not therefore vote on the Prohibition Bill, thus placing themselves in the false position of anti-prohibitionists. That 17,000 may, or can, pick up a thousand others, and thereby defeat the Bill which asks for 25,000 votes, in its favor. The whole arrangement of the Bill by the Government was faulty.

MR. MORINE in answer to some remarks of the Colonial Secretary, openly put that official out of commission, and Mr. Targot who finished the afternoon's debating made a splendid appeal in favor of the Bill, but believing in its passing by straight majority, as all other measures and movements in church and state do.

The House then took recess 'till 8 o'clock p.m.

NIGHT SESSION

The Assembly met at 8 p.m. The Resolutions presented at the afternoon sitting were gone over, and a considerable time given to their consideration.

MR. MORINE moved to several alterations in the wording of the several sections, and voiced his own Amendment to Sect 17 of the Bill, which was lost on the usual party vote, a vote by the way which has destroyed many a good measure moved in the House of Assembly this year.

MR. EMERSON spoke in favor of the Bill as it stood, and Mr. Abbott made a rattling fine speech favoring Prohibition, and depicting in expressive language the evils of drink. His speech was loudly applauded and was one of the best delivered on the Prohibition subject.

Messrs Kent and Morine went further into Bill, whilst Mr. Coaker again gave fourth very wise suggestions, which would have benefited the Bill materially.

MR. GRIMES called the attention of the House to the small sum of \$10 which had been fixed as a fine for breachers of the act.

MR. COAKER moved that 33 1-3 or 1-3 of the vote of the electorate be fixed as the limit, instead of 40 per cent, as demanded in the resolutions, Amendment was lost.

The Grand Bank Water Co. resolutions were then read and went through the Committee, and the "Patriotic Association."

The Customs Act Amendment, Safety of Bank fishermen, and Retiring Allowances Bills, were read a second time.

MR. MORINE arose here to define his position of legal connection with the Harmsworth Co., and showed that it had nothing to do one way or the other, or did not affect his vote in connection with the Product's Bill.

Hopes That Detraction Cease

Extract From a Speech by Mr. Morine in the House of Assembly

A NEWSPAPER in this city which seems to make a special point of vilifying me continues to insinuate that I am compensated by the A.N.D. Co., generally known as the Harmsworth Co., for opposition in the House to the Products Contract. It alleges that the general retainer which I enjoy from that Company, as I frankly told the House several days ago, covers and includes my work here. I wish to say that the retainer referred to is merely for the purpose of having prior right to my services in any litigation in the Courts in which the Company is concerned. I receive nothing from the Company for my work here. I have no financial interest—directly or indirectly—in the defeat or passage of the Products measure.

May I express the hope that detraction in this respect will henceforth cease.

How the Money Goes

(Continued from page 4)

Fogo Society, a/c, bull	20.00
Marystown, bal. grant	7.58
M. B. Greene, typewriting	20.00
J. F. Downey, salary	125.00
R. T. Devereaux, do	125.00
James Ryan, do	40.00
O. V. Ross, vegetables	1.00
John Lage, cab hire	1.00
Thos. Turner, keep bull	40.00
A. Glendenning, pigs	41.72
C. F. Lester, cartage	2.00
Wm. Rose, 1 pig	5.00
Reid Nfld. Co., freight	3.00
Hr. Grace Society, extra keej stallion, 1 boar	62.00
M. Canada Insee Co., Premium Office fittings	5.10
Geo. W. Squires, a/c bay stallion	29.61
Cudroy Society, gasoline for thrasher	20.45
A. Gallant, keep stallion	50.00
Wm. Tuik, Sec. Britannia Cove	20.00
J. F. Downey, salary	125.00
R. T. Devereaux, do	125.00
James Ryan, do	40.00
Star Pub. Co., advtg	32.00
Wm. Smithwick, services	2.00
Fogo Ag. Society, amt. acct. R. Wright & Son, mower, St. Bride's	51.00
Spaniard's Bay Society, amt. acct	201.40
Heart's Content, do	92.00
Hant's Hr., keep bull	45.00
Bowring Bros, Ltd., freight	89
Reid Nfld. Co., freight	54
J. G. Doyle re C. Bank Cove John O'Brien, keep bull, Bay Bulls	15.00
Robert Cole, 2 pigs	10.00
Jas. Devereaux, keep stallion Ernest Guzzwell, do	50
Office Spec. Co., furniture	162.73
R. Wright & Son, scullers, Kelligrews	21.50
S. S. Stephano, freight	10.97
H. M. Customs, duty	30.50
Heber Parsons, 1 bull	55.00
A. Glendenning, 2 pigs	17.02
Hant's Hr. Socy., amt acct Bay Roberts, do	109.00
R. T. Devereaux, do	125.00
Jas. Ryan, do	40.00
Nfld. Produce Co., freight	1.00
Martin Harware Co., a/c Salmonier	4.59
Norris Pt. Society, keep ram St. Joseph's Society, 1 harrow	10.00
J. S. Keats, a/c Merasheen	1.70
Geo. Pike, Sec. Haystack	20.00
St. Joseph's Society, keep bull	10.00
A. Hobbs, Sec. King's Cove	20.00
L. Colley, Sec. Kelligrews	20.00
M. T. Murray, Sec. Kelligrews Mt. Cashel D. Co., 3 pigs	15.00
Reid Nfld. Co., freight	11.40
T. P. Wade, Sec. Wood's Island	20.00
Rd. Finnimore, Sec. Joe Batt's Arm	20.00
Jas. Hynes, Sec. St. Brendan's	20.00
Jas. Small, Sec. Dergeo	20.00
J. O'Flaherty, Sec. Northern Bay	20.00
C. G. Jones, Sec. Spiard's Bay	20.00
P. R. Keating, Sec. Placentia Bay	20.00
R. McDonald, Sec. St. Alban's Bay	20.00
A. J. O'Reilly, St. George's Bay	20.00
L. J. Benoit, Sec. March's Pt.	20.00
J. Quilton, Sec. Princeton	20.00
Stephen Hawco, Sec. St. Joseph's	20.00
Wm. Hogan, keep stallion, St. Mary's	50.00
Jos. Boone, re L. River	3.00
Alec. Wells, re meetings, Salmon Cove	5.00

(To be continued)

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