

Mr. Morrow (Lib.) said no member in the Chamber had suggested that primary education should be curtailed. He would support Mr. Tassie's amendment when placed before the House.

Mr. Cooke (Lib.) said the suggested amendment was not to embarrass the Government. He was satisfied that small economies could be made on many lines.

Mr. Anderson (Ind.) said he would support the suggested amendment as long as it would not hamper the administration of the Government. Many of the speeches that night appeared to have been made for party political purposes. The Government went to the Premiers' Conference asking approval to budget for a deficit of £2,100,000, but it was tied down to £1,500,000.

Amendment Useless

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Jelley) said that, by the Governor's Appropriation Bill, Governments were empowered to exceed the Estimates by £200,000. The practical way for members to demonstrate that economies should be made was to show the lines on which savings could be effected. Members, however, had indulged in generalities, and their remarks showed that the suggested amendment would be useless. The Government would have to wait until the end of the year to know whether the deficit was £1,500,000 or more. Other Governments had not kept within their deficits. The exchange position might cost the Government another £200,000, or a great catastrophe involve them in a larger amount still. The amendment would be a vote of no-confidence in the Government.

The second reading was carried.

Amendment To Limit Deficit

In Committee, Mr. Tassie moved that the deficit should be limited to £1,500,000. He said the difference between the deficits of the previous Government and the present one was that a contract had not then been made with the Commonwealth Government and all the other State Governments. The amendment was not designed as a vote of no-confidence in the Government, but to keep it within the bounds it had set.

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Whitford) asked members not to accept the amendment. Members should point to specific instances where economies could be made. A report on the amendment from the Parliamentary Draftsman (Mr. Bean) stated that the Government could not borrow extra money to make up the deficiency, but must reduce its expenditure below the amount authorised by the Appropriation Act. If the amendment were carried and the deficit was exceeded the Government would find itself in the position of having committed an illegal action, and Treasury officials would be placed in an impossible position.

The Government had not earned the criticism levelled against it, he said. It had made greater economies than any other State. Experience had shown that the smart boys in primary schools were not the leaders in commerce today. The adolescent in the secondary school must be given full opportunities for development.

No Concerted Party Move

Sir David Gordon assured members that it was not a concerted party move, and he knew nothing of the amendment until it was indicated by Mr. Tassie. The result of the amendment probably would be that drastic economies would have to be made in the final months of the year, and probably salaries would have to be cut. If the amendment were not carried, and the Government had to incur extraordinary expenditure through a catastrophe, it would call a special session of Parliament.

Would Provoke Crisis

"If I were a member of the Government," said Sir David Gordon, "and the Upper House interfered with an Appropriation Bill such as this, and failed to give way in a conference of the two Houses, I would say that the Government had no option but to go to the country."

Mr. Pascoe (Lib.) supported Sir David Gordon's view. Unless they wanted to provoke a crisis, such an amendment should not be submitted.

Mr. Mills intimated that he wished to withdraw his support of the amendment.

Mr. Tassie said he congratulated the Government upon what it had done. He only asked it to stick to the Premiers' Plan. His amendment did not ask the Government to make a reduction in any item, but he wanted it to keep within the estimated deficiency, and if it could not, to call Parliament together. The Government would rise in the estimation of the public if it accepted the amendment.

Voting On The Amendment

The amendment was carried on the voices, but on a division was defeated by 10 votes to nine, as follows:—

For Amendment—Messrs. Tassie, Anderson, Cooke, Cowan, McCallum, Morrow, Prosser, Ritchie, and Young.

Against—Sir David Gordon, Messrs. Blesing, Condon, Duncan, Hannaford, Harvey, Jelley, Mills, Pascoe, and Whitford.

The Bill passed the remaining stages without amendment.