

1901.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

No. 94.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 1901.

1. The House met pursuant to adjournment.—Mr. Speaker took the Chair, and read Prayers.
2. ACQUISITION OF BRITISH NEW GUINEA BY THE COMMONWEALTH.—Mr. Barton moved, pursuant to notice, That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the following resolutions :—
 - (1) That this House authorizes the Government to accept British New Guinea as a territory of the Commonwealth, if His Majesty's Government are willing to place it under Federal control.
 - (2) That towards the expenses of the administration of the Possession this House is willing, when called upon, to vote a sum of £20,000 per annum, subject to revision at the end of five years.

Question—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair; Mr. Chanter reported that the Committee had made progress, and that he was directed to ask, That the Committee may have leave to sit again.

Resolved—That the House will, on Tuesday next, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

3. WAYS AND MEANS.—The House, according to Order, resolved itself into the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair; Mr. Chanter reported that he had been requested to ask the opinion of Mr. Speaker on a point of order raised in Committee, and that he was directed to ask, That the Committee may have leave to sit again.

Resolved—That the House will, so soon as Mr. Speaker has given his opinion on the question, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

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4. **POINT OF ORDER—PRIVATE MEMBER PROPOSING INCREASE OF DUTY.**—Mr. Chanter then stated, That in the Committee of Ways and Means he, as Chairman, had decided that a private Member could propose an increase in the rate of a duty under consideration in the Committee, and that the Committee had agreed to a resolution asking Mr. Speaker to give his opinion on the subject.

And after other honorable Members had addressed themselves to the question—

Mr. Speaker said—"I may say I have known for some few weeks past that this question would arise at some stage of the proceedings on the Tariff, and I have therefore given it very careful consideration. When first this was made known to me, I at once conceived that the idea of any unofficial Member proposing an increase of an item of taxation asked for by the Crown was contrary to the spirit of parliamentary government—the spirit of parliamentary government being that the Crown asks for an impost to be made on the people, and the people's representatives in Parliament consider the request of the Crown and may grant the request, or may grant a lesser amount, but would not conceivably give to the Crown a larger sum than the Crown asks should be imposed. When, however, I went from the question of the spirit of parliamentary government to the practice which has grown up as parliamentary institutions have developed, I am obliged to admit that in the House of Commons, which is the standard of our proceedings where it is not otherwise set out in our Standing Orders, the practice of proposing imposts on items not suggested as subjects of taxation by the Crown, and of proposing increases on items which are suggested as subjects for taxation, has sprung up, and that on several occasions, without any objection being taken, new taxes have been proposed and increases by unofficial Members, on details of taxes suggested by the Government. There are cases which I am prepared to quote, but which I understand the Chairman has already cited. One case dates back to 1840, and another can be seen in *Hansard*, vol. 218, page 1041. Striving to interpret the practice of the House of Commons by the practice in other Parliaments, I find that in Canada the same course has been followed; and also in Victoria, where attention was called to the importance of the matter. In South Australia, according to Blackmore's *Practice of the House of Assembly*, the practice was followed in 1870, and on other occasions. Therefore, ruling as I have to rule, that neither Standing Order No. 171 nor Standing Order No. 247, applies to this case, as we are now dealing with resolutions in Committee only, and the Bill stage will come later, and falling back on Standing Order No. 1, which incorporates the practice of the House of Commons, I am bound to decide that the Chairman has correctly determined the practice in this House, which is that duties on items may be increased, and that other items which are mentioned in the Tariff on which no duty is proposed may be proposed as subjects for duty, and that, in that way, the House will have the freest possible hand in debating the Tariff. I may say I should have been better pleased to have decided the other way had my duty permitted me so to decide because I can see that the ruling I have given may tend to produce considerable discussion beyond that which otherwise would have taken place. But with the practice of the House of Commons before me I can only rule as I have ruled, that the Chairman is correct in his decision."

5. **WAYS AND MEANS.**—Mr. Speaker left the Chair; and the House again resolved itself into the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair; Mr. Chanter reported that the Committee had made progress, and that he was directed to ask, That the Committee may have leave to sit again.

Resolved—That the House will, to-morrow, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

6. **PAPER.**—Mr. Kingston presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor-General—

Correspondence relating to British New Guinea.

Ordered to lie on the Table.

7. **ADJOURNMENT.**—Mr. Kingston moved, That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and resolved in the affirmative.

And then the House, at twenty minutes past eleven o'clock p.m., adjourned until to-morrow, at half-past two o'clock p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT.—All Members were present except—Messrs. Brown, Chapman, Clarke, Cruickshank, G. B. Edwards, Ewing, Fuller, McCay, F. E. McLean, V. L. Solomon, Spence, Watkins, Watson, and Wilks.

C. GAVAN DUFFY,
Clerk of the House of Representatives.