Document generated on 10/12/2024 2:22 a.m.

Newfoundland and Labrador Studies

Governor Sir John Middleton's Memorandum on the 1932 St. John's Riot

Melvin Baker

Volume 34, Number 1, 2019

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1072439ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1072439ar

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

Faculty of Arts, Memorial University

ISSN

1719-1726 (print)
1715-1430 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this document

Baker, M. (2019). Governor Sir John Middleton's Memorandum on the 1932 St. John's Riot. *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, *34*(1), 130–157. https://doi.org/10.7202/1072439ar

All Rights Reserved © Newfoundland and Labrador Studies, 2020

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

https://www.erudit.org/en/

DOCUMENT

Governor Sir John Middleton's Memorandum on the 1932 St. John's Riot

Melvin Baker

Introduction

A riot on 5 April 1932 in St. John's was a pivotal turning point in Newfoundland and Labrador history. On that date angry citizens in St. John's marched on the House of Assembly in session at the Colonial Building demanding higher relief payments and employment. The riot ensued as the mob and mounted police clashed, and rioters broke into the Colonial Building in pursuit of the Prime Minister, Sir Richard Squires.[1] Arguably, the subsequent chain of events led to the suspension of Dominion status and the Commission of Government[2] and ultimately Confederation with Canada.[3] Governor Sir John Middleton,[4] who played a crucial constitutional role at the time, kept a detailed account of the events leading to and after the 5 April riot. That document, located in The Rooms Provincial Archives in the form of a memorandum marked "secret" and intended for the Dominions Office, is reproduced herein. The memorandum provides valuable insight into the Governor's perspective and his actions in dealing with the dramatic events at the time. It is presented after the following brief explanation of the political and financial background leading to the riot and the downfall of the Squires regime.

Desperate Measures and Disturbances, 1932

Between 1929 and 1932 the Newfoundland government confronted major financial problems resulting from a global economic depression that lasted for a decade and ended with the coming of a world war in 1939.[5] The Great Depression had a devastating effect on the Newfoundland economy, whose prosperity depended on world demand for its primary exports — fish, pulp and paper, and minerals. By 1931 Prime Minister Squires struggled trying to maintain with reduced revenues both essential public services and interest and principal payments on the national debt. In February 1932 the Squires government was shaken by a major political defection amid charges of political corruption. Three days previous to the opening of the House of Assembly on 4 February, Minister of Finance Peter Cashin[6] resigned from the government without public comment. When the House of Assembly met, Cashin rose from his seat and accused Squires of having the Minutes of the Executive Council falsified without telling his Executive Council to cover up certain legal fees he had been paying himself out of public funds. He also accused other members of the cabinet with the misuse of public funds as well as Dr. Alex Campbell,[7] Squires's closest political friend, of failing to file his income tax return.[8] The charges were sensational and inflammatory to the St. John's poor and unemployed, and on 11 February a crowd of several hundred people gathered outside the Prime Minister's office located in the Court House demanding relief assistance. This was eventually granted, but not before the protestors forced their way into Squires's office. Squires had telephoned Police Superintendent P.J. O'Neill,[9] who was conducting a separate investigation nearby, that a protest was underway, and when O'Neill arrived soon afterwards, he found the doors to the Prime Minister's office smashed and Squires "with his back to the wall and surrounded by a crowd of men who were shouting and screaming. . . . As the Prime Minister appeared to be in a serious position, I did what I could to clear off the crowd in front of him." Recognizing one of the organizers, O'Neill told him "to tell the crowd to go

outside and I would help to adjust matters. He did so, and after a while I got them out and down to the street,"[10] O'Neill reported to Inspector General Charles Hutchings.[11]

Five days later another large crowd convened at the Colonial Building in anticipation of Cashin's intention to elaborate further in the Assembly on the charges he had made against the government. The Opposition called for a select committee to investigate the charges; Squires responded by having an amendment passed on a party vote that the inquiry be conducted by the Governor into the claim that the Minutes of the Executive Council were in error. A career administrator in the British colonial service who became Governor of Newfoundland in 1928, Middleton informed the Assembly that it had no constitutional right to question the accuracy of the Minutes. While the Governor refused to comment on the substance of the Minutes, there was enough information from other sources concerning the alleged misuse of public funds to weaken what little public confidence remained in the government. Middleton also provided the Assembly with a description of the records-keeping process with the Executive Council. With Middleton's reply read in the Assembly, Cashin continued to insist his charges were correct.[12]

In the middle of this growing crisis and under extreme pressure from the Canadian commercial banks from which Newfoundland sought financial assistance, on 23 March the Assembly passed legislation increasing customs duties, which already provided about 80 per cent of public revenues, especially on essential food items, and making further reductions in public expenditures, including that in the pension payments made to ex-servicemen. These measures resulted in the resignation of three more members from the government ranks. On 5 April the frustrations of the unemployed towards the Squires government took a turn for the worse when a mob of 10,000 people stormed the doors of the Colonial Building, which the mounted police unsuccessfully failed to defend.[13] While the mob was kept from the floor of the legislature where the House of Assembly was in session, they did occupy the basement of the building, looting and destroying public documents

in the process. Fearing for his life, Squires managed to escape secretly through a side exit of the building and into hiding for a day.

The following day Cashin announced that Squires had stated, in his and Sir William Coaker's presence,[14] that he would resign office immediately. Emerging from hiding, Squires flatly denied Cashin's claim and decided to hold a general election as soon as possible. On 6 April Middleton met with a "deputation of citizens" who said that Squires either had to resign or be dismissed, otherwise there would be "murder." The Governor told them that as long as Squires had a majority in the House he had the right to continue in office. He also warned them that criminal acts would be punished, but by 9 April rumours were rampant in the city of what the rioters had threatened, from setting fire to the oil storage premises on the south side of the harbour, to raiding the Newfoundland Hotel and destroying the city's power plant to put St. John's in "darkness and then begin a season of looting."[15]

Middleton kept the Dominions Office informed daily on events in St. John's. On 5 May 1932 the Governor prepared the memorandum for the Dominions Office providing background information on Newfoundland's 1932 financial, political, and social troubles. He also addressed the effort by Opposition politicians concerning the falsification of the Minutes of the Executive Council and the House of Assembly call for him to determine whether the Minutes were falsified. The House amendment asking the Governor to intervene and serve as referee was a clever manoeuvre by Squires. In effect, S.J.R. Noel has written of this event, the "governor was being asked whether or not he had been duped." Middleton's reply, as Squires had expected, was that the Assembly's request was unconstitutional, and the Governor gave an example from 1928 when the Executive Council, then led by Prime Minister Frederick Alderdice,[16] spent public money without legislative approval. Finally, Middleton provided information on how ill-prepared the police authorities were to deal with substantial public unrest and on Newfoundland's long-standing reliance on the power of the Royal Navy and the presence of a British naval vessel in Newfoundland

waters to act as a police deterrent.[17] Middleton's memorandum, with explanatory footnotes added, follows.

Document

<u>Secret</u>: Memorandum on (1) the disturbance in St. John's in April 1932 and the steps taken before and after these outbreaks for the preservation of order; and (2) the political significance of these and earlier events. [Dated Government House, St. John's, 5th May 1932][18]

The "Disclosures" made by Mr. Peter J. Cashin in the House of Assembly touching his former colleagues have formed the subject of my Secret Despatches dated the 7th, 26th and 31st of March.[19] Notwithstanding his Oath of Fidelity to me personally Mr. Cashin did not communicate to me, while he was a member of the Executive Council, any part of the information which in spite of his Oath of Secrecy he thought fit, after he had ceased to be a member of the Executive Council, to communicate to the House of Assembly. On this information alone did Mr. Alderdice, the Leader of the Opposition, and his associates rally to impugn the accuracy of the records of the Executive Council. There has been and can be no question whatsoever as to the undoubted right of the House of Assembly to discuss and to express approval or disapproval of the policy which these records enforce but, having regard to the origin of the Executive Council and to the provisions of the Letters Patent and Royal Instructions of 1876, I have been unable to admit that the House of Assembly has any constitutional or statutory power to question the accuracy of the records.

Throughout the present Session the Press reports of the Debates, when the House of Assembly has been in Committee and the Speaker has not been in the Chair, have recorded an orgy of the most unseemly and abusive language. What permanent record of these Debates[20] will be kept is not known but in the Official Proceedings of the House of Assembly for the year 1919 when a stormy Session was brought to an

abrupt conclusion by a disorderly scene, there is merely a note to the effect that no official copy of the Debates could be secured. It is, however, recorded in the issue of the 9th of April 1932 of the *Watchman* (a weekly political paper published at the expense of party funds provided by the Opposition) that the member for Placentia East (Mr. L.E. Emerson, a prominent Member of the Opposition),[21] in discussing the Budget on the 4th of April spoke as follows — "When the members of the unemployed called on the Prime Minister and showed force their demands were granted; and it would appear that all that is required to get demands out of the Prime Minister is a display of force." Almost at the same hour as this speech was being delivered in the House of Assembly a Mass Meeting was being held in another part of St. John's. The proceedings of this meeting were broadcast and a full press report of them is given in Enclosure No. 25 to my Secret Despatch of the 3rd of May.

On the following morning (Tuesday the 5th of April) I informed the Executive Council that after hearing the speeches made at the Mass Meeting on the previous evening I had decided to cancel the arrangements which I had made to leave for England on the 10th of April. The following matters were also brought by me to the notice of the Council. I drew attention to the absence from the "Proceedings of Council" which had just been confirmed of any record of the recent resignation of two members which was no doubt due to the irregular and discourteous procedure adopted by Dr. H.M. Mosdell[22] and Mr. P.J. Lewis.[23] In both cases they had tendered their resignations in letters addressed to the Prime Minister and before it had been possible for these letters to reach me and, while Dr. Mosdell and Mr. Lewis were therefore still members of the Executive Council, they had announced their resignations in the House of Assembly and stated their reasons for their action.

It had been evident from the Debates in the House of Assembly and from articles which had appeared in the Press that misunderstanding existed in regard to the relations between the Executive Council and the House of Assembly and I took the opportunity of

reading to the Council a Note which I had prepared on the subject. By way of illustration of the views expressed in this Note I also referred to what concurred in Newfoundland in 1928. The House of Assembly was dissolved by Proclamation on the 6th of July and from that date ceased to exist. The Executive Council which then existed continued until the 16th of August when it resigned and an entirely new Executive Council was appointed by the Administrator in virtue of the powers conferred on the Governor by the Second Clause of the Letters Patent of 1876. Some of the Members of the new Executive Council including Mr. F.C. Alderdice, Prime Minister, continued to be Members of the Legislative Council, the permanent branch of the Legislature; some had been members of the defunct House of Assembly; while some had never been Members of either branch of the Legislature. Out of the eleven Members appointed to the Executive Council on the 18th of August 1928 only three have since attained to Membership of either branch of Legislature.

Incidentally it is of sufficient importance here to record, although I did not refer to the subject when speaking to the Executive Council on the 5th of April, that the Executive Council of August 1928 was appointed early in a new financial year and held Office during the short season when weather conditions are most favourable for outdoor work. They had at their disposal for expenditure during that period:

(1) $230,000 under various departmental Votes on Roads and other Public Works.
(2) $250,000 from a Loan, which had been raised a few weeks earlier, on Highroads and their extension.
(3) $250,000 from the same Loan on "Special Grants for Public Works."
(4) $500,000 from the same Loan on the diversion of a section of the Railway Line about 50 miles in length.
(5) $800,000 from the same Loan on Re-railing a section of 140 miles of the railway Line.

It has been stated by a recognized authority that "Public Funds have from the outset of Responsible Government in Newfoundland been more or less systematically used for political ends by each Government in power" and it is notorious that in 1928 Public Funds to a very large amount, which had purposely been made available, were so used. Moreover a Redistribution Act increasing the number of Members in the House of Assembly from thirty-six to forty had been passed solely for political ends and has since been admitted by its authors to have been an egregious political blunder. This Act gave to St. John's four representatives in the House of Assembly and to the rest of the Island thirty-six representatives.

The Executive Council appointed in August 1928 continued to the 16th of November when it in turn resigned and a new Executive Council was appointed on the 17th of November.[24] The first Executive act of the latter was to appoint certain "Ministers" of whom some had already become Members of the Executive Council while one, although a Member of the Executive Council, was not a Member either of the Legislative Council or of the House of Assembly. An extract from the Official *Gazette* notifying the appointment of an Executive Council by the Governor and also the appointment of "Ministers" by the Governor-in-Council under the relevant Statutes forms Annexure No. 2 to this Memorandum. There is an error in the second notification as the "Prime Minister" is not appointed by the Governor-in-Council but by the "Governor."

I went on to explain to the Council that in the end of October 1928 a General Election took place at which Members were returned to sit in the House of Assembly but that the House was not "summoned and called together" by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, under the Fourth Clause of the Letters Patent, until the 16th of April 1929. So that from the 6th of July 1928 to the 16th of April 1929 no House of Assembly existed, but during that period two Executive Councils had been appointed in virtue of the powers conferred on the Governor by the Second Clause of the Letters Patent. These facts appeared to be a sufficiently complete refutation of

the proposition so frequently advocated in the House of Assembly and the Press during the preceding two months that the "Executive Council" was "only a Committee appointed by the House of Assembly."

My reason for referring in my Note to change which had come about in the exercise in a Dominion of the Governor's discretionary power to see if the Government could be carried on without a dissolution was the customary but questionable political manoeuvre in Newfoundland of forming an "Independent Group" in the House of Assembly towards the close of the last Session in the life of the House. It is significant that all the Members of the "Independent Group," who had recently seceded, should have addressed to me the letter of which a copy forms Enclosure No. 18 to my Despatch of the 3rd of May. I was unable to fathom the inwardness of this communication but I have no doubt that it was prompted by political motives.

I pass to the steps taken before the disturbances of the 5th of April for the preservation of order in Newfoundland. It has been traditional for successive Governments in Newfoundland to rely on the Royal Navy for assistance in the maintenance of law and order. The tradition owes its origins to the Fishery Patrol which was maintained until a few years before the Great War and the presence of His Majesty's Ships in Newfoundland Waters both in summer and winter; and partly to the maintenance up to 1919, almost entirely at the cost of the Admiralty, of the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve for which a training ship was stationed at St. John's.

On the 22nd of July, 1931, when I was at Grand Falls (which is about 300 miles distant from St. John's) on my way back from Labrador I received a telegram from the Prime Minister in which it was stated that persons of "red" tendencies were attempting unemployment organization in St. John's and Conception Bay which if not checked would lead to serious breaches of the peace; that it would be particularly helpful if one of His Majesty's Ships if not both those in Newfoundland Waters would visit St. John's before going to Canada; that the Inspector General of Constabulary had reported that his entire available force on the Peninsula of Avalon (which includes St.

John's and Conception Bay) was "insufficient to cope with one major disturbance at one time in one place." I replied that all of His Majesty's Ships had already left Newfoundland Waters for Canada and asked for further information. The reply was to the effect that for the present the unpleasant situation which was being developed had been checked and that consequently there was no immediate necessity to communicate with the Commander-in-Chief.

As I had made arrangements to visit Flat Islands in Bonavista Bay I was unable to return to St. John's until the 26th of July when the Prime Minister was on the point of leaving for England. Before he left he asked me to request the Commander-in-Chief to allow one of His Majesty's Ships, before returning to Bermuda at the conclusion of their summer cruise, to make an informal visit to St. John's for a few days at the end of September or the beginning of October.

I ascertained that there was evidence of serious anxiety on the part of the mercantile community in St. John's as to the ability of the Constabulary Force to repress disorder in a crisis and that insurance of property against riot was being effected which in a few weeks rose to nearly five million dollars. Over 90% of the buildings in St. John's are wooden and there are many records of disastrous fires involving loss of life or serious damage to property.

During the following two weeks, in the absence of the Prime Minister, I discussed with the Inspector General on several occasions the necessity for the preparation by him of a considered scheme for dealing with possible disturbances and on the 15th of August I made a note of the general purport of our discussions of which a copy is annexed. He appeared to remain under a grave misapprehension as to his responsibilities and powers but it is only fair to Mr. Hutchings to state that he has no special training as an Officer of Police and is 63 years of age. He, however, for a period of 12 years (interrupted by occasional excursions into active political life) was Deputy Minister of Justice, to whom the Inspector General of Constabulary is directly responsible, and he has held the latter office for nearly 15 years.

The total strength of the Constabulary Force at that time was one

Inspector General, one Superintendent and 150 other ranks. The Inspector General, the Superintendent and 84 other ranks are stationed in St. John's but of the latter 29 are employed in the Fire Department leaving 55 for police duties in St. John's. The total strength in the "Outports" including the important industrial centres of Grand Falls, Corner Brook and Bell Island, where there are works and plants of great value, is only 66. The area of Newfoundland is 42,000 square miles and in 1931 the estimated population of the whole Island is 281,549 and of St. John's 42,645.

Through the courtesy of the Dominions Office I was able to obtain a copy of the Secret Circular Despatch issued by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 11th of November 1918 relative to the preparation of schemes for dealing with civil disturbances. I discussed with the Inspector General the various measures recommended in that Circular, urged the necessity for his preparing a considered scheme for dealing with disturbances on the lines suggested in the Circular and offered my personal assistance in the task. I sent him a copy of the Circular on the 3rd of September with a letter of which a copy is annexed. He did not reply to my letter but on the 21st of September he returned the documents which I had sent him and at the same time gave me an assurance that in an emergency he would have no difficulty in securing the assistance of civilians adequate in number to repress any attempt at disorder which was likely to occur in St. John's.

It is necessary that this Memorandum should include a brief reference to some of the events of the past twelve months. The financial difficulties of Newfoundland are well known. In May 1931 the Legislature authorized a public loan of eight million dollars. The business of raising the loan was entrusted, as is customary, to the Bank of Montreal, who are the Government Bankers, but no warning was given that the loan might not be subscribed and no tenders were received. Arrangements were later made with four Canadian Banks doing business in Newfoundland for a temporary loan of two million dollars to meet the service of the public debt on the 30th of June. The conditions on which this temporary loan was granted were embodied in a letter addressed to

the Banks by the Prime Minister (Mr. Squires) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. P.J. Cashin). An undertaking was given in this letter to invite His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom "to nominate a Commissioner" who in collaboration with His Majesty's Government in Newfoundland would investigate the financial situation and would make recommendations with a view to strengthening the finances of the Country, the "positive assuring of a continued balancing of the Budget" and the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of the public debt. A further undertaking was given by Sir R. Squires and Mr. Cashin that on the receipt of the Commissioner's report a Session of the Legislature would be held at which legislative effect would be given to the recommendations of the Commissioner.

The Prime Minister (Sir R. Squires) announced in the London press on the 23rd of August that Sir Percy Thompson,[25] K.B.E., C.B., Deputy Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, had "been selected for collaboration, consultation and advice with the Newfoundland Government in connection with its fiscal programme covering the Dominion's revenue and expenditure and public debt."

Towards the end of September on account of the serious fall in the revenue of the Island the Canadian Banks were again approached by the Prime Minister (Sir R. Squires) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. P.J. Cashin) for an additional and immediate loan of approximately three and a quarter million dollars. Both Sir Percy Thompson and Mr. R.J. Magor,[26] who had recently consented to undertake an investigation into the commercial enterprises of the Government of Newfoundland, took part in these negotiations. The Banks replied that they were unable to participate further in granting credit to the Dominion of Newfoundland but that if it were possible for Sir Percy Thompson to give them before the 15th of December reassuring views based on his preliminary investigations of the situation they would be glad to reconsider the whole question.

On the 18th of November a public meeting was held in St. John's for the purpose of "discussing the industrial, economic and financial conditions of the country." The principal speaker was Mr. Arthur

English[27] who, in moving a series of resolutions addressed to the Prime Minister which had for their expressed object to obtain "an official statement of the actual conditions with which the country was confronted," is reported to have said that "The people can by force extract an answer from the authorities who are the agents of the people only and not their masters" adding that if "an answer from the Prime Minister were not forthcoming or not satisfactory it was their intention to call another meeting so that the answer could be wrested from him."

A copy of the resolutions was presented to me for my information on the following day by Mr. Arthur English and Mr. A.B. Laite "Secretary of the Citizens Committee." Mr. English describes himself in a local publication as "Farmer, Journalist and Scientist" who unsuccessfully contested a District in 1913 in the interest of the Liberal Party and in 1919 another District in the interests of the same Party under the leadership of Sir R. Squires. Until rigid economy had to be enforced in 1931 Mr. English had held a subordinate post in the Department of Agriculture receiving a small salary which appeared to be his only source of income.

Mr. English and a deputation from the "Citizens' Meeting" were received by the Prime Minister, when Sir Percy Thompson was present, and a considered reply was given to the resolutions. The reply was not regarded as satisfactory and a further meeting was held on the 25th of November at which it was resolved that "this Mass Meeting call upon the Prime Minister and his Government to resign": "that forty-eight hours be given to the Prime Minister for his acquiescence and if such is not then forthcoming another meeting be held to consider what further steps be taken." In moving these resolutions Mr. English is reported to have said that "We want Newfoundland to be governed by Newfoundlanders and not by Commissioners and Experts who are costing the country thousands of dollars" x x x x x "Henceforth the Prime Minister shall be regarded as an usurper and be dealt with according to custom in such cases" x x x x x "We mean to call upon His Excellency to dismiss from office one who has not the decency to resign in the face of failure" x x x x x "Should His Excellency

refuse to dismiss the Government then it shall be our bounden duty to keep up the fight and see our cause triumphant."

No report of any further meeting arranged by this particular "Citizens' Committee" appeared in the press but in the first week of December I received by post from two very small settlements with populations respectively of 60 and 260, in Trinity Bay and Bonavista Bay, two petitions on printed forms. The petitioners appealed to the Governor "in the sacred name of the Constitution and of British Justice to take such steps as may be necessary for the immediate removal from power of the present evil administration who hold office against the wishes of the people and whose existence is a national menace to ourselves and our children."

The Petitions were evidently sent direct to me through a misunderstanding as I ascertained that a Circular and a similar form of petition (of which copies are annexed) had been distributed widely throughout the Island by the "Citizens' Committee" (which Mr. Arthur English had organized) with a request that the printed forms of petition should be returned to the "Citizens' Committee" by post. The intention of Mr. English's "Citizens' Committee" evidently was that all the forms of petition which were received by them should eventually be presented to me.

Early in December in accordance with the arrangements made with the Canadian Banks in the end of September, negotiations were reopened for temporary accommodation to the extent of a little over two million dollars to meet the service of the public debt at the end of the year. The negotiations were protracted and most difficult but late on the 31st of December an agreement was entered into between the Government and the Banks under which the latter agreed to make an additional loan of $2,200,000 to meet the interest due on the public debt on the following day while the Government "undertook to take every step in their power to balance their Budget for the financial year 1932–33" and at the next Session of the Legislature to pass certain financial measures.

The Banks made it an express condition of the additional loan in December that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. F.C. Alderdice)

should be a party to the conditions and terms. These entailed reductions in expenditure and increased taxation as recommended by Sir Percy Thompson but Mr. Alderdice has opposed both in the House of Assembly although he had given to the Banks the written undertaking which they had sought from him.

Mr. Cashin, notwithstanding his written undertaking to the Banks in June 1931 and his general acceptance of the terms imposed by the Banks in December 1931, tendered his resignation as Minister of Finance at the opening of the Session of the Legislature in February last and has since then consistently opposed the financial programme of the Government. Mr. Cashin has recently retired from public life and has temporarily left the country for Montreal where he has been followed by Sir John Crosbie[28] with whom he was in close touch and who was his predecessor up to 1928 in the Office of Minister of Finance and Customs. They have been associated in business since the conviction in February of Mr. Cashin's brother-in-law, Mr. C.J. Cahill,[29] Barrister and Solicitor, on charges of extensive forgeries and defalcations from clients and they have taken over, jointly, the agency of an important Canadian Insurance Company formerly held by Mr. Cahill. Another strong opponent of the reductions in expenditure and the increased taxation recommended by Sir Percy Thompson, in fulfilment of the undertaking given by the Government to the Canadian Banks in December 1931, has been Mr. L.E. Emerson who is the legal adviser of the Bank of Montreal. In his capacity as legal adviser to the Bank of Montreal Mr. Emerson claimed and received from public funds in December 1931 a fee of one thousand dollars for revising a simple form of Debenture for the periodical renewal of the loan made by the Banks in June 1931.

For the past eighteen months the whole population of Newfoundland has been very seriously affected by the world-wide economic depression and these conditions have been aggravated since October 1931 by the unprecedented slump in the price of salt fish the production of which forms the main industry of the Country. Great distress and suffering have resulted and during the past winter outside the City

of St. John's over 60,000 persons out of a population of about 240,000 have been receiving relief from public funds while in the City of St. John's itself there are over 2000 unemployed men who with their families have been assisted both from public and private funds.

The great majority of the unemployed in St. John's have drifted there from the "Outports" during the last few years and enrolled themselves in the Longshoremen's Union, which has a membership largely in excess of the requirements of the port, with the result that the policy of the Union has been to secure as much regular work as possible for the relatively small number who have been members of that body for a long period and to leave to the majority of the members such casual work as may offer but which in itself is insufficient to provide a means of livelihood. The price of salt fish had fallen so low that it was generally admitted that it was no longer practicable or in fact equitable to the fishermen, who produced this commodity, to continue pay to longshoremen in St. John's, the rates of wages which had been fixed when the prices for fish were very much higher. After protracted negotiations between the Employers Protective Association and the Longshoremen's Union, from which no agreement resulted, the former body gave notice of a general reduction of ten per cent in the rates of wages believing that every precaution would be taken to protect the considerable and entirely adequate number of men who desired and had expressed their readiness to work at the reduced rates of wages. The Longshoremen's Union retaliated by declaring a strike, and after several vessels, owing to the absence of Police protection, had been held up for about a fortnight the Employers were compelled to revert to the higher rates of wages which had previously been paid. The action of the Employers' Association in giving notice of a reduction in the wages of longshoremen (although the rates were acknowledged to be excessive in the conditions prevailing), at a time when so large a number of men in St. John's could not obtain any employment at all undoubtedly caused resentment amongst a considerable part of the population.

Reference has already been made to the distress which has prevailed throughout the Island during the past winter and the necessity

for affording assistance on a large scale from public funds. The serious financial difficulties of the Government and the abuses that had existed for many years in the distribution of relief necessitated a complete revision of the system and the substitution of relief in kind for monetary payments over which no effective control had been or could be exercised. This change met with very strong opposition from those whom it affected. A meeting of the unemployed was held in St. John's on the 9th of February at which certain resolutions were passed including one to the following effect "That immediate steps be taken to place the relief system on a proper and human basis; and that the condition which demands that under-fed and under-clad men perform manual labour under winter conditions be abolished as being an unnecessary hardship."

On the following morning I received a deputation of the unemployed which included Mr. James McGrath,[30] Chairman, and Mr. W. Hackett, Secretary of the meeting held on the previous day, as well as Mr. [John] Furlong, Mr. Weston Dicks, Mr. Kelly and several others. Copies of the resolutions which had been passed were presented to me and were immediately transmitted to the Secretary of State of Newfoundland. On the 11th of February a large number of the unemployed led by Mr. James McGrath, Mr. Weston Dicks, and Mr. Furlong, invaded the Executive Council Chamber in the Court House Building where acts of disturbance and violence were committed and much damage done to property. The Police failed to maintain order and no arrests were made. It is significant that although large quantities of liquor were later looted on the 5th and 6th of April, there was no looting of either food or clothing although shops stocked with supplies of both food and clothing were broken into.

On the 4th of April a Mass Meeting, to which reference has already been made and of which an account is given in Enclosure No. 2 of my despatch of the 3rd of May, was held in St. John's. The meeting was held by Mr. Henry A. Winter who is a Barrister and Solicitor. He was elected in 1907 to a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford where he graduated as Bachelor of Arts.[31] He was for a time a partner in a Legal firm

with Sir Richard Squires and later with Mr. W.R. Warren who was Prime Minister in 1923.[32] In that year Mr. Winter was elected to the House of Assembly of which he was Speaker from the 6th of June to the 18th of August, 1923. He unsuccessfully contested seats in the House of Assembly at the General Elections of 1924 and 1928.

At this Mass Meeting the most inflammatory speeches were those made by the Rev. W.E. Godfrey[33] and by Mr. Weston Dicks who had taken a leading part in the disturbance at the Court House building on the 11th of February. The latter's speech was not published in the press but I was able to hear it as the proceedings of the meeting were broadcast. The meeting closed with an impassioned appeal from Mr. James Howell, the Chairman, who holds a subordinate position in a Departmental Store. He invited all present and all listeners-in and their friends to take part in a parade on the following day to the House of Assembly when a Petition embodying the resolutions which had been passed at the meeting would be presented at the Bar of the House. He also requested that all places of business, shops and schools should be closed on the following afternoon so that as many as possible might be able to join in the parade to the House of Assembly.

Mass movements of this description cannot fail at the best of times to be something of a menace and consequently it is not surprising that given the disregard shown by a section of the population for law and order a real crisis should have arisen. Within a brief period the situation had got beyond the control of the available force of constabulary and the value of the voluntary assistance rendered later by ex-Service men and civilians cannot be overestimated. A press account of the disturbance is given in Enclosure No. 5 to my despatch of the 3rd of May.

About five o'clock on the afternoon of the 5th of April Sir William Coaker came to see me and gave me an account of what had taken place in the House of Assembly. He stated that after "An unseemly situation had arisen in the galleries" (as it is described in the Journal of Proceedings), he had had a conference with Mr. Alderdice, the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. P.J. Cashin and that they were

all agreed that "after what had happened Sir Richard Squires must resign and that there was no other course open to him." Sir William Coaker went on to tell me that after the disorderly scene in the House Mr. L.E. Emerson had come to the Speaker's room where the Members of the Government Party were gathered and informed them that he and his associates felt that they were in a measure responsible for what had occurred and he wished to offer them safe-conduct through the crowd. This offer was declined and shortly after this Sir William Coaker left the building in company with Mr. Cashin and came direct to Government House from the grounds of which the enclosure of the Colonial building is only separated by a public road.

By the morning of the 6th of April many people in St. John's had become seriously alarmed as to what might happen owing to the continuance of disorder in the City and it was with some uneasiness that the general population prepared to set about their daily tasks. The *Evening Telegram* of that date in commenting on "The Political Situation" announced that "It is an admitted fact that the Government will resign within the next forty-eight hours and in doing so Sir Richard Squires will recommend to His Excellency that Mr. Alderdice be invited to form an Executive to take charge without undue delay. Up to 2 pm Mr. Alderdice had not received any notification of what the Prime Minister proposes to do."

At 4 pm on the 6th of April a telephone message was received in the Governor's Office from the residence of Mr. F.C. Alderdice intimating that a "deputation of citizens" was already on its way to Government House. The message was conveyed by Mr. Henry A. Winter, the Organizer of the Mass Meeting of the 4th of April and concluded with the words "It's the resignation of Squires or bloodshed." Thereupon the deputation arrived and was composed of Mr. J.M. Howell, Chairman of the Mass Meeting of the 4th of April, and Mr. T.H. Stevenson and Mr. Thomas J. Molloy, who had been present at the meeting on the 4th of April and taken part in the parade on the 5th of April. They stated that the position was very serious and that the only possibilities were "the resignation or dismissal of Sir Richard Squires

or murder." I told them that the resignation of Sir Richard Squires was a matter which was in his own hands but that any criminal act would be punished in accordance with the law. The deputation also enquired whether a Warship had been ordered to come to St. John's and I replied that no such order had been given. On leaving Government House the deputation returned, in the motor car which had brought them, direct to the residence of Mr. F.C. Alderdice.

In the course of the same evening Mr. Alderdice issued an Appeal against the further use of force which included the following sentence "We are exerting ourselves to the utmost to ensure the resignation of the Squires Government." The Appeal was signed by Mr. Alderdice as "Leader of the Opposition" and a copy is annexed for convenience of reference.

During the subsequent forty-eight hours there was distinct deterioration in the situation. Attempts to break into the Government Liquor Depots were continued: shops, to which liquor looted from these depots on the 5th of April had been sold, were in turn raided: there was difficulty in guarding the private bonded warehouses in which liquor intended for re-export was stored; and two attempts were made to obtain rifles by force.

On the 8th of April I had a private conversation with the Chief Justice, Sir William Horwood,[34] who in the ordinary course of events would have assumed the Administration of the Government in my absence. In his opinion there was real risk of grave disorder. On previous occasions, when there had been trouble, he had had no fear of serious disorder but his feelings were very different at the present time. In speaking to me he also referred to the riots at Harbour Grace some years ago when four of the rioters were killed.[35] Later in the day I had a prolonged conference with Sir Tasker Cook,[36] who had acted as Prime Minister on several occasions during the last three and a half years, the Deputy Minister of Justice,[37] and the Inspector General of Constabulary. Verbal reports were made to me by the two latter which were embodied in the reports which form Enclosures Nos. 14, 15 and 16 to my despatch of the 3rd of May. All three persons present urged

most strongly that a Warship should be asked for and in view of these representations and my own appreciation of the situation I was reluctantly constrained to request that H.M.S. *Dragon* might be allowed to visit St. John's.

I did not, however, inform anyone that this request had been made and it was not until the night of the 9th of April when I saw the Prime Minister for a second time (my earlier interview having been on the 7th of April) that I told him, at the same time enjoining the strictest secrecy upon him. I had come to the conclusion several months before that a considerable increase in the Constabulary Force was essential and the Inspector General had given it as his considered opinion on the 8th of April that the Force should be increased by 100 men. The Prime Minister promised that he would agree to this increase and a meeting of the Executive Council was arranged for the morning of the 11th of April when the proposed increase in the Constabulary Force would be considered. At this meeting I read to the Council the reports which I had received from the Deputy Minister of Justice and the Inspector General and I put forward other arguments for an immediate and permanent increase of 100 men to the Constabulary Force. I was surprised when Sir Percy Thompson and Mr. J.H. Penson,[38] who were present at the meeting, both opposed the proposed increase in the Constabulary. Their opposition was an encouragement to more than one Member of the Council to join in the opposition to the proposals which I had so strongly advocated. To these objections I replied that successive Governments in Newfoundland had not hesitated to ask for assistance from the Admiralty in the preservation of order by sending a Warship which might entail an expenditure on the taxpayer in the United Kingdom of as much as £15,000 to £20,000 and that it was inconceivable, in my view, that the Government of Newfoundland should demur at incurring an expenditure of say £20,000 on increasing the strength of the Constabulary which had been admitted to be insufficient "to cope with one major disturbance at one time in one place" and on a public service for which His Majesty's Government in Newfoundland were alone responsible and could no longer evade.

Ultimately unanimity was arrived at and the increase in the Constabulary Force, including seven mounted men, was authorized.

Later in the day I had a conference with the Inspector General, Colonel L. [Lamont] Patterson, C.B.E.,[39] President of the Great War Veterans' Association, and Captain F.W. Marshall, M.B.E.,[40] who was in command of the Special Constables who had been enrolled. The measures which should be taken for the preservation of order were discussed at length and thereafter I informed the Inspector General that a permanent increase in the regular Constabulary Force of 100 men had been authorized and that he would be allowed until the 16th of April to organize and equip this addition to the Force, and that uniform should be ordered from the Clothing Factories in St. John's without delay and should be provided for as many men as possible by the 19th of April.

H.M.S. *Dragon* arrived in St. John's early on the morning of the 12th of April. The moral effect attendant on the presence of a Man-of-War was undoubtedly of the greatest value both in St. John's and also in several Outports where disturbances were threatened, and where if outbreaks had occurred there was no means of repressing them. In spite of insistent demands that H.M.S. *Dragon* should prolong her visit indefinitely she left, with my concurrence, on the 17th of April. It is to the credit of the Inspector General that since then, with the voluntary assistance of Captain Marshall and his Special Constables, the former has succeeded in maintaining order in St. John's.

After acts of disturbance and violence had been committed on the 5th of April I announced that I proposed to appoint a Commission of Inquiry which would also be charged with the duty of framing recommendations as to the steps necessary to avoid a recurrence of such outbreaks. In the absence of legislation providing for the proper conduct of such an Inquiry, and affording due protection to persons who might give evidence before it, I prepared a Bill of which a copy is annexed and in which are embodied the provisions which I considered to be necessary.

The announcement of the proposed Commission aroused most bitter resentment against me personally from Mr. Alderdice and his

associates, the organizers of the meeting of the 4th of April and many others. The reasons for this resentment are, at the time of writing this Memorandum a month later, manifest. It would be impracticable to constitute a Commission such as I contemplated from residents in Newfoundland and it would be necessary to invite non-resident Commissioners with special qualifications to undertake the Inquiry. The expense involved would be considerable and on a conservative estimate, based on a previous Commission, would amount to not less than £8000 to £10,000. The expenditure of this amount could ill be afforded by the country in present conditions and a substantial increase in the strength of the Constabulary Force has already been effected. The introduction into the Legislature of a Bill on the lines of that which I prepared might have endangered the passing of the financial legislation which has since been enacted. Even if the Commission of Inquiry Bill had been passed and the present Government authorized the necessary expenditures there was a possibility that a General Election might place in power a Government which would not agree to the expenditure involved. After careful consideration of all the circumstances I decided not to urge the introduction of the Bill which I had prepared.

The House of Assembly resumed its sittings on the 19th of April when a Select Committee, composed of the Speaker and four Members, was appointed "to ascertain and report to the House as to what steps the House may take to carry out the prayer of the Citizens' Petition" which had been presented on the 5th of April. The Committee did not make any report up to the 30th of April when the legislative programme of the Session having been completed I prorogued the General Assembly and announced that a Proclamation dissolving the House of Assembly would be issued in due course.

Notes

1 Richard Anderson Squires (1880–1940), Prime Minister of Newfoundland, 1919–23 and 1928–32. See James K. Hiller, "Squires, Sir Richard Anderson," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16,

University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/squires_richard_anderson_16E.html.

2 On the establishment of the Commission of Government, see Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929–1949* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

3 Subsequently, Squires called a general election for 11 June 1932 and was resoundingly defeated, with Opposition Leader Frederick Alderdice and his United Newfoundland Party winning all but two seats. Newfoundland's financial problems continued and in 1933 Prime Minister Alderdice agreed to a British-appointed commission of inquiry into its financial and political situation. The commission's report in late 1933 recommended, and the Newfoundland legislature accepted, the establishment of a Commission of Government to govern Newfoundland until it was self-supporting again. The next constitutional change came in 1949 with Newfoundland joining the Canadian Confederation following the second of two referendum votes in 1948.

4 Sir John Middleton (1870–1954), Governor of Newfoundland, 1928–32. See *Evening Telegram*, 16 Oct. 1928, and http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/colonial-john-middleton.php.

5 On this period, see Raymond Blake and Melvin Baker, *Where Once They Stood: Newfoundland's Rocky Road towards Confederation* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2019), 137–82; Gene Long, *Suspended State: Newfoundland before Canada* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1999), 64–73.

6 Peter Cashin (1890–1977), Minister of Finance and Customs, 1928–32. On Peter Cashin, see his *Major Peter Cashin: My Life and Times, 1890–1919* (Portugal Cove, NL: Breakwater, 1976); *Peter Cashin: My Fight for Newfoundland*, edited by Edward Roberts (St. John's: Flanker Press, 2012).

7 Alexander Campbell (1876–1940), Minister of Agriculture and Mines, 1919–23, and Minister without portfolio, 1928–32.

8 *Evening Telegram*, 1, 2, 5, 6, 18 Feb., 8 Apr. 1932.

9 P.J. O'Neill (1883–1944), Chief of the Newfoundland Constabulary, 1934–1944. See Arthur Fox, *The Newfoundland Constabulary* (St. John's: printed by Robinson Blackmore Printing and Publishing, 1971), 122–37.

10 The Rooms Provincial Archives (RPA), GN13.1.B, Box 371, file 23, P.J. O'Neill to Charles Hutchings, 15 Feb. 1932.

11 Charles Henry Hutchings (1869–1946), Deputy Minister of Justice, 1900–04, 1908–17, and Inspector General of the Newfoundland Constabulary, 1917–34. On the social protest in this period, see also Sir W.F. Coaker, *Past, Present and Future* (Port Union, NL, 1932), Article 9; James Overton, "Riots, Raids and Relief, Police, Prisons and Parsimony: The Political Economy of Public Order in Newfoundland in the 1930s," in Elliott Leyton, William O'Grady, and James Overton, *Violence and Public Anxiety* (St. John's: ISER Books, 1992), 195–334; James Overton, "Nationalism, Democracy, and Self-Determination: Newfoundland in the 1920s and 1930s," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 32 (2005): 31–52.

12 S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 198–200; Peter Neary, "'That Thin Red Cord of Sentiment and of Blood': Newfoundland in the Great Depression, 1929–34" (unpublished manuscript, c. 1988, available at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University Libraries), 32–36; RPA, GN1.3.A, Box 150, despatch 181/32, Middleton to J.H. Thomas, 26 Mar. 1932. Secretary of State Arthur Barnes had prepared a report on the nature of records-keeping process with the Executive Council since 1898. See GN1.1.7, Box 34, despatch, 181/32, Barnes to Middleton 21 Mar. 1932.

13 On the police investigation into the 5 April disturbance, see RPA, GN13/1/B, Box 453, file "Re Riots at House of Assembly (1932)."

14 William Ford Coaker (1871–1938), President of the Fishermen's Protective Union, 1908–26, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 1919–23, and Minister without portfolio, 1928–32. On Coaker's claim, see Middleton note dated 21 Apr. 1932 in RPA, GN1.3.A, Box 151, despatch 349/32. On Coaker, see Ian H. McDonald, *"To Each His Own": William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908–1925* (St. John's: ISER Books, 1987); Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*; Melvin Baker, "William Ford Coaker, the Formative Years, 1871–1908," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 225–66.

15 RPA, GN1.3.A, Box 151, despatch 349/32, Middleton note dated 6

Apr. 1932 and Hutchings to Middleton, 9 Apr. 1932; Dominions Office Newfoundland Correspondence, DO35/461, 1932, C.G.L.S. to Sir Clive Wigram, 16 Apr. 1932, available at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University Libraries.

16 Frederick Alderdice (1871–1936), Prime Minister of Newfoundland, 1928 and 1932–34. See Doug Letto, *Newfoundland's Last Prime Minister: Frederick Alderdice and the Death of a Nation* (Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, NL: Boulder Publications, 2014); Jeff A. Webb, "Alderdice, Frederick Charles Munro," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/alderdice_frederick_charles_munro_16E.html.

17 Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 199. On Newfoundland's dependency on the Royal Navy for security, see D035/461, despatch 20470/22, annex no. 3, memorandum dated 5 May 1932, and 20470/23, Report of the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. *Dragon*, dated 21 Apr. 1932; Melvin Baker, "'Unlawful Assembly': The Royal Navy and the Flat Islands Protests, 1919," *The Greenspond Letter* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 18–24.

18 RPA, GN1.3.A, Box 151; despatch 349/32, Middleton memorandum dated 5 May 1932 and notes by Middleton dated 6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 19, 21 Apr., 5 May 1932. The reaction of the Dominions Office to the memorandum is in DO35/470, despatch 20470/22.

19 These despatches are in RPA, GN1.1.7, for 1932.

20 Other than the contemporary newspaper accounts of the 1932 proceedings, the debates were not published until 2010. See James Hiller, ed., *The Debates of the Newfoundland Legislature, 1932–1933*, 2 vols. (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 2010).

21 Lewis Edward Emerson (1890–1949), MHA Placentia East, 1928–32, St. John's East, 1932–34, Minister of Justice, 1932–34.

22 Harris M. Mosdell (1883–1944), medical doctor, journalist, and MHA Fortune Bay, 1926–34, Minister without portfolio, 1928–32, Secretary, Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1932–44.

23 Philip J. Lewis (1900–85), Minister without portfolio, 1928–32. On his resignation, see RPA, GN1.3.A, Box 151, despatch 310/32, Lewis to Squires, 28 Mar. 1932.

24 Led by Liberal Prime Minister Sir Richard Squires.

25 Percy Thompson (1872–1946).

26 R.J. Magor, a Montreal industrialist and financier appointed by the Newfoundland government in 1931 to examine public expenditures. He had previously been connected with the Canadian-owned iron ore mines at Bell Island. See Neary, "'That Thin Red Cord of Sentiment and of Blood'," 15. Magor's interim report is in the *Evening Telegram*, 10 Feb. 1932.

27 Arthur English (1878–1940), journalist and farmer. See John Cheeseman, "'Mr. English Writes Again': How a Local Naturalist Responded to Resource Development and P.T. McGrath's *Newfoundland in 1911*" (unpublished History 6999 paper, History Department, Memorial University, 2008).

28 John Chalker Crosbie (1876–1932), Minister of Finance and Customs, 1924–28. See Melvin Baker, "Crosbie, Sir John Chalker," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/crosbie_john_chalker_16E.html.

29 Cyril Joseph Cahill (1883–1971). On Cahill's legal difficulties, see *Daily News*, 9 Jan., 20 Feb. 1932; *Evening Telegram*, 19 Feb. 1932.

30 James J. McGrath (1857–1934), President of the Longshoremen's Protective Union, 1905–20. See Sean T. Cadigan, "McGrath, James," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mcgrath_james_16E.html.

31 Harry Anderson Winter (1889–1969), MHA Port de Grave, 1923–24, Harbour Grace, 1932–34, and Minister without portfolio, 1932–34. See H.A. Winter, "Memoirs of Harry Anderson Winter, Part III," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (summer 1976): 17–22.

32 William R. Warren (1879–1927), Minister of Justice, 1919–24, Prime Minister of Newfoundland, 1923–24.

33 William Ewart Godfrey (1880–1935), Church of England minister at St. Thomas' Church, St. John's, 1924–35. See his obituary in the *Daily News* and *Evening Telegram*, 25 Nov. 1935.

34 William Henry Horwood (1862–1945), Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, 1902–44.

35 This was the "Harbour Grace Affray" when a parade by the local lodge of the Loyal Orange Association through the Roman Catholic portion of Harbour Grace on Boxing Day 1883 resulted in physical confrontation and the deaths of five people and 18 individuals wounded. See Fox, *The Newfoundland Constabulary*, 60–68.

36 Tasker Cook (1867–1937), Mayor of St. John's, 1921–29, Minister without portfolio, 1928–32.

37 Brian E.S. Dunfield (1888–1968), admitted to the Newfoundland Bar in 1911, Secretary for Justice, 1934–39, Supreme Court Justice, 1939–60.

38 John Hubert Penson (1893–1979), British financial adviser to the Newfoundland government.

39 Lamont Patterson, Royal Newfoundland Regiment veteran. His military record is available at https://www.therooms.ca/thegreatwar/in-depth/military-service-files/database.

40 Frederick Walter Marshall (1891–1959), Royal Newfoundland Regiment veteran and automotive businessman. His military record is available at https://www.therooms.ca/thegreatwar/in-depth/military-service-files/database. While Patterson and Marshall supported the sending of a naval ship, Great War Veterans' Association executive member Richard Howley, who had served in the Royal Navy, opposed a warship. Inspector General Hutchings told Middleton that Howley "very emphatically resented a Warship being brought here, and intimated that he was prepared to stand between the Naval Authorities and the people of St. John's, whom he thought should not be checked in their legitimate rights by the demonstration of such a force." See RPA, GN1.3.A, Box 151, despatch 349/32, Hutchings to Middleton, 9 Apr. 1932.