

# AGAINST CONMEE CLAUSES.

## THEY WILL GO TO THE NEW MUNICIPAL BOARD.

### Toronto Bill Again Before the Municipal Committee of the Legislature—The Assessment of Small Telephone Lines.

The Municipal Committee of the Legislature resumed consideration of the city of Toronto's bill yesterday. The clause giving the Council power to regulate signs or other advertising on buildings or vacant lots was approved. The clause proposing in effect the repeal of what are popularly known as the "Conmee clauses," which provide that before entering upon the establishment of municipal-owned utilities, such as gas, water, power and heat, municipalities must first negotiate for the purchase of existing private plants within their boundaries, were struck out, but not because the committee was opposed to the idea. Mr. Preston (Brant) was of opinion that, while there had been in the past a good deal to say in favor of protecting existing companies from injustice, the Legislature had no right to protect them against the advance of science. If there was to be municipal transmission and distribution of electrical energy, and there was a tendency toward that, the clauses might be found to constitute an insurmountable obstacle. He suggested that the Conmee clauses be referred to the Railway and Municipal Board to be created by the Government's new measure for consideration and report.

Hon. Mr. Hanna said this was in line with a suggestion made by Premier Whitney last session. They could not refer the clauses to the board until that body was created, but they could recommend that it be done. This was approved of.

Mr. Preston also suggested that the board should be recommended to devise a uniform system of bookkeeping in respect to municipal-owned utilities.

The Committee approved the clause authorizing the Park Commissioner to remove trees after giving 48 hours' notice; such notice to be left at the buildings in front of which the trees stand, in case the owners of the property cannot be located within the time named. Another clause passed provides that Councils of cities have power to compel persons to destroy tussock moths and cocoons thereof on trees or elsewhere upon premises owned or occupied by them. Where such is not done within ten days civic officers of the Councils may do the work and the owner or occupant of the premises must bear the expense.

The clause giving power to municipalities to prevent the sale of fruit from waggons, carts, baskets, etc., upon such streets or portions thereof as appears desirable was strongly supported by Mr. E. M. Trowern, Secretary of the Retail Merchants' Association. The clause was held over. So, also, was the clause giving municipalities the same power in cases where it is necessary to construct pavements and assets the cost against the property affected, as is now the case in respect to sidewalks.

Mr. Munro's bill to amend the assessment act in relation to telephone companies carried. It provides that the lines of telephone systems chartered to operate in specified localities shall be assessed in every township through which they run at their actual value, but not exceeding on the whole the rate per mile as set out in the general act, which is \$135.

At the present time the lines are uniformly assessed and this, it is held, is a hardship in the case of cheaply constructed lines for purely local purposes.

The committee held over the measure introduced by Mr. Preston (Brant) enabling Municipal Councils to issue debentures for buying fire appliances.