

ment bill came up for its third reading Mr. T. H. Preston moved: "That the bill be not now read the third time, but be forthwith referred back to the Committee of the Whole House, with instructions to insert the clause therein to amend section 24 of the act passed in the sixth year of his Majesty's reign, chaptered 47, by striking out in the said section the word "three-fifths" wherever it appears therein and substituting therefor the words "a majority."

He said it had not been satisfactorily explained by the Government why such an obstacle as the three-fifths clause should be placed in the way of local option. The clause was an infringement of a principle which had been in existence since confederation, that the people should decide such questions by a majority vote. Even the party organs of the Government took that view, and stated that a prohibitory law could be enforced if it were desired to do so. They were told that the real reason for the clause was to secure permanence. "But," he said, "it has been found, in the testing time, that where the local option by-laws have carried by a bare majority vote they have been maintained." Proceeding, Mr. Preston drew down on himself the wrath of the Premier by saying that the three-fifths clause was "un-American." Mr. Whitney protested that the Government was very properly un-American, to which Mr. Preston retorted that in prison labor reform and other schemes the Government had copied from examples across the line. Proceeding, Mr. Preston said that local option had come from across the line, where it was almost universal, and had come into power on a bare majority vote.

Mr. Macdiarmid (Elgin)—Was local option no good before this Government came into power?

Mr. Preston—At that time the temperance people were not calling for local option, but knocking at the door of this Legislature for prohibition.

Proceeding, Mr. Preston said that Manitoba had recently abandoned the three-fifths clause. Prince Edward Island had prohibition, Nova Scotia three-fifths, Saskatchewan three-fifths, Alberta three-fifths, and the entire Dominion a bare majority. In Queensland a two-thirds majority governed the increase of licenses; Victoria, a majority; South Australia, Newfoundland and the Transvaal a bare majority. Ontario prided itself that on temperance questions the Province was in advance of the majority of British colonies. He thought it a pity that they should be marking time instead of taking a step in advance.

A Defence.

Hon. W. J. Hanna said that when the Government came into power they found a local option law had been on the statute book for thirty years, but local option only in force in six or seven municipalities. At that time because local option was passed by a bare majority the interests opposed to it immediately set to work to discredit it with a view to its repeal at the first opportunity. With the three-fifths clause there was behind the by-law a strength of sentiment which assisted in its enforcement. The adoption of local option by municipalities which failed to enforce it did a great injury to the temperance cause, and therefore it was desirable that it should only be adopted under conditions which would make for its permanency and enforcement. In the elections of 1907 and 1908 there was much not only to encourage the temperance people, but the Government. Those elections showed, he said, that local option had at last come to stay in the municipalities, and where it was enacted it was being enforced by a Government which was in

earnest.

He pointed out that many of the Churches in Canada had the same principle in their constitution.

In conclusion he said the Government intended giving the three-fifths clause a fair trial.

Mr. Preston's amendment was lost by a vote of 21 to 55. Mr. Studholme voting with the Opposition.

Third Readings.

To amend the Ontario game and fisheries act, Hon. Dr. Reaume; respecting local municipal telephone systems, Hon. Dr. Reaume; to amend the public schools act, Hon. Dr. Pyne; to amend the act for the improvement of public highways, Hon. Dr. Reaume; respecting the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Mr. Foy; for the protection and reformation of neglected children, Hon. Mr. Hanna; to amend the liquor license act, Hon. Mr. Hanna; respecting the weekly court, Mr. Hodgins; to amend the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board act, Colonel Hendrie; to incorporate the town of Keewatin.

What Do the People Get?

The Ontario Government yesterday announced that it was proposed to guarantee the bonds of the James Bay Railway to the extent of a million and a half of dollars for extensions totalling about fifty miles, and for proposed terminals in Toronto and elsewhere. The James Bay Railway, as every one knows, is Wm. Mackenzie and D. D. Mann. These gentlemen also constitute the controlling interest in the Electrical Development Company, which is the chief obstacle in the way of carrying out Mr. Beck's policy of publicly owned pole lines for the distribution of electric energy from Niagara at cost. Premier Whitney and Mr. Wm. Mackenzie, if they were both in earnest, would come to an arrangement in an hour by which the duplication of pole lines between Niagara and this city and of distribution plants within Toronto could be avoided and a great waste of capital prevented.

Mr. Whitney has lent Mr. Mackenzie the Province's name on a note for \$1,500,000. It would be interesting to know whether he tried to get anything in return for the municipalities along the line of the Electrical Development Company's pole lines. The Premier has been profuse in his professions of a desire to serve the municipalities. He had a splendid chance to do so when he sat down to discuss this guarantee. When Mr. Whitney met Mr. Mackenzie what did the Premier say to advance the cause of publicly owned electrical transmission lines? Mr. Mackenzie comes away smiling with this huge bond guarantee from the people.

WHAT DO THE PEOPLE GET?