

# TELEPHONE ACT FOR ONTARIO

## Legislature Approves Proposal to Take Control.

### HON. MACKAY'S COUNSEL

## Advises Province to Supplement Dominion Act.

### Hon. Mr. Foy Promises a Revised Division Court Act — Mr. Bowyer After Vicious Dogs—Proposed In- spection of Slaughter Houses — Busy Sitting of Legislature.

Ontario is to have a Provincial telephone act. The Legislature will place upon the statute books at the present session a measure which, as pointed out by Hon. A. G. MacKay, the Liberal leader, supplements the action of the Dominion Parliament. Under the co-operative acts the public will have control of the entire telephone service.

The bill of Mr. Sam. Charters of Peel was endorsed by both sides of the House at the Legislative sitting yesterday. As previously intimated in *The Globe*, it proposes to place the control of all independent companies and concerns in the hands of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board, in similar terms to the Federal measure which commits the jurisdiction of the trunk lines to the Dominion Railway Commission. It will be entrusted to a special legislative committee for final revision, with a view to putting its provisions in permanent form.

#### Object of the Bill.

In submitting the measure for its second reading the member for Peel said its primary object was to secure co-operation among rural companies in providing an efficient service to the public. The rural telephone enterprises had grown to remarkable proportions in Ontario. There were in this Province at the present time more than double the number of rural telephones than there were of Bell telephones in the three Provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan when these Provinces took over the systems. The situation, he submitted, demanded Provincial attention.

"This bill," said he, "does not aim to crowd out or knock anyone. It seeks merely to meet the requirements of the rural districts and to break down monopoly. It hopes to make the 'phone system of Ontario as complete and efficient as possible. It opens the way for long-distance connections at one-half the present rates. It desires to secure the co-operation of companies and to guard against combination."

Messrs. T. R. Mayberry (South Oxford) and Daniel Reed (South Wentworth) bespoke their approval.

#### The Government's Position.

Hon. I. B. Lucas, speaking for the Government, endorsed the principle of the bill. The divided jurisdiction, he pointed out, made the telephone question a somewhat difficult one to deal with. The Federal authorities controlled the Bell, while hundreds of small rural systems were under the jurisdiction of the Province. The Dominion Government, after an exhaustive investigation, had decided that it was not wise to embark on the public ownership of telephones.

"We need a new Government at Ottawa—one that has some backbone," interpolated Mr. Allan Studholme, the Labor man,

amid laughter and applause.

"That is not now our business," quoth the Minister. "Our business is to make the best of conditions here."

"Why not regulate the whole thing, or take it over," persisted the Labor man.

#### Position of the Province.

"It is for the Federal Government to take the first step in that direction," was Mr. Lucas' comment. "We have not jurisdiction unless the Federal authorities were to hand over to the Province the control of rates, the power of expropriation and what not. We are seeking to make the best of conditions here. That is our job for the present." The present bill would, the Minister added, at least prevent the making of contracts between the Bell and independent companies for exclusive service, and would, he was satisfied, result in a wonderful development of the independent telephone movement all over Ontario.

#### Liberal Leader Speaks.

Hon. A. G. MacKay bespoke his support of the bill. It was along right lines. It supplemented what the Dominion Government had already done. The Dominion had committed the control of the trunk lines to the Railway Commission. Ontario was giving to the Ontario Board the control of Ontario companies.

"Thus we will have," observed the Liberal leader, "the maximum of control without a dollar of public money invested. Under these conditions it will be our own fault if we do not get efficient and fair service. Both are business boards and, acting in concert, they should secure a good and satisfactory general system."

The measure carried amid applause from both sides of the House.

#### Mr. Baby Has no Claim.

In response to questions by Capt. Machin (Kenora), Hon. Mr. Foy stated that the alleged claims of one W. W. Baby for reimbursement of law costs paid by him in the suit of the Attorney-General

v. Cameron had been examined in January, 1903, by a former Attorney-General and again in May, 1907, by the present Attorney-General. In the opinion of both Ministers there was no ground for the claim made.

Hon. Mr. Hanna introduced the Ontario drainage act. The Minister stated that the measure was a consolidation of existing statutes.

#### To Do Drainage Work.

The bill of Mr. A. Ferguson (Simcoe) to amend the ditches and watercourses act by increasing the limit of the amount municipalities may spend on such works from \$1,000 to \$1,500 was approved.

Hon. Mr. MacKay gave the measure hearty support. "The cost is light, the procedure simple and all parties are well protected," he said, adding that the legislation was careful and inexpensive. He would not quarrel with a proposition to raise the figure to \$2,000.

#### Inspect Slaughter-houses.

The bill of Mr. W. H. Hearst to amend the public health act by giving municipalities power to inspect slaughter-houses in other municipalities which supply meat to their citizens, occasioned some discussion. Sir James Whitney was afraid of clashes over rival municipal authority. Hon. Mr. MacKay pointed out that under existing conditions a wrong was suffered. It was the business of the Legislature to right wrongs. If the present bill did not do this the committee should seek to evolve a measure which would accomplish the purpose.

Mr. J. Kohler (Haldimand) thought that while the aim of the bill was good it did not proceed on wise lines. He advocated Provincial inspection. "There is as much necessity for the Provincial inspection of slaughter-houses as for the inspection of milk at the present time," he submitted. The bill was sent to committee.

#### After Vicious Dogs.

Mr. P. H. Bowyer (East Kent) waged war on the vicious dog by the increased taxation on canines provided in his bill. It was designed, he said, primarily to pro-

tect sleep.

"Is your proposal for revenue or protection?" asked the Premier.

"For protection," replied Mr. Bowyer.

The Minister of Agriculture said the bill had sufficient merit to be sent on to committee. Sir James Whitney did not see how the tax would provide protection. The bill passed.

#### New Division Court Act.

The bill of Dr. Anderson (South Essex) to enlarge the jurisdiction of Division Courts was allowed to stand, at the request of Hon. Mr. Foy. The Attorney-General stated that the Government were submitting a bill to deal with Division Courts, and all these matters would be given consideration. "It must not be forgotten," observed the Minister, that the Division Court was designed as the poor man's court."

#### Returns to the Attack.

Mr. Studholme is returning to the attack on the Government's immigration policy. He has given notice of motion for a return showing how many emigrants the Salvation Army brought out from Great Britain and Ireland during the season of 1909, and all particulars as to their permanent settlement and occupation.

Mr. Valentine Stock has given notice that he will ask for a return showing the details of Provincial loans to municipalities for drainage purposes.

Mr. Wm. Proudfoot will move for an order of the House for a return showing the total amount paid for inspection and overseeing work done on and building colonization roads during the years 1908 and 1909.

Mr. Studholme will also ask how many domestic servants J. W. Rigby sent to the Province during the year 1909, and for details concerning them.

#### The Speaker's Dinner.

## WANT GOVERNMENT LOAN.

### INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL MANAGERS NEED \$25,000.

#### Will Ask Ontario Government for This Amount for Purpose of Erecting Additional Cottage and Improving Conditions of Buildings.

A new cottage is needed at the Victoria Industrial School, as the cottages there are overcrowded to the extent of accommodating about fifty boys, instead of only thirty or thirty-five, and the Board of Management yesterday decided to ask the Ontario Government for a loan of \$25,000. The Board decided that a cottage would cost \$20,000, and another \$5,000 would be required to put the barns and other buildings in proper condition. "I think we shall not be able to repay the loan," smilingly remarked the Chairman, Mr. G. Tower Fergusson, "and it is likely to be permanent." It was explained that the Government could not make a grant, as it was a private institution, but there was nothing to prevent the Government from lending the desired \$25,000.

There are 250 boys at the Victoria Industrial School, and five cottages accommodate them all. Superintendent Ferrier stated that since the closing of the Reformatory at Penetanguishene the attendance at the Victoria School had been increased by about fifty boys each year.