

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 1910.

MEMBERS WANT MORE INDEMNITY

Matters Under Discussion in Conservative Caucus.

VOTER'S QUALIFICATIONS.

Toronto Wants Reduction in Assessment Requirement.

Towns and Small Cities Should be Similarly Favored, Says Mr. McDougall — Government Given Power to Extend T. and N. O. Into Porcupine District.

Prior to the Legislature sitting of yesterday, the Conservative members of the House held a lengthy caucus with their Ministers. It was the first party conference of the session, and several important matters are understood to have been under consideration.

Increased Sessional Indemnity.

The conference is understood to have dealt with matters of unusual importance. The question of an increased indemnity to the members, which has long been mooted, was at length broached in a formal manner. The suggestion was that the present allowance of \$1,000 per session should be increased to \$1,500. Those who favor the advance point out that many members, notably those from the more remote constituencies of the north, find it difficult under existing conditions to secure a fair allowance for their time and services, while the cost of living in Toronto is now, they state, a serious item.

The members are not unanimous on the question. This fact and the fact that the supplementary estimates for the present year have already been prepared and submitted enabled the Government to escape an immediate dealing with the question. The promoters had to content themselves this year with an "educational campaign."

To Centralize License Authority.

Another matter of importance which, it is understood, came before the caucus was the problem which confronts the Government in the administration of the present license system. It is believed that the Provincial Secretary is prepared, on the approval of the local members, to proceed with the much-discussed proposal to centralize the licensing authority in Ontario. Two plans are believed to be in contemplation, one to establish one central and independent Board of License Commissioners, to assume charge of the entire license system for the Province; the second to proceed by experimental stages by establishing one such board to handle the license situation in the whole of northern Ontario.

Both plans intimately affect the disposition of local patronage, hence the necessity for the concurrence of the individual members. The caucus was assured that no drastic legislation in reference to the license law was contemplated at the present session, but the members will take the intervening twelvemonth to "size up the situation" locally.

Do Not Favor Expropriation.

Toronto's bills, particularly the clauses thereof affecting the railway situation, are understood to have

been under discussion. The chance for legislative endorsement of the proposal to expropriate the street railway seems to be slim. Other municipal private bills were briefly discussed where they involved a question of public policy. The proposition to combat proposals to exempt from school taxation, except in the most exceptional cases, as previously outlined by Sir James Whitney, was endorsed.

The special committee of which Hon. I. B. Lucas is Chairman, appointed to review the measure submitted by Mr. Sam Charters (Peel), and draft an Ontario telephone act, met last evening for organization. An arrangement was made for a meeting on Friday at 1 o'clock for the purpose of hearing representations from the various telephone companies interested.

Statement Untrue, Says Premier.

Before the House settled down to business Premier Whitney arose to call the attention of the members to a statement that appeared in a morning newspaper. "The statement," said Sir James, "is to the effect that the officials of the Ontario Agricultural College threatened to resign, and that because they threatened to resign the Government granted them increases in salary. Nothing could be further from the truth. To my knowledge no threat of resigning was ever made. If one had been, the resignation would have been accepted. The Government found that these gentlemen were entitled to the increases, and gave them."

To Regulate Statute Labor.

Mr. W. H. Hearst (Sault Ste. Marie) secured the second reading of his bill to amend the act respecting statute labor. Mr. Hearst explained that the act at present was ambiguous. Statute labor is assessed on each parcel of land of two hundred acres or less, but in the mining divisions of the north one man may hold numerous properties of only 40 acres, for each of which under the act as at present he is liable to do a full share of statute labor. Mr. Hearst pointed out that his bill aims to remedy this inequality, and puts the basis of statute labor at two hundred acres, whether held in one lot or several. Hon. Mr. Hanna added that the present act was defective, and the bill went on to the Municipal Committee.

Hospital Bill Withdrawn.

The attempt of the city hospitals to make outside municipalities shoulder the cost of treatment of penniless persons sent in by these municipalities was favorably considered, but, nevertheless, the bill framed by Mr. Frupp (Ottawa) with that end in view died suddenly. The member from Ottawa in introducing the bill pointed out that the small municipalities were imposing upon the city hospitals by sending in patients who were unable to pay their own expenses. When asked to reimburse the hospitals they ignored the requests.

Hon. Mr. Hanna remarked that the introducing of the bill would have an educational effect and would perhaps bring the municipalities to realize their duty in this respect. He thought, however, that these places should have an opportunity to make representations on the matter. At some future date a bill of this kind might receive the sanction of the House. "Mr. Frupp," he concluded, "omitted to say that that was his wish." The member for Ottawa did what he was expected to do and the bill was withdrawn.

The New Medical Act.

The Ontario medical amendment act, introduced by Dr. R. F. Preston (Lanark), was given its second reading, and will now be considered by a special committee composed of Hon. Dr. Pyne and the following private members: Ferguson (Grenville), Preston (Durham), Dr. Smellie (Fort William), McGarry (South Renfrew), Bowman (North Bruce), Dr. Godfrey (West York), Tudhope (East Simcoe), Shaw (North Toronto), Dr. Mackay (North Oxford), and its sponsor. The provisions of the new act have already been outlined, and are the substance of the recommendations made by the Medical Council.

To Lower Voters' Qualifications.

The problem that has confronted Toronto in adding to its boundaries was introduced to the Legislature by Mr. W. D. McPherson (West To-