

LIBERALS SCORE AT HARD WORK

Were Factors in Dealing With Assessment Act.

NEW POWER LEGISLATION.

Government Acts on Milk Com- mission's Report.

Hon. Mr. MacKay Makes Gallant Fight for the Cause of Cheap Legislation —Col. Hugh Clark Clashes With the Premier—The Labor Man and the Widows—Work Done by Can- adian Northern on the Clay Belt.

While the band of Legislative members who represent the cause of Liberalism in Ontario's Parliament may be small numerically, they are proving themselves industrious and efficient. This was particularly in evidence yesterday, when, under the vigorous leadership of Hon. A. G. MacKay, they led the discussion on the new assessment act. While the earnest efforts of the Liberal leader to secure a better understanding of the scope and meaning of the clause affecting the taxation of private institutions of learning was unavailing, he succeeded in winning the House to a couple of important revisions, calculated to mete out equity and justice.

New Power Legislation.

Two important Government measures were introduced by Hon. Adam Beck. The first of these—an amendment to the Hydro-electric Commission act—provides that in the case of securing lands or easements, failing an agreement between the parties as to the price, the provisions of the public works act shall apply, and an arbitration as provided by the public works act shall determine the amount in question. Another clause gives the commission power to regulate and control the installation of municipal systems, while a third confirms the commission's contracts with Hamilton and Tillsonburg.

The second bill of the Minister of Power was along the lines previously outlined in *The Globe*. In order to meet conditions which have arisen—in one case to serve an elevator with power—the bill provides that it will be no longer necessary to secure a vote of the ratepayers of the county or township to construct public utility connections when the by-law has been approved by the county or township Council and confirmed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

In Quest of Pure Milk.

The first result of the investigations and report of the Provincial Milk Commission was evidenced by the introduction by Hon. Mr. Duff of a Government measure to amend the municipal act.

The act is designed to secure pure milk for the consumers, and aims to remedy conditions which have more or less generally obtained, by giving the consuming municipalities the right to protect their citizens. The bill empowers cities and towns to license and regulate milk vendors and to inspect places where milk is produced or handled, whether in the municipality or elsewhere. It also gives power to

revoke the license if the commodity is not handled under clean, suitable and sanitary conditions, or if the animals are not properly fed and cared for.

The measure, which was given a first reading, is believed to be initial legislation. Other enactments based on the report of the Commission will probably follow next year, when the Government has had sufficient time and opportunity to deal with all the points raised.

Settling the Clay Belt.

In response to the inquiries of Mr. J. W. Johnson (Hastings), Hon. Dr. Reaume tabled a return showing progress made in developing and colonizing the clay belt. As a result of the grant of last session the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway have constructed and operated thirty miles of railway from Sellwood Junction in Hutton township in a northerly direction. Four survey parties are in the field between the completed portion and Port Arthur. About seventy persons are engaged in the four parties.

Fight For Cheap Education.

The result of the work of the special committee on assessment, which met between sessions, came before the House in the form of a new assessment act, and the consideration of its clauses occupied practically the whole afternoon. The clause making all colleges or similar institutions, which are run on a business basis, subject to business assessment, proved a knot-point and brought forth objections in many quarters, although the enactment was finally carried.

Hon. A. G. MacKay thought that the act in this regard should have been left as it was. The Government was making a change in a statute that had stood for nearly a quarter of a century. He pointed out that in the case where tenants had leased properties for a number of years injustice would result. These persons had entered into contracts calling for the paying of a higher rental with assurance

that the properties, being used for educational work, would not be subject to assessment. They had made the contracts believing that the law would be continued. According to the clause they would, in a sense, be called upon to pay double. "I believe," said the Liberal leader, "in erring on the side of leniency rather than that of severity."

Safety-valves of Province.

Hon. Mr. MacKay was vigorous in championing the cause of these colleges and seminaries. He emphasized the work they were doing. They were, as he expressed it, "a safety-valve for the whole Province, where children could be educated who would not do well in the public schools." He hoped that the section would be dropped. Toronto was the only city that would be materially affected, and he did not believe that the City Council would come forward and say that, for the sake of the picayune taxes that would be received, they would desire to have this clause adopted. He declared that the most of these colleges and seminaries seldom made any money. In many years they actually went behind, yet on the rare occasion that they had a small surplus they would be asked to hand over a portion of it.

After Business Colleges.

Hon. Mr. Hanna, in reply, stated that the clause was inserted more to take in business colleges, which made no pretension of working with any public spirit. If these colleges made very little money the clause would not affect them seriously. In the case of the larger colleges, any difficulty in this connection could be overcome by following a course such as that of Upper Canada College and St. Andrew's, of putting the college in trust. In this way every dollar made goes back for the general benefit of the institution.

The Liberal leader accepted this solution, but claimed that his other objection carried sufficient force to warrant the rejection of the clause. To change the whole basis on which landlords and tenants had made contracts would be a "monstrous thing to do."

Not Considering Special Cases.

Sir James took a hand in the discussion. It was an unusual position, he claimed, to say that matters of legislation should be affected by what would occur in particular instances.

"The greatest good for the greatest number" was the purpose that should guide them. The whole matter had been discussed by the special committee, and its best judgment was incorporated in the bill. It was out of the question to change it for a few individual cases. The Liberal leader insisted that there should be a saving clause for the protection of tenants or the shifting of the burden to the shoulders of the landlord, but the clause went through without amendment.

Plea For the Trainmen.

The clause to raise the income exemption from \$1,000 to \$1,200 in cities and from \$700 to \$900 in towns and villages was productive of considerable difference of opinion. Mr. J. W. Johnston (West Hastings) urged that the claims of the trainmen for special consideration be recognized. Trainmen, by reason of the special nature of their occupation, had double expenses.

Hon. Mr. MacKay was opposed to setting aside one particular class. It was, he thought, a matter for the railways to deal with. Surely, he observed, the railway companies, in paying their men, took into consideration the fact that some men had greater expenses than others.

Hon. Mr. Hanna—That is what happens.

Claims of the Storekeepers.

The Liberal leader said he had heard that the exemptions were too large, but he thought there was a large number of small storekeepers and dealers in the country who would find it quite difficult enough to pay their taxes even at the increased exemption.

Mr. A. E. Fripp (West Ottawa) supported the claims of the trainmen. In his argument he said that the trainmen had to work 365 days a year.

Hon. Mr. MacKay—Do you mean to say they work seven days a week?

"Well, they are liable to. They have to work when they are called upon to do so," answered Mr. Fripp.

Hon. Mr. MacKay—They have as much time off as any men in Canada. The great body of the trainmen did not, he thought, want to be the subject of class legislation.

Hon. Mr. Hanna cleared the cloud somewhat by exclaiming that the wording of the act already stipulated that a person was only assessable on his net income, which would meet the objection raised by Mr. Johnston and Mr. Fripp.

Colonel Hugh Clark—The clause is all right if it is explained fully.

Case of the Widow.

Mr. J. McEwing (West Wellington) brought up the cause of people non-house-holders, whose incomes were exempt up to only \$300. He wanted the exemption raised to \$500. He was backed up by Mr. Allan Studholme, the Labor member, who put in a plea for the "poor widow." The members of the Government were hard-hearted, however, and even Mr. McEwing's own colleagues opposed him.

Mr. D. Reed (South Wentworth) considered that raising the exemption for these people would put an additional burden upon others less able to pay. "Most of these people with an income of \$300 or over have about \$15,000 in the bank that they are getting it from," he said.

"I wish you were a widow," was Mr. Studholme's parting thrust directed at Hon. Mr. Hanna, as the clause was passed.

Liberal Leader Wins Point.

Hon. A. G. MacKay secured an important amendment to the clause affecting lands in towns. According to the change secured by the Liberal leader, in the case of such lands, when really farm lands, the owner does not need to give a notice requiring lower assessment every year, one notice sufficing for all succeeding years.

Brush With the Premier.

Sir James Whitney learned, ere the committee rose, that he had one militant follower in the House who is not prepared to accept his convictions spoon-fed. Colonel Hugh Clark (Centre Bruce), who had earlier in the discussion joined the Opposition leader in maintaining that many