

GOVERNMENT SILENT ON IMPORTANT POINTS

No Word About Tax Reform or Anti-treating

CRITICISM OF OPPOSITION

People Led to Expect Legislation, Declares Mr. Marshall in Resumption of Debate—Mr. Munro Points to Western Benefits.

Although Mr. Elliott's tax reform amendment to the address in reply to the speech from the Throne stands, on the resumption of the debate in the Legislature yesterday there was little curtailment of discussion. The Speaker allowed wide latitude to both Opposition and Government members. Tax reform and anti-treating were the principal points of criticism in the speeches of the Opposition members. The people of the Province had been led to believe from the speeches of the Prime Minister and Provincial Secretary on the temperance discussion last session that legislation would be announced, declared Mr. Marshall (Monck), and yet nothing had been heard of it. Strangely enough none of the Government supporters who spoke essayed any excuse. A defence of the temperance policy of the Administration seems to be tabooed, and only furtive references are made to tax reform. Entrenchment means everything, and the Conservative speakers take every advantage of eulogy and excuse.

Mr. Hugh Munro (Glengarry) contributed valuable material to the discussion. He spoke from the point of view of a manufacturer and a man whose observation had enabled him to reach sound conclusion.

What the Speech Omitted.

Mr. Thomas Marshall (Monck) said the address from the Throne was not so much an address as a testimonial, and as a testimonial, it was more valuable for the things it omitted to say than for the things it said. There were two important omissions in the speech. No mention was made in it of the question of anti-treating legislation or of tax reform. The people were looking for some announcement on the vital issue of temperance. The statements of the Premier and of the Provincial Secretary last year left no room for doubt, thought Mr. Marshall, who quoted from speeches by Sir James Whitney and Hon. W. J. Hanna.

"What paper?" asked Mr. T. L. McGarry (South Renfrew).

"They are from a publication, the head offices of which are in the Confederation Life building," replied Mr. Marshall. "I do not wonder at the honorable member asking that question, for it is probably not on his file."

Referring to the omission of any mention of the tax reform movement in the address, the member for

Monck spoke of the close attention and study given to this problem by J. A. Ellis, Conservative member for Ottawa West, and of the sacrifices which it inevitably involved for Mr. Ellis to disagree with his party. It was only an indication, he said, of the way the wind was blowing. "There have been presented to the Government petitions from organizations all over the Province and other countries are taking up this matter, and I fail to see why the Government should hesitate in this matter."

W. S. Brewster (South Brant) reviewed the record of the present Government in the matter of assessment reform, and referred to the special committee appointed by the Legislature in 1909 to consider the question. He wanted to know why the Opposition were so anxious for tax reform. "This new movement," he said, "has been brought about by an agitation started by newspaper clippings, which were mailed to various parts of the Province. Let me say here that it will require more than these clippings and this mode of propaganda to shake our confidence in and love for the Premier of this Province."

The "Stunted Poplar."

Mr. Wm. McDonald (Centre Bruce) was given little peace by the Conservative members. "North Bay" greeted him when he rose, and he at once admitted that he had revised his view that northern Ontario was the land of the "stunted poplar," as proclaimed by Sir James Whitney when in Opposition.

"I never said anything of the kind," interrupted the Premier.

"That was my impression," replied the man from Bruce.

"Ah," said Sir James, "the honorable gentleman is guided by impressions."

Confining his criticisms to the lack of progress towards assessment reform, Mr. McDonald reiterated his plea for the granting of the principle of local option in taxation to municipalities. The voters in the municipalities were best able to judge whether a differential assessment between improvements and land would work beneficially. He was prepared to admit that not 10 per cent. of the land in Bruce county was held for speculation, and that was more reason why the right of choice should not be given to the voters.

What About the 16,000?

The member for Centre Huron (Mr. Musgrove), continued Mr. McDonald, had read out of the party, The Ottawa Citizen. Why not continue the work and read out as well The Toronto World, and the 16,000 voters in Toronto who had voted for a change in the assessment law?

"Of course, the question would not get that majority at election time, because the city is controlled too much by societies," he said.

"Name, name," cried several members amid general laughter.

Mr. McDonald had no doubt that the rank and file of the Government members were in favor of a change in the assessment law, and appealed to them to take a business view of the question.

Mr. John L. Hart (East Simcoe) twitted Mr. Rowell with trying to find nicknames for the Prime Minister, which, however, would not hurt either the Government or Sir James. He charged the leader of the Opposition with inconsistency in the recent East Middlesex campaign, claiming that Mr. Rowell had forestalled the probable action of the temperance people by placing a disgruntled Conservative in the field. Only one question, he said, could worry the Opposition at a time. Last year it was the abolition of the bar; this year it was tax reform.

Mr. Hugh Munro (Glengarry) congratulated Hon. Mr. Hanna on his