

ASSESSMENT REFORM ONCE MORE REJECTED

Provincial Secretary Says it is No Time for Changes

HINT TO LOCAL ASSESSORS

Claim Made That Present Law Discriminates Against the Working Classes — Speculators Hold Land for Rise in Values.

The Ontario Government in the Legislature yesterday afternoon rejected a bill introduced by Mr. Ham, Liberal member for South Brant, to permit municipalities by a two-thirds vote of their Council or by a majority vote of the electors to raise a larger revenue from the land value and a lesser amount on the improvements on the land.

Hardship to People.

The member for South Brant said there was no reason why the present system should be permitted to go on, to the great detriment of the city and the people. It was too bad that the workingmen of this Province had added to their burdens and that other people who have not created the value in any shape or form should not pay their full share. It was time the Government was beginning to consider reform in the taxation laws of this Province. This had been a plank in the platform of the Reform party for years, but on account of prohibition and other things it had not received the prominence it was entitled to. In the future, he ventured to say, there was going to be more heard of tax reform. Notice should be served upon the speculators, and it was time for the Legislature to make a start in the right direction.

Speculators' Land.

Mr. Allan Studholme (East Hamilton) said they heard a great deal these days about conserving resources, and so, at the time time, they had the strange sight between cities of miles and miles of idle land taxed as farm lands while held by speculators.

Mr. Hurdman (Ottawa) remarked that so far as the city he represented was concerned they were vitally concerned in a bill of this nature. The matter had been before the people there in the shape of a referendum, and the people spoke in no uncertain way as to their desire for what was contained in a bill of that kind. He urged upon the Government to allow a second reading to the measure.

Mr. Mageau (Sturgeon Falls) also spoke in favor of the bill.

A Wide Departure.

Hon. W. D. McPherson, Provincial Secretary, opposed the measure on the ground that it was proposing a very wide departure from the assessment system now in vogue, and the present time was no time to pass a law that would interfere so seriously with existing conditions. "The law as it now stands provides an adequate remedy for the disease complained of by my hon. friend (Mr. Ham), and all one has to do is to call upon the local assessor to perform his duty in connection with the proper taxation of vacant lands," said Mr. McPherson.

Mr. Thomas Marshall (Lincoln) contended the law as it now stands discriminates against the working classes and allows the owners of castles and mansions to get off with lighter taxation, comparatively. He could not see any reason why the bill should not be adopted. If it were, speculators would be compelled to