

TOO MANY RACE-TRACKS ALLOWED IN ESSEX CO.

Mr. Wigle Gets Order for Correspondence

TREASURER MAKES REPLY

Letters Written to Dr. Reaume by
Treasury Department Officer and
Not "Official" Are to be Produced,
Mr. McGarry Says.

The Windsor race track trouble was thrashed out in the Legislature yesterday afternoon when Mr. L. P. Wigle (South Essex) asked for a return of correspondence relating to the Devonshire Race Track Company, and in particular that between Mr. J. T. White, Solicitor to the Provincial Treasury Department, and Hon. Dr. Reaume, former Minister of Public Works.

Hon. T. W. McGarry, Provincial Treasurer, who spoke on behalf of the Government, said certain correspondence had passed between Mr. White and the Hon. Dr. Reaume, but it was personal correspondence and was not on the official file of the department. He had not heard about it until recently. However, he would bring it down to the House on a separate file.

Essex Member's Complaint.

Mr. Wigle said they had plenty of race tracks in the city of Windsor. One race track had been situated there for some years, but last year two more race tracks were established in the locality. Each was operated for 14 days, which made continuous racing in the city of Windsor or in that vicinity for 42 days. Previously there were some of the professional gamblers or sports who came to the city for a few days, but now that they had 42 days' continuous racing they had all the professional gamblers and crooks of the two countries coming to their city and staying for that period. The very best elements in that part of the country were very much opposed to the race tracks being situated there and to the race track gambling.

No Time for Gambling.

"They will say to you," said Mr. Wigle, "why have we to put up with this race track business in our part of the country, and why should we have three race tracks imposed upon us? In this time of war we need every bit of our energy and strength for the successful prosecution of the war. Many of our young men and older men go there and spend their time and money when they would be far better employed on the farms."

Touching on the money spent these 42 days, Mr. Wigle said he had been told of one man in a departmental store who had lost \$1,800 through following the race track business. He thought these licenses should be cancelled so as not to allow the up-er-ation of the racing business.

The Treasurer's Explanation.

Hon. Mr. McGarry said he recognized his honorable friend's duty to bring this matter before the House. There had been a great deal of discussion with regard to these race-tracks at Windsor. The first time the matter was brought to his attention as Provincial Treasurer was on the 9th of September, 1915. He received a letter from Mr. McGregor Young of the firm of Young & McEvoy, who were acting as solicitors in connection with the Devonshire racetrack and the required license.

Fight Over Windsor Tracks.

Before he had received that application he had been spoken to by the solicitor of the Hendrie race-course at Windsor, that was the original course, and was told there was going to be such an application and he was asked if he would hear arguments against the granting of that charter. When he received the application he spoke to Mr. (now Senator) Lynch-Staunton, and told him he wanted his arguments. Mr. Staunton held that the charter issued to the Ottawa Racing Association in 1903 had lost its force. Mr. McGregor Young had written Mr. McGarry that the charter had been bought from Senator Belcourt at Ottawa, acting for the Connaught Park Jockey Club, who owned the Ottawa charter. Senator Belcourt had given a guarantee that the charter was a Dominion charter and that the company could race in the Province in spite of the department if it refused to issue a license.

The matter had been taken into the courts, which held that the charter came under the Dominion act of 1912, and inferentially those behind the charter had the right to race in the Province.

Too Many Unused Charters.

The Miller bill had undertaken to restrict racing, but in the end legislation passed by which meets could be held on tracks holding charters granted prior to 1912. He believed that the chief fault was that no investigation was held as to the number of old charters lying around the country unused.

How Charter Was Granted.

"They dealt with charters which were in existence," said Mr. McGarry, "but they did not deal with charters which were lying around unused at that time. The result was, of course, that the passage of that bill, instead of doing away with racing in the Province or in any other Province, gave a value to these charters which were lying around which they did not have before. And the proof of that is in the charter with which we are dealing. This charter was issued in 1903 to Sir Frederick Borden, Sir Clifford Sifton, Mr. Sidney Fisher, Senator Belcourt and others.

"Until the criminal code was amended in 1910 there was no special value attaching to that charter, but afterwards the Connaught Park Jockey Club obtained extra letters patent in 1914, and then began negotiations to sell. The negotiations were carried on by Senator Belcourt. The sale took place to a number of gentlemen. Among these was Mr. Hepburn, M.P., Prince Edward, a Conservative member of the House. So we have a Liberal Senator selling to a Conservative member. (A laugh.)

"In the meantime an application had been made for the Kenilworth track by a firm of solicitors in this city. They had their charter. They had it prior to 1912. It was held by the Legal Department to be a good charter and to come under the criminal code. They came and demanded their license. I refused that license, but they took this position: they said: 'We are going to race, anyway.' They began and finished their track without any undertaking from the department that a license would issue. The application came along, and they sent the money to me, and the Crown officials advised that we had no option once they tendered the money and they would have the right to go ahead and hold these meetings. That was the position in 1916."

White-Reaume Letters.

With reference to the charter a discussion took place and certain correspondence had followed, and there had been personal correspondence between Mr. J. T. White, solicitor of the Treasury Department, and Dr. Reaume, about which he (Mr. McGarry) had heard only quite recently. Mr. White arranged that Dr. Reaume or Mr. Glassco of Windsor would be introduced to the men who were behind the charter and the purchase at Ottawa. There were certain negotiations going on at the time Justice Middleton's decision was given, holding that the charter for the Ottawa Racing Association was good.

With regard to the Windsor tracks, the department had held up the license for nearly a year, and it was not until the judgment of the court agreed with all the lawyers that the department gave way. He obtained