

# DEWART VOTED BY HIMSELF

Opposes Extension of Legis-  
lature for an Indefinite  
Period

PREMIER REBUKES HIM

In First Division of the Session He  
is Defeated by Vote of  
58 to 1.

Characterizing the bill to extend the life of the Legislature as a "jug-handled scheme" which restricts the people, but leaves the Government free to spring an election at any time when "the going is good," Mr. Hartley Dewart, member for Southwest Toronto, vigorously protested in the Legislature last night against an indefinite extension, on the ground that "such a measure really establishes an irresponsible oligarchy." He thought an extension for one year would be sufficient, but he was willing to extend the Legislature from year to year, if advisable, during the period of the war.

The Liberal Leader, Mr. Proudfoot, declared that in making the extension offer to the Prime Minister he did so in the utmost good faith, believing that he had the authority of all the members of the Opposition, including that of Mr. Dewart. Mr. Proudfoot repeated the opinion that it was in the interests of the people of Ontario that the life of the Legislature should be prolonged.

#### Premier's Views.

Sir William Hearst also thought the members of the House were unanimous on the question at the time the offer was made and accepted, and if he did not think that public opinion throughout the Province was overwhelmingly in favor of the bill he would withdraw it, submit a soldiers' voting bill in its place, and bring on an election without delay.

Mr. Sam. Clarke (West Northumberland) said the Opposition Leader did not make the offer off his own bat, "but it was discussed by the members of this side of the House before the offer was made, and I certainly was not aware that there was a dissenting voice."

The motion for the second reading of the bill was then put, and the only division of the session showed that Mr. Dewart stood alone, the vote being 58 to 1.

#### Mr. Dewart Surprised.

Mr. Dewart said that he was compelled to dissent from the idea of an indefinite extension of the life of the Assembly by members who happen to constitute the House at any particular time. He contended that definiteness was surely intended by the use of the words "for four years" "and no longer." Any extraordinary power should be carefully exercised. Mr. Dewart said that the views expressed by the Opposition Leader in offering the extension did not bind Liberal members. He had been surprised at the promptness with which

the Prime Minister had accepted the proposal.

"I submit that the term of the extension must be definite, and that a period of one year is to-day a reasonable exercise of the power, leaving it to the Legislature from year to year to deal with the question, with the larger light and knowledge of then existing conditions," said the speaker. Nor is it, he said, good legislation to allow any Government to get "out of hand" and "out of touch" with the expression of popular will. In these times of rapidly changing conditions, when great new problems are arising, no one can see what the Legislature will have to deal with even in the next two years. For that reason it is only fair that the influence of public opinion should be felt, that conditions which will arrive years hence will not be dealt with to-day. It is estimated that it may take two years, and the bill is only another way of saying that the Government shall have another year in which "to put its house in order before submitting itself to the people." Then, too, the personnel of the Government may change, and an unendorsed Government may be in power.

#### A Jug-handled Scheme.

"It is really the establishment of an irresponsible oligarchy," continued Mr. Dewart. "It is almost a jug-handled scheme, because, while the Province is tied, the Government is to have its hands free to dissolve at any time that it may deem the going good and the occasion opportune." Industrial forces and returned soldiers are not properly represented in the House, and it is not fair that they should be bound indefinitely by an agreement between the old line parties. One condition, if an extension is granted, should be that the patronage system will be abolished in the Province.

#### Mr. Proudfoot's Speech.

The Opposition Leader said the member for Southwest Toronto must have overlooked certain events which took place, because he was under the impression that he had the authority of all his followers, including that of the member for Southwest Toronto, to make to the Prime Minister an offer for the extension of the life of the Legislature. If the member for Southwest Toronto was going to object to the offer being made, there was a proper place and a proper time. "In making the offer to the Prime Minister I did so in the utmost good faith, believing I had the authority of all the members on this side of the House. If I had not so believed I would not have made the offer. The Government did not ask for the extension. The offer came from me. The bill was not prepared hurriedly, as the member for Southwest Toronto suggests, nor was it drafted by the Prime Minister and approved by me without changes being made in the bill at my suggestion. My hon. friend thinks the extension should be from year to year. That question was fully considered, and I came to the conclusion that it would be a very improper way to deal with the subject. If the extension were only from year to year, there would be a feeling of indefiniteness all the time and we would not know what we were going to do. If the war should end this year and the soldiers return, the time is even more definite than the time suggested by the hon. member for Southwest Toronto. But if the war continues there will be all the more reason for extending the life of Parliament and a greater reason why we should not have an election in the Province.

"After the matter came up in the House I received congratulatory messages from all parts of the Province, from men of both parties and from women of both parties. They all took the stand that an election was undesirable in war time. We all know that the recent election disarranged all patriotic work. Viewing the situation from the standpoint of what is best for the Province, I