

APPROVE O.T.A. AMENDMENTS

Bill Passed to Close Loopholes in Temperance Legislation

With but few changes, the bill to amend the Ontario Temperance Act, which the Government found necessary to close up certain loopholes brought to light since the act has been in operation, was passed by the Legislature in committee last night. It was subsequently given its third reading. A proposal put forward by Mr. Hartley Dewart, the Southwest Toronto Liberal, to reduce the License Board from five members to one instead of three, was defeated. Mr. Dewart said he believed the estimates for the board should be reduced to \$150,000 from \$205,000, and moved such an amendment when the House went into concurrence on the main estimates. The proposal was defeated.

After considerable discussion it was decided to allow the present act to stand in its reference to the sale of liquor on vessels on the Great Lakes. Under the act the presumption has been that it is an offence for any person to have liquor on any vessel, including private yachts. A clause in the original amendments brought in by the Provincial Secretary, Hon. Mr. McPherson, proposed forbidding liquor being carried on any vessel navigating the Great Lakes in Ontario. Last night he brought forward another amendment which would have made it illegal for liquor to be consumed only on vessels actually employed in commercial purposes or for purposes of gain.

Scores "Class Legislation."

Allan Studholme (East Hamilton) entered a vehement protest against any such discrimination, as he declared it was class legislation. When the workmen recently wanted a little more "pep" in their beer the Government said no. He declared it was not right to allow wealthy people to take liquor on their yachts when people couldn't have it where they wished on land. The South Wellington member, Sam Carter, joined in the protest of the Labor representative. He declared that it only opened up a way for the wealthy to have their liquor.

Mr. McPherson said that the amendment was needed so as not to inflict a hardship on visiting yachtsmen who might enter Canadian waters. The entire clause was withdrawn at the suggestion of the Prime Minister.

Another clause which was withdrawn at the suggestion of Sir William Hearst was that requiring every druggist to attach to every bottle of whiskey sold a label showing the name of the practitioner on whose prescription the liquor was supplied, the date, the kind and the quantity of such liquor and the name of the person for whom it was prescribed. Dr. Nixon of Halton said that there is sufficient protection now, as the

doctor's prescription has to be placed on file.

For Medicinal Requirements.

Mr. Thomas Marshall (Lincoln) wanted to know where the druggists would get their liquor after the supply in Canada was exhausted. Sir William Hearst replied that they could import it.

"According to reports from the brewers," added Sir William, "we will have enough to do for medical purposes for two or three years."

"Yes, they say there are 14,000,000 gallons," joined in Mr. Proudfoot.

Mr. Marshall asked who had asked that whiskey be allowed to be used for medicinal purposes. He was informed by the Provincial Secretary that no one had made such a request. Dr. Nixon explained that the medical societies in England and the United States include whiskey as a drug.

Some Minor Changes.

A clause was added to the bill so that in case of emergency the Lieutenant-Governor could issue a proclamation refusing to allow liquor to be consigned to certain defined areas. Mining camps were mentioned as places where it might be necessary at some time to thus designate. The clause stipulating that before a manufacturer could sell cider he would have to procure a permit from the board was withdrawn.

Only one change was made in the clause referring to the sale of essence of ginger. It provided that essences containing more than 2½ per cent. proof spirits could not be sold.

While the Ontario License Board is nominally composed of five men, said Mr. Dewart, it is virtually composed of only four. Now the intention apparently is to make the fourth member a "glorified inspector." He charged that the cost of administration has gone beyond all reasonable bounds. He thought one Commissioner could do all the work, as the restrictions are greater than ever before. He urged that the estimates should be reduced from \$205,000 to \$150,000. He then moved his amendment for reducing the board from five members to one.

License Board Defended.

Sir William said he would have to ask the House to vote down Mr. Dewart's amendment. Under the new act the board cannot consist of more than three men, and if the Government sees fit it can reduce the number. However, he was not holding out any promise that that would be done. He said if the suggestion of the member for Southwest Toronto was carried out, of deputing some of the powers of the board to a member of the Cabinet, it would throw the operation of the act into politics. He didn't think the public desired that.

"They have carried out their duty," said the Prime Minister, referring to the License Board, "in a way that has won the plaudits of the people of Ontario. No persons have had a more difficult task. While this law is upon the statute books I feel that it is the duty of the Government to see that it is enforced. If that law is going to continue to have a good effect on the people of Ontario it will only be by rigid enforcement of that law."

Mr. McPherson, replying to Mr. Proudfoot, said there was not much credence placed in the story that Ontario was not a "prohibited" area in the eyes of the law, and that liquor could be delivered here after April 1. If it should be found to be correct, the Dominion Government will have to correct its order in Council.