

# DIVISION BELLS RING FOR FIRST TIME IN TWO SESSIONS

**Another Proof of Ending of Party Truce in Ontario Legislature—Yeas and Nays Taken on Amendment to Election Act of Last Session Proposed by H. H. Dewart, K.C., Member for Southwest Toronto — Resulting Vote is 58 to 25**

Striking evidence that the truce is at an end in Ontario politics was given in the Legislature yesterday. For the first time in two sessions division bells rang, and the yeas and nays were taken on the amendment which was moved by Mr. Hartley Dewart, K.C., M.P.P. (Southwest Toronto), and Mr. G. C. Hurdman (West Ottawa). The amendment proposed that the Ontario Election Act of last session, providing for enumerators in preparing the voters' lists, should be repealed and provision made for compiling the lists by municipal authorities. The House divided on straight party lines, the vote being 58 to 25 against the amendment and in favor of the motion. The two United Farmer members, Enoch Bowman (Manitoulin) and J. W. Widdifield (North Ontario), kept their seats and did not vote. Messrs. J. A. Calder (North Oxford) and W. H. Fraser (North Huron), the two new Liberal members, voted with the Opposition.

The amendment, which the Liberals and Mr. Allan Studholme, the Labor member, supported, was: "That the following words be added to the motion: 'and this House would respectfully represent to your Honor that the Ontario Election Act of 1918 should be repealed and provision made for the preparation by the municipal authorities of voters' lists, which shall include the names of all women and men over the age of twenty-one years entitled to vote at elections to the Legislative Assembly, subject to revision under the provisions of the former law, and the holding of elections one week after nomination.'"

Mr. Dewart was the last speaker on the debate in reply to the Speech from the Throne on the Liberal side. To all appearances the afternoon was going to end without a division, when Mr. Dewart announced his amendment. It was loudly applauded by the Opposition. The amendment took the Prime Minister by surprise, for he hurriedly sent a messenger for the Attorney-General, who briefly replied to the amendment. Mr. Lucas explained that minor amendments to the Election Act of last session would be introduced at a later date, when every opportunity would be granted for suggestions to be made and a full discussion.

## Dewart Criticizes Government.

After paying warm tribute to the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Dewart proceeded to criticize the Government for its handling of by-elections in the last couple of years. The Government and Opposition Leaders, at the last session, entered into an agreement not to contest by-elections. This provided only for cases where vacancies occurred by death. Sir James Whitney had put on the statutes an act making it necessary for writs for by-elections being issued three months after the vacancy occurred. In Peel, North Perth and Southwest Toronto Opposition candidates had been elected. These by-elections had served a useful part, and the agreement of last session had resulted in misunder-

standings. While there were vacancies in North Huron and North Oxford, where members had resigned, there was delay in opening the seats, but in safe seats such as East York and Northeast Toronto the elections were brought on first.

"At a time when we should expect a different kind of conduct we have the whole business of by-elections manipulated by the Government for their own party advantage," charged Mr. Dewart. "If that is the result, that writs have been held back and others have been issued, it will be interesting to see whether it is part of the same machine in dealing with the election law of the Province, which can be used for party advantage and against the Op-

position." The result in St. Catharines had shown the Government that the industrial classes must be considered.

## An Answer to Autocracy.

Mr. Dewart declared that it was not the wishes of the people of Ontario that any body of men should enter into a bargain to retain office. The result of the by-elections was an answer to such autocratic forms of government. The Province of Ontario was the only one that had not had an election during the war. He urged the Prime Minister to trust the people and give them a chance to speak as to their attitude toward the Government. "I venture to say that if the Premier takes the plunge the result will amply justify the statements I make, that the people want to have a voice in their own affairs."

Hon. Mr. Rowell and Sir Wm. Hearst had gone "over the top" together in the election of 1917, and it looked as if having gone over the top then, they were going to go to the bottom together now, said Mr. Dewart. It would be the autocratic use of power that would result in the defeat of both Governments. He was surprised at the Prime Minister seeking to push the Housing Bill through the House when it had not been passed by the Dominion Parliament as yet. He was likewise surprised that nothing had been done to make a survey of the farms of the Province, so as to ascertain the number available for soldiers. He deplored sending returned men up north when fertile land was vacant in the older part of the Province. Mr. Dewart also expressed surprise that the Government had taken no steps toward the irrigation of small holdings of land, which, too, could be made available for soldiers.

Mr. Dewart expressed curiosity as to the proposed amendments to the Ontario Temperance Act, and deplored the fact that there was no prospect of the one-mill war tax being removed. The Government ought to have the courage, he said, to compel the Canadian Copper Company to pay tax arrears which were properly payable for the last three years.

## Condemns Election Act.

Dealing with the Election Act passed last session, Mr. Dewart condemned it most strongly. He described it as a measure born in iniquity, and said it came as the re-