

WARM FIGHT ON HOUSING BILL

Government Opposes Major Tolmie's Amendment of Grant to Soldiers

RULED OUT OF ORDER

"Not Time and Place," Says Mr. McGarry, for Such Action

Before the Housing Bill was finally given its third reading in the Legislature yesterday, a short but sharp fight occurred between the Government and the Opposition. After the debate on the measure last week, the bill stood for third reading, but yesterday the Prime Minister moved that it be considered in committee again, to permit of several unimportant verbal amendments being made. The changes were agreed to without opposition. The Liberals, however, availed themselves of the opportunity of the bill being sent back to the committee to propose that some special provision be made for returned soldiers. The Opposition Leader, Mr. William Proudfoot, first urged the matter on the Government, and the proposal was placed in concrete form by Major J. C. Tolmie of Windsor, who introduced an amendment to provide for the payment of a grant of \$200 to "a returned soldier, or the father or mother of a returned soldier." The amendment was discussed for a few moments, and then dropped, as the Chairman, Mr. A. E. Donovan of Brockville, ruled that an amendment affecting the revenue of the Province could not be introduced by a private member. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Hendrie, will assent to the bill today. The municipalities will then be able to go ahead and operate under the provisions of the act.

Not Practical, Says McGarry.

The Government contended that the proposal of Major Tolmie was impracticable. Hon. T. W. McGarry deprecated the suggestion in view of statements of Opposition speakers last week that there was really a deficit of a million and a half in the Budget. There were 200,000 soldiers sent overseas from Ontario, and if 150,000 of them desired houses, and they were each given a grant of \$200, it would necessitate an outlay of \$30,000,000. Even if only 25,000 soldiers built houses, the grants would total \$5,000,000.

"I take no back place to any man regarding the returned soldier," declared Mr. McGarry, "but this is not the time and the place, when we have a Housing Bill before us, to consider what money grant we shall give to the soldier. If honorable gentlemen opposite will stop injuring the fair name of the Province, the finances of Ontario may at some future time be in a position to permit a reasonable grant to the returned soldier."

Mr. McGarry said that there was nothing in the bill which prevented the Government helping the returned soldier. He declared that members of the Opposition would not find Government supporters second to them in their generosity to the returned soldier. "After mature consideration, after the Dominion Government, which has the first liability, is in a position to state what their whole intention is in regard to providing for the returned soldier, we can consider the matter," said the Provincial Treasurer, "but are we going to rush in and commit ourselves to an expenditure of \$30,000,-

000 when we don't know what the Dominion Government is going to do? Until the conclusion of this session we will not know the total assistance they are going to give the returned soldier. However commendable the object of the honorable member is, this is not the time nor the place in which such a motion should be made."

Mr. Proudfoot Urges Amendment.

Sir William Hearst pointed out that the amendment proposed was out of order. Mr. Proudfoot, however, further impressed the desirability of the change in the act upon the Government. He declared that no \$30,000,000 was involved in the suggestion, as contended by Mr. McGarry, since the bill did not provide for the expenditure over the amount of the Federal grant, plus the \$2,000,000 set aside by the Province.

Sam Carter (South Wellington) argued that for the next two years 10,000 houses would be the maximum construction. Of these not more than 3,000 would be built for returned soldiers, and the cost to be borne by the Province therefore would not be so large.

Major Tolmie denied that the Opposition had been injuring the fair name of the Province in any way, as alleged by Mr. McGarry. Nor did he desire to make political capital out of the motion. Such was not the intention of any Liberal member. He said he knew the difficulties the soldiers felt confronted them, and many of them were anxious to get homes started. Major Tolmie declared that now was the time to assist the returned men, and not wait until next session, as had been suggested. "The soldiers are back now, and if we are going to help them this is the time to do it, and not a year from now. It would take away that restless spirit and it would show them that we really meant business," he declared.

It was suggested by Mr. Proudfoot that the discussion on the amendment be adjourned, but the resolution was declared out of order by Mr. Donovan, and the other minor changes gone on with. "When the Government proposes to help the returned soldier," said the Prime Minister, "it will bring down proper and well-thought-out means of enabling it to do so."

Major Tolmie suggested earlier in the debate that the returned men be loaned the money at 4 per cent. as an alternative to the \$200 grant. To this suggestion the Prime Minister said that Major Tolmie was no more enthusiastic in the interest of the soldier than the Government.

Other Bills Passed.

The companion bill providing for an amendment to the Bureau of Municipal Affairs Act to permit of the appointment of Mr. J. A. Ellis as Director of the housing scheme, was opposed by the Liberals. It was finally given third reading after a motion by Mr. Proudfoot to give it a six months' hoist was voted down. The Opposition Leader reiterated his objections of last week to allowing Mr. Ellis to hold two offices, one as a member of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board and the other as the Director of the Bureau of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. J. B. Lucas in reply pointed out the advantage of co-ordinating the work of the bureau with the municipal work of the Railway Board. He emphasized the fact that as a member of the board Mr. Ellis would have opportunity to devote himself to municipal matters, as only a portion of his time would be taken up with sittings. The salary of Mr. Ellis for the two positions would be \$6,000, of which \$4,000 was for his services on the Railway Board.

Several Government bills were given second reading, and the Vacant Lands Cultivation Act, providing for the extension of a measure passed last session for one year, was put through committee without opposition.