

# WOMEN'S BILL IS ADVANCED

## Premier Hearst Says Administration Abreast of Public Opinion

### A HINT OF AN ELECTION?

## Government Says "No" in Answer to Opposition Query

Although Governments elsewhere have previously granted to women the right to sit in Parliament on an equal basis with men, and although the Liberals on more than one occasion in the past sought to persuade the Queen's Park authorities to do likewise, Sir William Hearst still maintains that his Government is abreast of public opinion. He modestly admits, however, that they are not ahead of it. In the Legislature yesterday the Prime Minister moved that the three bills extending the right of women to sit in the Legislature, to be appointed or elected to municipal office, and to farmers' wives and daughters to sit on School Boards, be given second reading. In doing so he gallantly tried to extricate the Government from the previous "stand pat" attitude on the matter. Almost heroically he remarked that: "The members of the Government are all married men, and we knew that the women would get whatever they wanted; and if they wanted the right to sit in the Legislature they would get it in due time."

Sir William said that the attitude of the Government in the last two years was that there was no need to introduce an amendment at either of the two preceding sessions because an election was not pending. Last year, when the Liberals had introduced a similar bill, he had said that the Government had an open mind, but would await happenings elsewhere. He felt now was an opportune time to grant women the rights contained in the three bills. In Australia the women had had the right to sit in Parliament for years, and it had not been taken advantage of to any great extent. In New Zealand women had had the right for many years to vote, but not to sit in Parliament. The war had hurried the change, and it had also completely altered the attitude of public opinion on the matter.

#### Men Unanimous for Change.

"I feel that any opposition that there is to this move comes rather more from the women themselves than it does from the men," said Sir William. "The services and sacrifices of the women during the war and the splendid executive ability displayed by them in war work of all kinds have won for them the admiration of the men, at all events, to such an extent that we feel they should be put upon the same basis as the men."

While there had been no agitation to have women granted the right to sit in municipal Councils, it would be a strange anomaly, said Sir William, if they were eligible as members of the House and not of the Councils, which were creatures of the Legislature.

Mr. Sam Carter (South Wellington) wanted to know why the Government would not go further and permit any person to sit in Council without qualifications. He urged that as everything was going smoothly, and the Prime Minister had advanced so rapidly, that the Government could very well go a

little further.

"We are quite abreast of public opinion, but not ahead of it on this subject," retorted the Prime Minister.

Mr. Proudfoot expressed gratification that the Government had at last adopted a measure which he believed would be a good law. He believed it would be a good thing for the public at large. The Opposition Leader wondered if the statement of Sir William Hearst, that the bill was not introduced last session because there was no election pending, meant that an election would be held shortly, now that the amendment was being made.

"I meant nothing," replied Sir William.

"Just talk," laughed Mr. Proudfoot.

#### Loan Companies Act.

In discussing the amendments to the Loan and Trust Corporation Act, Mr. Lucas pointed out that the clause to which all the companies objected was that after January 1 next, no loan or trust company could invest more than 15 per cent. of the stock and debentures in any one corporation. These companies claim that the clause would prevent them investing in their trust companies as at present. "They want some leeway?" said Mr. Lucas, "and it is for the House to say whether there should be any granted."

Mr. Proudfoot wanted to know why companies should be prevented investing in certain stocks after January 1, why they could buy all the same stocks before that time.

Mr. Mark Irish (Northeast Toronto) explained that the date was put in by the committee for the protection of certain companies, in view of certain arrangements that had been made.

Mr. Lucas agreed with the Liberal Leader that in some cases a little leeway might be necessary, such as where a company owned a big building and desire to improve it, thus going beyond the 15 per cent. He promised to consider some such amendment, and with this one clause being held up, the bill was passed through committee.

# HIGHWAY ACT IS AMENDED

## Government May Designate Roads in a Suburban Area

### OTHER BILLS DISCUSSED

An amendment to the Ontario Highway Act was introduced yesterday in the Legislature which will enable the Government to give greater financial assistance toward the building of "suburban" roads. Heretofore the Government has paid forty per cent. of the cost of construction on county roads, but it has limited its contribution toward defraying the cost of highways lying within "suburban" areas around cities and large towns to \$4,000 per mile. Under the amendment which was introduced by the Minister of Public Works, Hon. Finlay G. Macdiarmid, this limit is being removed, and the full forty per cent. will be paid of the cost of building "suburban" roads.

Under the old system it has been quite common for a stretch of road just outside large municipalities to be in bad condition. It is fully expected that this change will result in a much better road in such areas being built. In districts around Toronto or other large centres, where