

O.T.A. MEASURE IS INTRODUCED

Little Variation From That
Announced by Premier
Last Week

PROVISIONS OF BILL

When the bill containing the Government's proposals for the taking of the temperance referendum was introduced in the House yesterday, and further explained by the Prime Minister, Sir William Hearst, it was found that it was only slightly different from what was foreshadowed on Monday last. It is made clear that every municipality must stand or fall by its vote on the referendum. Thus, the referendum will not only be a verdict by the Province as a whole, but at the same time it will be a verdict upon the local situation, upon which the Government and the Board of License Commissioners may take action.

The bill states that if the majority of the electors of the Province give an affirmative vote on the third question, which provides for the sale of light beer in standard hotels, the Board of License Commissioners may issue licenses for the sale of light beer of the specified strength in any municipality in which the majority of the electors voting thereon have voted in the affirmative. Even if the Province as a whole should carry question three, no local municipality will have light beer sold in standard hotels unless the majority of the electors in that place have carried the question in the affirmative.

May Take Another Vote.

However, provision is made for the municipality to change its mind by taking another vote any time after December 31, 1921. Thus, if the Province votes "Yes" on question three, and a municipality also votes "Yes," and licenses are issued to standard hotels to sell light beer, a referendum locally may be taken subsequently to see if any change is desired. In each case the sale of light beers will date from May 1 of the following year.

No change is made in the text of the questions to be submitted from what was announced by the Prime Minister. It is made clear in the body of the bill, however, just what will be the effect of the vote on each question. Thus, a majority vote for the repeal of the O.T.A. will mean bringing again into force the old Liquor License Act, though not automatically, the revival of that measure being subject to a proclamation by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. In fact, the law would be just the same as before prohibition came into effect, for districts which had local option then would revert to their former status.

The bill states that the date for the taking of the vote will be fixed by proclamation. It also makes it clear that each question stands alone. If the O.T.A. is repealed, and yet the electors want the sale of light beer in Government agencies, then the O.T.A. will remain upon the statute books, but will be amended to permit of the sale of light beer. The same applies to the sale of beer in standard hotels, and the sale of spirituous and malt liquors by the Government.

TO CONSERVE NATURAL GAS

After an extended investigation lasting over several months the Natural Gas Advisory Board appointed by the Ontario Government to investigate and report upon the natural gas problem in Ontario has presented its findings to the Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines, Hon. G. Howard Ferguson. The report is a voluminous one, covering more than 100 pages. It was presented to the Legislature late last night. The recommendations briefly are as follows:

"That all natural gas in the Province be conserved and that measures be provided for the prevention of waste and misuse, allowing for a variation of treatment as between the gas fields of the east and west—the older and newer fields—which having reached different stages of decline call for slightly different treatment.

"That it appears expedient and necessary for the present available supply of natural gas to be allotted so far as possible for use in the homes.

Respect Agreements.

"That all rights existing under agreements be respected, provided also that where these rights do interfere with the carrying out of conservation principles for the common good, they be modified and adjusted, subject to proper protection.

"That provision be made for appeal from the administration of the Natural Gas Regulations subject to such regulations as the Legislature may deem practicable.

"That diligent search for new gas areas and the tapping of the same be wisely encouraged so that additional sources of this valuable fuel may be made available for the public, and that the utility of the existing costly systems of distribution now serving the public be preserved, which otherwise would soon be rendered useless and of small value owing to the decline and extinction of the present fields.

"That consideration be given to the adjustment of rates and the establishing of an equitable scale of prices proportionate to the cost of discovering, producing and selling natural gas, and consistent with the general conditions prevailing in each district and the extent of available supply.

"That the intelligent allotment of any available supply not required for domestic use to those classes where its economical use will bring the most good should be fully considered.

Establish Supervision.

"The establishment of such supervision over field operations looking to co-operation with the operators and owners that methods may be encouraged whereby extension of the life of the fields will be the main consideration."

As a result of the report, Hon. Mr. Ferguson introduced a bill in the House last night which is based on it. It proposes giving the Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines wide power in making regulations to put the recommendations of the board into effect.

Provision is made for the appointment of an officer to be known as a Commissioner of Natural Gas, who under the direction of the Minister will be charged with the enforcement and administration of the act.