

HAVE SET TIME FOR ELECTIONS IN PROVINCE

Go to the People in October
Every Fourth
Year

THE BILL IS INTRODUCED

The Present Assembly to
Stay Till August
in 1923

Ontario hereafter escapes all the uncertainty and speculation on the date of a general Provincial election. The new Election Act brought down in the House yesterday by Premier Drury sets a definite date every four years. The Premier in his explanation said positively that the present Assembly would continue until August 1, 1923, and that a general election would be held that year, and on every fourth year thereafter.

The bill specifies that nominations be on the second Thursday of October, and the polling day on the second Monday thereafter, giving ten days instead of seven between nominations and elections. The Premier, in reply to Major Tolmie, after his review of the bill, admitted he had not mentioned by-elections, stating that the Government would bring this point up at discussion of the bill, and would welcome suggestions. The Premier invited Opposition suggestions, "to make a perfect Election Act." His review was applauded heartily by the Liberals, who seemed well pleased with the general features of the bill.

Uniform Polling Hours.

Some of the other features are maintenance of polling places in hospitals, the giving of the vote to Indians with war service, the establishment of uniform polling hours throughout the Province—from 9 in the morning until 7 at night, extension of the privilege of advance polls to sailors as well as railroadmen, the appointment of a Chief Election Officer for the Province, and pursuit of the former practise by having the municipalities make the voters' lists in three parts.

Premier Drury said: "The bill is divided into four parts.

"Part one contains certain amendments to the election laws. Heretofore qualification has been based upon residence prior to a certain fixed date; formerly this was the last day for making complaints to the Judge under the Voters' Lists Act, and under the Election Act, 1918, it was the day upon which the enumerators commenced to make up their lists; in the present bill

qualification is fixed at twelve months' residence in Ontario prior to polling day, and three months in the electoral district prior to that date, but provision is made for persons who have moved from one electoral district to another in the same city, and also for allowing persons to be added to the list who were on the list for another electoral district, or were entitled to be on that list, and who have removed into the electoral district in which the election is being held within the period of three months.

Provision for Soldiers.

"The soldiers' franchise provisions are retained so far as they relate to returned men who are inmates of, or employed and resident in hospitals and other institutions where they are receiving instruction or treatment.

"Provision is made for special polling places in hospitals, and a practise which it is believed was followed at the last election is legalized, that is allowing the Returning Officer, Poll Clerk and agents to take the vote of bedridden patients at the bedside.

"The bill retains the provisions with regard to naturalization in the act of 1919, that is to say, a man who was not a British subject before the passing of the Ontario Franchise Act, 1917, will not be entitled to vote unless he has since become naturalized under section 2 of the Naturalization Act, 1914, or under the Naturalization Act, 1918, while a woman of foreign birth will not be entitled to vote unless she has become naturalized in her own right prior to the 12th day of April, 1917, or has since become naturalized under section 2 of the Naturalization Act, 1914, or the Naturalization Act, 1918, or has become a British subject by marriage or by the naturalization of her parent while a minor, and has obtained a certificate from a Judge stating that she possesses the necessary qualifications for naturalization and has taken the oath of allegiance.

Eliminate Stamping of Ballots.

"There is no provision at present in the Dominion Act for a married woman becoming naturalized in her own right, and the object of the provision is to ensure that a woman who has become a British subject by marriage or the naturalization of her parents shall be properly qualified to exercise the franchise by residence, a knowledge of the language and by satisfactory references as to character.

"Special provisions have been found necessary with regard to Indians who are qualified to vote by virtue of service in the late war, and in order to enable them to vote as well as other persons, who, although resident on an Indian Reserve, may be qualified, reserves will be treated as territory without municipal organization and the voters' lists will be prepared for them in the same manner as in other unorganized territory.

"The stamping of the ballots by the Returning Officer is dispensed with. At the late election the stamping cost something like \$50,000.

"The bill makes it the duty of the municipality to provide the polling places, but the municipalities are to be allowed \$6 for every polling place, this amount to be payable by the Province.

"The bill provides that polling day shall be the tenth day after the day fixed for holding the nomination. It has been found at recent elections that seven days was not satisfactory.

Issue Writs Earlier.

"The time for issuing the writ for the election at present is not more than twenty, nor less than sixteen days, before nomination day. In order to allow ample time for registration and the proper revision of the lists, it has been necessary to enlarge this time to not more than sixty and not less than thirty days.

"The hours for polling are made uniform throughout the Province; that is, from nine o'clock until seven o'clock.

"The Election Board substituted for the Voters' Registration Board, will be composed in the same way, except that instead of the Chairman being appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor, the County or District