

LEGISLATURE WOULD 'DIGNIFY' MARRIAGE LICENSE BUSINESS

Measure in House Would Take Issuance Out of Hands of Jewelers and Other Persons and Give to Returned Soldiers

There is to be a certain amount of "dignity," and, if conditions warrant, a good deal more difficulty in the procuring of marriage licenses if a suggestion introduced by Dr. Stevenson of London into the Legislature is taken up by the Government. In his bill he proposes to take the privilege of issuing marriage licenses out of the hands of jewelers and others and placing it under the jurisdiction of municipal clerks. In Toronto and larger centres it is expected to furnish remunerative posts for returned soldiers.

In brief discussion of this radical change from the old system a warm reception was also given an added suggestion that henceforth marriage license records be open to the public. The member for London would not immediately wrench this business from the present issuers, but prohibit the issuance of any further permits. His bill provides that all municipal clerks be ex-officio officers to issue licenses, receiving a fee of 25 cents for each license issued.

As the bill was one which affected the revenues of the Province, pointed out Hon. H. C. Nixon, it could hardly be introduced by a private member. The Government, he said, intended to put such a policy into effect, but it could be done as a matter of administration. He held

that legislation was not necessary and suggested that it be withdrawn. Dr. Stevenson replied that if he had the assurance of the Minister that the change would be made he would withdraw his bill.

Should be no Competition.

The suggested measure found a warm advocate in Dr. Forbes Godfrey, West York, who emphatically declared that there should be no competition in marriage licenses. It would be better, he said, if the peddling of marriage licenses were stopped altogether. He repeated his maxim, "Any two fools in this Province who have four or five dollars can go and get married."

"The Government is in entire accord with the principle of the bill," declared Premier Drury. "We thought to approach the matter from the standpoint of administration, but I can see there would be a great deal of advantage in having it enacted as a law. It would relieve the Government of a great deal of pressure. I am against placing it in the hands of jewelers interested in the paltry consideration of selling a wedding ring. Properly handled, such a change could be made a great blessing to the commonwealth." But the bill, the Premier concluded, was out of order. If the member would withdraw it the matter could be introduced as a Government measure.

ASSIST MAIMED, URGES VETERAN

Upon Premier Drury's suggestion, Sgt.-Major McNamara yesterday withdrew his motion in the Legislature to provide Governmental assistance to workmen and working women totally disabled in the pursuit of their vocations. After the member for Riverdale had spoken in support of his motion, Premier Drury moved that it be replaced by a motion to have a committee investigate the question of the rehabilitation of disabled workmen. Sgt.-Major McNamara thereupon consented to withdraw the motion he had placed before the House.

Premier Drury expressed concurrence in the sympathy for industrial cripples expressed by the member for Riverdale. But it was an entirely new subject so far as Ontario was concerned, and Hon. Mr. Drury thought that "the best haste lies in moving slowly." He then moved the appointment of an investigating committee to be named later.

Mr. Sam Clarke reminded the House that the Federal authorities had intimated their acceptance of some measure of responsibility in this connection. He was entirely in sympathy with a move to extend some assistance to these helpless workers.

ROAD BILLS GET SECOND READING

Further progress was made with the large road program of the Ontario Government yesterday. Hon. F. C. Biggs got two of his bills second readings. Little objection was raised. Hon. Geo. Henry said that the time had arrived when a certain part of the cost of a Provincial highway should be levied against those directly benefited.

A new feature of the road program is that cities may have superintendents for suburban roads where the county and city engineers are too busy with other matters.

By slight changes in the law the proportions of cost to the Province and municipalities in the matter of construction, maintenance and bridges are made uniform. This avoids trouble where there may be doubt whether work done is construction or maintenance. The Dominion grant applies only to short bridges, and in cases of larger bridges where it does not apply the expenditure is to be borne by the Provinces, thus relieving municipalities of further expense, said Mr. Biggs in the debate.

Another interesting feature was Mr. Biggs' suggestion that no municipal official, such as Reeve or Councillor, should be a Road Supervisor.

PROBE WINDSOR SHOOTING CASE

Government Tells Major Bergeron Affair Not Happen Again

Investigation by the Attorney General's Department is being made to the shooting of Ernest Bergeron at Windsor in mistake for "wreckers." Major J. C. (Windsor) brought the matter in the Legislature yesterday. He wanted to know if the police were acting under instructions from the Government.

"Is this kind of thing to go on in the Province so as to make it dangerous to drive on the public ways?" asked the Windsor member. "It is a serious thing if police in civilian clothes can fire on people like this."

"I concur in the criticism of the member for Windsor," said Hon. E. Raney. "They had no authority from the Government to fire on any parties. The matter is under investigation. We have a preliminary report and have asked for a detailed one. The Provincial officers were suspended. Afterward it was said that the shots were not by them."

"Are steps being taken to prevent this thing can't happen again?" Major Tolmie.

"Absolutely," replied the Attorney General.