

RESTRICT VOTE TO RATEPAYERS

Private Bills Committee
Establishes Principle in
Money By-law

SPECIFIC PRIVATE ACT

An important principle was laid down by the Private Bills Committee of the Legislature yesterday regarding the referring of money by-law questions to the electors of a municipality for approval. The City of Ottawa is applying for legislation to permit it to acquire the Ottawa Street Railway at the expiration of the franchise in 1923. A clause in the bill relates to the power of the municipality to issue debentures for the purchase and extension of the line, and it was a question whether, when it was referred to the people for approval, it should be referred to the "electors" or "to those qualified to vote on money by-laws."

Hon. W. E. Raney, Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Dewart, were all of the same opinion, that if such a question were to be submitted to the general ratepayers, such reference should be because of a general law, and not because of a specific act. The committee concurred in this view, and debentures may be raised after obtaining the approval of electors qualified to vote on money by-laws.

May Extend Lines.

Power was given to the city to extend the railway into Hull, provided the necessary enabling legislation were obtained from the Dominion Parliament and the Quebec Legislature. Power was also given to extend the road into municipalities adjoining Ottawa on the Ontario side, provided such municipalities consented.

Hon. I. B. Lucas made his appearance yesterday before the committee, representing the County Council of Grey, opposing the application of Owen Sound to be incorporated by special legislation as a city. Mr. Lucas contended that Owen Sound had been part of the county in starting a county road system of approximately 430 miles, practically all un-built. He maintained that if Owen Sound became a city it would be absolved from the payment on this road system to the extent of \$14,000 a year, the extra burden falling on the county.

Bill Stands Over.

Mr. Lucas was supported in his contention by Hon. F. C. Biggs, Minister of Highways, who said that he could not vote for the bill until such time as the roads were protected. He was not opposed, he said, to Owen Sound being a city, but was opposed to its side-stepping its agreement with the county of Grey in 1917.

The committee decided that the bill should stand over for a clause to be drafted to the satisfaction of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Biggs) as regards Owen Sound's contribution to the county road system. Should the bill pass, Owen Sound will enter its new career on June 1, 1920.

Ottawa's application to be permitted to borrow by debentures the sum of two and three-quarter millions of dollars (instead of the million and a half granted two years ago) for the erection of a Civic Hospital, was approved.

END MORTGAGORS' RELIEF ACT JULY 1

Purpose of Bill Given Its
Second Reading in the
Legislature

The Government measure to extend and provide for the termination of the Mortgagors' and Purchasers' Relief Act on July 1 this year passed the second reading yesterday in the Legislature, but with the assurance of the Prime Minister that when in committee the suggestions of Mr. Dewart would be considered. Mr. Dewart was of the opinion that if the act expired on July 1 everybody would be forced to borrow money on new terms, and he was afraid that would create a difficult condition. He was in favor of having the act come into effect on the interest dates on mortgages, so as to have a gradual release from its conditions.

Mr. Raney said, in moving the second reading, that he thought even in the mortgagors' interests it would be better not to extend the time beyond July 1, as at the present time money was fairly easy. Mr. Ferguson thought the time should be extended to the fall, and Mr. J. W. Curry suggested November 1. Mr. Raney replied that the Government was not committed hard and fast to any particular date. Mr. Rollo thought that July was the best time, because in the summer calls were the least upon the workingman's purse.

Messrs. Wellington Hay, Thomas Crawford and Z. Mageau spoke briefly on the motion, and the measure passed when the Prime Minister promised consideration in committee. Mr. Drury said that in country districts he thought that when the act was repealed private arrangements between mortgagor and mortgagee would follow.

Would Protect Estates of Disappearing Men

Yesterday Hon. W. E. Raney introduced a bill in the Legislature, "respecting absentees from Ontario whose whereabouts is unknown." While the bill is a general one, the occasion of it is the disappearance of Ambrose Small, Toronto millionaire. Mr. Raney explained in reply to questions from the Opposition that the bill was to protect the estates of men disappearing, until their fate was learned or they turned up again. Other jurisdictions, he said, had laws covering such cases, and he thought Ontario should, too.