

MANY ENEMIES TO SINGLE TAX IN LEGISLATURE

Premier Drury Introduces Measure Providing for Local Option

SOME CHANGES COMING

Bill is Given Second Reading and Sent on to Muni- cipal Committee

Considerable opposition arose among Liberal and Conservative members in the Legislature yesterday to the bill introduced by Premier Drury giving municipalities the right by local vote to exempt a portion of "improvements" from taxation. Single tax was debated fairly fully, with Labor, Farmer and some Liberal members upholding the principle. Others were outspoken in their opposition.

Premier Drury pointed out that the bill as printed did not quite convey the purpose he had intended. When the bill goes to the committee this change will be made in it, and some of the minor points raised by various members may be noticed and incorporated. Municipalities may vote that any amount of improvements may be exempted, but the percentage must be specified in the by-law. They may vote from year to year on further reductions until they wipe out the tax altogether.

A point which will be raised in committee will be whether all those entitled to vote for municipal candidates will be allowed to vote on this taxation by-law, or only those entitled to vote on money matters. Many members, including Mr. Dewart, brought up this point in the debate yesterday, and saw dangers if all those entitled to vote for municipal office are allowed to vote on a taxation question.

Is Not Compulsory.

J. A. Pinard (East Ottawa) thought the principle wrong. He declared that such legislation adopted by the municipalities would put the burden on the poor man. On that system, he said, a building ten stories or so high would not pay any more taxes than a smaller and less valuable building on the same frontage.

Premier Drury said that there was nothing compulsory about the measure. It was left to the people to decide if they wanted it, and that was a safe principle. However, there was a real demand in the rural districts for such a reform. Especially in Northern Ontario was there such a demand. "It is absolutely unjust that the man who is making that country by clearing his land and building his home should pay all the taxes, while the land held in the next lot goes unimproved—being held for a higher price—pays practically no taxes. This bill does not disturb anything. If the municipalities want it the Province should not stand in the way."

Land Should Pay.

Thomas Marshall (Lincoln) thought the bill a good one. It was a permissive bill, giving municipalities a chance if they wanted it. The part benefited by improvements was the land, and the land should pay. Mr. Marshall had a little fun at the expense of Ottawa. That city, he said, was most peculiar in its desires. It was forever before the Legislature to get something the people had not voted for. It was, he