

One Member Declares That Premier is Worth More Than Sir Wm. Hearst to the Country — Many Resent Plea of Government Heads for Economy—Another Suggests Arbitration to Determine Values

Open conflict was staged in the Legislature last night. The point at issue was the sessional indemnity. The debate started at 10 o'clock, when the House was in supply, and lasted until 1.30 this morning. As there was no motion before the House, no vote followed. Premier Drury was unalterably opposed to any increase, but had there been a vote it is doubtful if he could have commanded a majority.

Party or group ties fell like a house of cards when individual members discussed the question. Private members who have not opened their mouths even in committee sprang into the fray. Most of them wanted an increase. Some of them didn't, but these were a minority among those who spoke. Premier Drury's attempts to pour oil on troubled waters simply added fuel to the blaze.

So far as can be ascertained, this is the first time in the history of the Ontario Legislature, and perhaps in the annals of Canadian Parliamentary history, when the House has gone into battle over the question of sessional indemnity. Hitherto such increases have been petitioned for, granted, and accepted, with only a feeble protest from the country. That situation was reversed last night. It was apparent that the Cabinet thinks economy starts very much at home.

Asked for \$2,500.

It has been known for some time that a round robin had been circulated and forwarded to Premier Drury. It asked for a \$2,500 indemnity instead of \$1,400. The debate was precipitated in the most innocent way by the Premier himself. When the House was in Committee of Supply he took occasion to announce that the Government would not grant the increase, and added that it would be indiscreet to accede to the request at the first session of the Parliament, in hopes that it would be forgotten before a general election.

This insinuation was resented by Wellington Hay (North Perth) and the row was on. Mr. Dewart, with some dexterity, got the House out of committee into regular session.

Farmer members felt no restraint at all about getting into the fight. Liberals, Labor men and Farmers awaited eagerly to get a chance to get the Speaker's eye. They wanted to tell the Legislature and the country why they did or did not sign that round robin.

Means \$66,000 a Year.

Premier Drury, speaking at 1 o'clock this morning, said that, although the matter may look trivial, it was not. It would mean \$66,000 a year. How could the Government resist the great pressure from all over the Province for increased salaries if it started by voting itself \$66,000? he asked.

"Let this stand over for a year until we see if this inflation of living costs is permanent. My personal opinion is that the inflation is not permanent and will be over before a year passes."

Every once in a while Premier Drury reiterated his remark that there would be no increase just now, but then another ardent exponent of "More pay" would get up.

Premier Hotly Opposed.

"I believe that the Government cannot at this session consider the indemnity increases asked for in the round robin," said Premier Drury. "The House knows the need for economy. We can't increase the indemnity and have it arranged that it should pass at the first session of the present Parliament expecting that the people will forget it before the next election. The members have my sympathy in these days of the high cost of living, but we should go back to the constituencies and find what the people think. I might point out that it is an indemnity and not a salary. There is still some reward in the honor and privilege of serving one's country. The Government abso-

lutely cannot consider the increase in the indemnity."

Wellington Hay, Liberal for North Perth, resented any insinuation that the members asked for the increase now in hopes that the people would forget about it. That suggestion should not have been made by the Premier. The Government should be strong enough to settle that question itself.

K. K. Homuth, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, ruled M. M. MacBride out of order when he attempted to speak on the same subject. Premier Drury remarked that nothing would be gained by further discussion, and the match was to the powder.

Mr. Dewart arose quickly and moved that the committee report progress. This done, he immediately moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the indemnity question.

Dewart Backs Hay.

The Liberal Leader took up the cause of Mr. Hay. The members on his side of the House objected to the suggestion that they were trying to "get away with something." He declared that had it not been for the war there would have been an increase, and anyway, "the members were entitled to more than the cavalier treatment accorded by the Premier." Everybody recognized the honor and duty attached to the position. He hoped the Premier had not said his last words on so important a subject. "It was a reasonable and fair request, and the people would approve of it un-

Not a Question of Politics.

Mr. MacBride rushed into the debate with some warmth. He had no apologies to make to the Premier, the Government, the members of the Legislature, or any citizen, for signing the round robin. All fair-minded people would support him. It was not a question of politics. If men had not the courage of their convictions they were not worthy to be members. He had a fine word for the "people" who expected to pay for service. "I will put out my hand and take my indemnity in my open hand, but no one will drop any behind my back," said the Brantford member, and the House applauded.

"The Premier is always asking for the consensus of opinion of this House. Now, 79 members have signed this round robin. That is surely a consensus of opinion, and yet he has the audacity to put his judgment against the 75 per cent. of this House. That is a fine example of autocracy. He is not the dictator of the policy of this Province."

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 5.)