

URGES LAND TITLE CHANGE

R. L. Brackin's Suggestion Favorably Received in the Legislature

An earnest appeal by R. L. Brackin, Liberal, (West Kent), for serious Government consideration toward a change in the present system of land titles registration in Ontario met with a distinctly favorable reception from members on both sides of the House yesterday. Mr. Brackin's notice of motion along this line suggested the introduction of the Torrens system now in force in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The West Kent member based his appeal on the ground that the change he proposed would save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to the citizens. He pointed out how under present conditions a lot-purchaser is compelled to employ a solicitor to search the title, and pay him anywhere from \$25 to \$100. The lot might be transferred four or five times in a year, pointed out Mr. Brackin, nevertheless the same procedure and the same expense were necessary on each occasion.

When the speaker explained the Torrens system, one which gave the property-purchaser a Government guarantee to his title, without any other expense than that of registration and certificate of transfer fee, Premier Drury expressed interest as to how the fund for title insurance was raised. Mr. Brackin explained that the small fees for registration were made to take care of the fund, but the only contingency in which the Government would be called upon to reimburse a purchaser for loss would be in the event of a mistake by the registrar.

Mr. Brackin suggested a special committee of the House to investigate. His motion for Governmental consideration was carried, and his suggestions were accorded applause from every section of the House.

Natural Gas Rates Bill Withdrawn by Minister

Hon. H. Mills, Minister of Mines, yesterday withdrew the bill which would have given the Gas Commissioner power to adjust rates on natural gas in towns in the gas belt. All the municipalities concerned protested against the bill.

The Minister announced that on July 1 the gas rates were to be increased in Brantford, Ingersoll and Galt. Under the present act the Government could do nothing to regulate the rates, but with the opposition from the municipalities, he thought it advisable to withdraw the bill.

NICKEL INQUIRY TO BE GRANTED

Premier Says Taxes Paid by Companies Will be Investigated

MOTION IS WITHDRAWN

Inquiry into taxes paid by nickel companies into the Ontario revenue was promised in the Legislature yesterday, following a debate on a motion by H. H. Dewart, Liberal Leader. Whether the present commission investigating timber affairs would have its scope widened for this investigation, or whether an entirely new one would be appointed, the Premier was unable to say. J. W. Curry, who seconded the motion by Mr. Dewart, wanted the inquiry to go into the charge also that Ontario nickel was shipped during the war outside of the country, eventually getting to Germany to be used in munitions of war against "our own flesh and blood."

Dewart's Motion.

Mr. Dewart's motion, which he withdrew at the request and after the promise of the Premier, follows:

"That, in view of the fact that 'the Mining Tax Act, 1917,' does not provide for the recovery by the Province of Ontario of the arrears of taxes for the years prior to 1916, properly payable to the Province by the Canadian Copper Company (now the International Nickel Company of Canada, Limited), under the report of the Royal Ontario Nickel Commission, which said company was illegally granted a flat rate of taxation at the rate of \$40,000 per year by an unauthorized agreement entered into in the month of December, 1913, between the then Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines and the Hon. Wallace Nesbitt (representing the company), covering the years 1911-12-13-14 and 1915, this House is of the opinion that it is the duty of the Government to institute proceedings under 'the Mining Tax Act' to recover from the Canadian Copper Company (or the International Nickel Company of Canada, Limited), the arrears of taxes properly payable by it, and that the necessary ancillary legislation be passed conformable to 'the Mining Tax Act, 1917,' to cover the years in question, from the 31st day of December, 1915, back to the commencement of the period covered by the said illegal agreement, and authorizing the recovery by the Government of the Province of the taxes to which it is entitled, and which have not been paid."

Not a Hardship.

Mr. Dewart contended that it was the duty of the Government to go into other years and collect taxes from the nickel company mentioned in the resolution. It would be no hardship for it to be forced to pay its proper taxes, as it had made enormous revenue. "Why not have full arrears from this company?" he asked. "The Province would have a good deal over a million-dollar revenue." The present Government had nothing to do with the agreement by which the company avoided taxes, he said.

"The motion as moved by the honorable member for Southwest Toronto, and which I have the honor to second, is one that ought to appeal to every member in this House," said J. W. Curry. "It is one that I believe will appeal to every citizen of this Province of Ontario and of this Dominion of Canada who takes the trouble to carefully read it and see what it means. And I do believe this Government will be well advised if they will compel the payment to this Province of the amount that is due to the Province and investigate further as to whether larger sums may not be due, and go further still and investigate the whole condition under which, with their knowledge, nickel was being shipped out of this Province prior to the war in preparation for the war and being shipped out of this Province while the war was on against the protests of this House."