

LITTLE CEREMONY AT PROROGATION

Closing of Ontario House
Yesterday Was a
Quiet Affair.

FEW MEMBERS ATTEND

Address of the Lieutenant-
Governor Reviews
Session's Work.

In sharp contrast to the formal opening, when the galleries of the Legislative Chamber were crowded to capacity and the floor of the House was a-flutter with feminine relatives and friends of the members, was the formal prorogation of the Ontario Legislature yesterday. The first session of the 15th House came to a close in quiet manner. Only about 30 members were on hand for the ceremony. Society was represented by the wives of the Ministers, who sat in lonely state on either side of the main aisle, while up in the corners of the galleries a score of civil servants, with an odd outsider watched the proceedings.

The Lieutenant-Governor drove up to the Parliament Buildings promptly at 3 o'clock, accompanied by a military escort. A salute of 15 guns was fired as he approached. He was met at the door of the Legislative Chamber by Premier Drury and members of the Cabinet, and escorted to the dais. The Assistant Clerk of the House then read the list of bills passed during the session, to which his Honor gave formal assent. The usual bill voting moneys to the Crown was presented to the Lieutenant-Governor, who then read the following speech:

"Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

"In relieving you of the exacting duties of the present session, I desire to commend the close and conscientious attention you have bestowed upon the various measures that have been submitted for your consideration. While the session has been of unusual duration, your deliberations have been of special importance and more than ordinary results have been accomplished.

"I share with you to the fullest extent the sentiments expressed in the eloquent tribute you have paid to the noble and unselfish part borne by the Mother Country in carrying the burdens of the war, and more than her share of the great burdens the reconstruction has entailed upon civilized nations. It will afford me pleasure to transmit your message to his Majesty the King.

Agriculture Aided.

"Although the Spring season was somewhat backward in certain sections of the province, I trust that the great agricultural industry of this province will have a successful year, and thus contribute to relieve the scarcity of food and to enhance the prosperity of the whole community. By means of legislation and appropriations, steps have been taken to assist in the further development of agricultural production. Special mention may be made of the Act to encourage co-operation in the marketing of potatoes and of seed grain, which is expected to have a very beneficial effect. The Act respecting the handling of cream, the amendments to the Dog Tax and Sheep Protection Act and the Act respecting community halls, are among the other measures which will no doubt prove of advantage to the province generally.

"It is a matter of satisfaction that in the framing of an Election Act the various views entertained on this subject have been harmonized and a source of controversy and disquiet removed. The people will observe with approval the spirit of conciliation displayed by the House in the preparation of public measures, and the general desire that the best counsel shall prevail.

"An anomalous situation having arisen out of the importation of intoxicating

liquors into the province, the Federal Government has been asked to submit the question to the people under the provisions of the amended Canada Temperance Act. A measure has been adopted to ensure that in the event of importation being prohibited, transactions in liquor shall not be permitted within the province to defeat the purpose of that measure. During the recess the operations of the Ontario Temperance Act will be fully inquired into by a Committee of the Legislature.

Bigger Grants to Education.

"Initial steps have been taken to improve the state of education by increasing the financial support of the schools, especially the rural schools, for the purpose of carrying out needed reforms. The grants to university education have been renewed, pending fuller inquiry into the relations of these institutions to the province with a view to determining the future obligations of the state in this respect. A revision of the Public Libraries Act has been adopted in order to strengthen the resources and to encourage the extension of libraries in those parts of the province not now provided with such facilities.

"Several measures affecting the welfare of the industrial workers have been adopted. Provision has been made for the payment of allowances to mothers with dependent children. Authority has been given for the establishment of a minimum wage for women and children. More generous compensation has been provided for injured workers employed in the various industries.

"Authority has been given to municipalities to submit to the ratepayers by-laws for the gradual reduction of the taxation of improvements, income and business, until all such taxation is eliminated. Under the provisions of the law the reduction may be discontinued at any point desired; and if the ratepayers so decide the taxation may be restored by gradual stages.

"A measure has been adopted to simplify the qualifications required by candidates for office in local municipalities, and to remedy the varied and confusing conditions that have hitherto prevailed in this connection.

Extension of Moratorium.

"By the enactment of the Mortgages and Purchasers' Relief Act, 1920, it has been provided that repayment of the principal money now due on any mortgage, or agreement to purchase, may be further deferred until the first interest-paying date after October 1st, 1920, but the extension shall in no case go beyond the 1st of January, 1921.

The Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway Commission has been empowered to extend its line to James Bay, when the Lieutenant-Governor in Council shall determine that financial conditions will warrant the undertaking. In adopting this measure, the Legislature has declared a policy of development in the Northern part of Ontario, which is designed to encourage exploration and enterprise, and eventually to bring Ontario into close touch with Hudson Bay and its commercial possibilities.

With a view to the reorganization of the public service on a more economical and more efficient basis, provision has been made for the retirement of aged and incapacitated civil servants. The plan adopted provides for the establishment of a superannuation fund to which the employes and the Government will contribute, and which will in the future carry a burden which has hitherto been borne entirely by the province.

Funds for the Hydro.

Financial provision has been made for carrying on to completion the various developments undertaken by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. The Power Commission Act has been amended to enable better arrangements to be made for the distribution of power in rural districts. Authority has been given for the establishment of the commission of auxiliary plants, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

Among other measures adopted are bills to establish a department of mines, to amend the Housing Act, to amend the Succession Duty Act, and codifying the law of partnership and the law respecting the sale of goods.

I desire to acknowledge the provision you have made for carrying on the various undertakings of the Government, and for maintaining the public service of the province, and to assure you that the supplies you have voted will be administered with due regard to economy and efficiency.

In conclusion, I desire to thank you for the beneficial legislation you have enacted, in the framing of which the entire Legislature has participated very largely, and to express the earnest hope that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon this province and upon our country.