

PREMIER COMES OUT IN FAVOR OF "P.R." BEFORE LEGISLATURE

Declares It Would Prevent Manipulation of Electoral Divisions to Advantage of Any Party—Labor Men Take Same View

MEASURE OPPOSED BY OLD PARTY MEN

Proportional representation came in for more or less extended discussion in the Ontario Legislature yesterday when a bill introduced by T. Magladery, Conservative, Timiskaming, came up for second reading. Although Mr. Magladery's bill only proposed to "allow municipalities to adopt proportional representation in municipal elections," members went on to discuss generally the principle as applied to Provincial elections.

Mr. Magladery referred to the increasing and insistent demand for the system of proportional representation. In municipal elections, he explained, the single transferable vote system would be used.

Ferguson Has Fears.

Hon. G. H. Ferguson expressed concern for the continuity under proportional representation of the age-old principles of responsible government. He was anxious, he said, to hear arguments pro and con, but it would take a good deal of argument, he added, to convince him that the old system could be improved upon.

Hon. Thomas Crawford said he had heard no public demand for proportional representation, and urged that it be killed "right now."

Premier Drury thought there could certainly be no ill effects following upon the adoption of a measure such as that proposed by the member for Timiskaming.

"I do not think," he said, "that proportional representation would lend itself to the introduction of group government. One thing it would prevent is the manipulation of electoral divisions to the advantage of any party, and it would insure that minorities would be represented much more nearly in proportion to their numbers than they now are."

Tories Out of Touch.

K. K. Homuth, South Waterloo, thought the Conservative members were much out of touch with public sentiment if they were unaware of any demand for it. A system of proportional representation, he contended, would be a big improvement over the old party system.

Edgar Watson, U.F.O. member for North Victoria, strongly supported the principle of proportional representation. Mr. Watson said that formerly there never had been any middle course open to the people.

"How comes it you are in the House, then?" asked R. R. Hall, Parry Sound.

Mr. Watson—The people of Ontario simply kicked over the traces.

Mr. Hall—Then there is a middle course.

R. R. Hall, Parry Sound, expressed the conviction that if questionnaires were sent out among the U. F. O. members for their conception of the workings of the system "there would not be six in the whole bunch who would say the same." How could the ordinary elector, he asked, be expected to vote intelligently under it? Asked by Mr. Watson if he were not aware that many House members represented minorities in

their constituencies, Mr. Hall replied, "They may on that side of the House."

Confuses Electors.

J. A. Calder, North Oxford, contended, in the face of denials, that 11,800 spoiled ballots had been cast in the Winnipeg election. He quoted results in other countries under proportional representation, which, he believed, were entirely unsatisfactory.

Supporting Bill.

After Dr. H. A. Stevenson, Labor member for London, had supported the bill, Hon. Walter Rollo, Minister of Labor, pointed out proportional representation was not a system intended primarily to benefit the Labor party, "and," he said, "we have group government pretty nearly all over Canada at the present time without proportional representation."

"I think that, without question, the government of this Province will resolve itself back into that of the two old parties," declared Thos. Marshall, Liberal member for Lincoln.

The bill received second reading.

RAKE TOWNSITE FORE AND AFT

Malcolm Lang and Hon. Mr. Ferguson Wax
Critical

DRURY DEFENDS MOVE

Second reading was given in the Legislature yesterday to Premier Drury's bill to incorporate the townsite of Kapuskasing, but not before the whole arrangement, including the agreement entered into between the Government and the Spruce Falls Pulp & Paper Co., was subjected to hot criticism by Malcolm Lang, Liberal member for Cochrane, and Hon. G. H. Ferguson.

According to the agreement, said Premier Drury, the townsite was not to be a "company" townsite, a state of affairs which he thought was detrimental to citizenship. Mr. Lang pointed out that it was going to be a "Government" townsite, which, in his opinion, was worse. And, moreover, he said, if the townsmen of Kapuskasing fell down on their repayments of the half-million dollars being advanced by the Government for dwelling-house and sanitary construction, the townsite then reverted in any case to the company.

Folly to Move Soldiers.

Hon. G. H. Ferguson reiterated former statements to the effect that it had been folly on the part of the Government to move the soldier settlers away from Kapuskasing.

The ex-Minister of Crown Lands ridiculed the "splendid" agreement that had been drawn up by the Government with the new company. The Government, he declared, had relieved the company of the obligation of paying \$1 per horsepower water rentals, had moved forward six years the date at which it must complete the agreement, and had contracted a worthless arrangement whereby a reservation of 15 per cent. of the paper output was made for Canadian publishers. Hon. Mr. Ferguson calculated that the Government, in altering the original agreement drawn up by the old Government, had lost to the Province