

PROVINCIAL POLICE ARE BALKY REGARDING O.T.A. ENFORCEMENT, DECLARES RANEY BEFORE HOUSE

Supt. Rogers Distinctly Opposed to Co-ordinating Criminal Law and O.T.A. Work — Brackin Doesn't Blame Him — Provision for Police Chief in Each County Withdrawn

PASSES COMMITTEE FOR THIRD READING

For seven solid hours yesterday the Ontario Legislature in committee debated Attorney-General Raney's bill to co-ordinate criminal law and O.T.A. enforcement under a Provincial Commissioner of Police. At near the midnight hour the committee defeated the motion of H. H. Dewart that the bill be not reported, and amidst thunderous applause from U. F. O. benches the measure was sent on for third reading.

The debate proceeded during the day with all the vigor characteristic of O.T.A. discussions and ran on at length despite obvious efforts of the Government to curtail discussion. On one occasion Mr. Dewart curtly informed the Premier he could not interrupt him during his remarks and a moment later Premier Drury returned the compliment.

Attorney-General Raney withdrew sections of the bill which provided for the appointment of a special chief officer in each county to whom all county constables would be amenable.

The principal objectors to the measure were H. H. Dewart, Liberal Leader; R. L. Brackin, Liberal member for West Kent; J. C. Tolmie, Liberal member for Windsor, and Hon. G. H. Ferguson. Mr. Dewart said it was but a continuance of the policy to co-ordinate all power and authority in the Province under the Attorney-General; R. L. Brackin and J. C. Tolmie predicted a weakening of law administration in both departments; Hon. G. H. Ferguson declared the proposed step had not been given sufficient consideration.

Not Very Informative.

Both Opposition Leaders protested at the lack of information provided members of the Legislature as to the exact purport of the bill: whether it was the intention to supersede Superintendent Joseph E. Rogers, and who it was intended to make Provincial Commissioner of Police. Premier Drury supported the bill.

In opening the discussion Mr. Dewart asked if it were not a very extraordinary thing that Provincial Police officers who had been over 30 years in the service and receiving only \$3,000 a year should not find "that favored children of fortune under the auspices of the Attorney-General" should be thrust in over them at much larger salaries. "This bill," he said, "is an appeal for the centralization of power in the Attorney-General, one of the many bills he has introduced to centralize power in one man, and I object to every measure that has that tendency.

Balk at O.T.A. Enforcement.

In reply, Attorney-General Raney declared there had been a disposition on the part of the Provincial Police, he would not say to evade, but to avoid having anything to do with the enforcement of the Ontario Temperance Act. Under the bill proposed every officer in the Province, excepting one or two especially charged with investigating a particular crime, would have upon himself the added duty of enforcing the O.T.A. It meant the abolition of the

control of the License Board, though not necessarily of the board itself, although it was problematical whether, in the event of the heralded resignation of the Chairman, the vacancy would again be filled.

"Under the act," he said, "if the referendum carries there will be a new condition of things. At the present time the O.T.A. is full of dead wood. If the referendum carries, or perhaps even if it does not carry, the O.T.A. ought to be revised at the next session of the Ontario Legislature. In this bill there is no studied appeal to supersede anybody. I am not prepared to give any pledge as to who the new commissioner will be."

Asked by J. E. Thompson (North-east Toronto) if Assistant Deputy Robert Geddes of the Toronto Police Force had been approached in connection with the commissioner-ship, the Attorney-General denied it.

Mr. Rogers Opposes Idea.

J. C. Tolmie (Windsor) looked upon the bill as proposing a very serious step. Had the Attorney-General asked the opinion of the Superintendent of Provincial Police? Hon. Mr. Raney said he had, and that the Superintendent was distinctly opposed to co-ordinating criminal law enforcement with that of the O.T.A. Mr. Tolmie pointed out that the carrying into effect of the principle proposed had already resulted in the loss of two very efficient officers in the Windsor district. In Mr. Tolmie's opinion there was a distinct difference, which ought to be regarded, of enforcement of laws against serious crime and the O.T.A.

R. L. Brackin (Liberal member for West Kent), whose connection with the Spracklin trial and wide criminal legal experience caused members to give attentive hearing to his views, declared: "There is a vast difference between the enforcement of the O.T.A., the methods that have got to be adopted in enforcing that act, and in other kinds of law enforcement." He said one could not blame a Provincial police officer of long criminal experience for objecting when he was asked to do "some of the things that have to be done in the enforcing of the Ontario Temperance Act."

Do Away With Spotters.

Premier Drury declared one did not need to make O.T.A. enforcement different from any other law. It was because he disapproved of whiskey spotters and stool-pigeons, he said, that he was supporting a co-ordination move.

"We are going to get better conditions by this consolidation," he said. "We are going to avoid overlapping. I am willing to risk the reputation of my opinion on the matter that we will get better law enforcement of the O.T.A. and general law enforcement."

Among those promising support of the measure was Z. Mageau, Liberal. In passing, he paid a tribute to the capabilities of the present Superintendent of Provincial Police, Joseph Rogers. He had known him many years ago, he said, when Mr. Rogers was working on matters very similar to those facing law officers at the present day, in so far as enforcement of liquor laws was concerned. In those days, as now, officers had to "do some shooting" now and again.

Any official who was not prepared to enforce the O. T. A., said R. M. Warren, North Renfrew, should not be retained, inasmuch as the act was law, quite as much as any other on the statute book.

Other members who took part in the committee discussions were: Charles McCrea, Conservative member for Sudbury; J. W. Curry, Liberal, S.E. Toronto; Alex. Lewis, N.E. Toronto; J. M. Webster, U.F.O. member for Lambton; Hon. Geo. Ross, Kingston; Geo. G. Halcrow, E. Hamilton.