

QUIET, BUSY DAY SPENT BY HOUSE

Legislature Kills Bill to Ex- empt Church and School Properties

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS TODAY

A sparsely attended Legislature considered yesterday a miscellaneous assortment of bills, and, from the point of view of excitement, it was almost the quietest day this session.

Hon. Peter Smith announced that the public accounts would be down today, and that he would present the Budget likely on Thursday.

Premier Drury, in answer to a question, said there was no intention on the part of the Government to revert to the system of a Fuel Administrator for the Province. The bill brought in by Alex. C. Lewis, Northeast Toronto, to abolish exemptions on church and school properties found no friends in the House, and died during second reading.

Nipigon Deal Again.

The only flurry of the day, and it was very mild, occurred when discussion on the Nipigon power development was called. Hon. Howard Ferguson said he did not wish to speak on the subject until all the documents in connection with the case had been tabled by the Prime Minister. Mr. Drury asked him to specify, and Mr. Ferguson said he could not specify, as he did not know what letters had been written, but thought all the correspondence and other papers on the subject should be put before the House. H. H. Dewart also argued that these documents and letters should be brought down, and the Prime Minister promised to table all the papers.

Hon. W. E. Raney introduced bills to amend the Ontario Railway Act and to amend the Ontario Railway and Municipal Act. These bills provide that, instead of bonds issued by the railway companies being limited to 5 per cent. interest, the interest is not to be more than allowed by the Railway Board. Annual returns of railways to the board are to be arranged so that they will be due at the same time as they are required to be sent in to the Dominion Board.

Question of Coal Price.

Hon. Thomas Crawford asked if the Government intended taking any action in connection with the price of coal. Premier Drury said he hoped the anti-combine legislation, to be introduced this session, would afford a remedy.

Alex. C. Lewis moved for second reading for his bill to abolish exemptions on property owned by churches and schools and burying grounds. Excepted from these exemptions were universities, public and separate schools, and burying grounds in townships, villages and towns. Mr. Lewis said that private schools in Toronto were assessed at \$1,666,000 and cemeteries at \$2,600,000. He argued that under the working of the Assessment Act church buildings would be virtually exempt under his bill, but the land would not. This was sharply questioned by the Premier, but Mr. Lewis held to his ground, and said he had had some years of experience in assessment work in Toronto and knew whereof he spoke. Regarding the assessment of churches in Toronto, he gave the following figures: Synagogues, \$382,000; Roman Catholic churches, \$1,603,000; Protestant churches, \$10,969,000. All these properties were exempt from taxation.

Finds Many Opponents.

Mr. Dewart opposed the bill, and said that a measure of that kind should be introduced as a general amendment to the Assessment Act, rather than in the way it had been introduced.

J. W. Curry also opposed the bill, as did Premier Drury and Hon. George S. Henry. The Premier said it would interfere seriously with the work of many country churches. Mr. Henry suggested that the area of lands owned by seminaries of learning should be clearly defined, as there were cases where they owned much more land than they used, holding it for speculative purposes. The bill was defeated.

Andrew W. Gray's bill to give permission for Councils to fix the hours of polling in municipal elections from eight in the morning to six at night was passed. Councils may do this by by-law if the by-law passes before November 15 preceding the elections.

Another bill of Mr. Lewis', providing that, where actions in law were entered against a publicly-owned street railway, the action should be against the commission that operated the railway, and not against the corporation, was withdrawn at the request of the Attorney-General. Mr. Lewis will introduce an amendment to the bill constituting the Toronto Transportation Commission to this effect.

Fruit Bill to Committee.

Hon. Manning Doherty's bill to aid in the grading and packing of fruit passed second reading. Mr. Ferguson suggested if private owners of existing plants wanted to come in under this act and could not, then they should not be subject to unfair competition with the assistance of Government funds. Mr. Doherty said the bill was not retroactive in its application. The bill was referred to the special committee on fruit, formed at the last session of the Legislature.

Hon. Peter Smith's bill to amend the Private Detectives' Act also passed second reading. This bill prohibits these concerns from acting as collection agencies; raises the bond from \$2,000 to \$3,000; requires that each operator must obtain a license from the Provincial Treasurer, and requires also, that the record of all operators working for licensees shall be open at all times to inspection by the Commissioner of Police.

Discuss Mining Measures.

In piloting his mining measures through second reading, Hon. Harry Mills was asked if it was thought advisable to give the Mining Commissioner the status of a judge, with the prestige and dignity of a court. Mr. Mills said he did not think there had been any great request for this. Mr. Raney said that the Province ought to be fairly economical in the creation of judges. Personally, he added, he was sorry to see that word applied to the head of the Toronto Juvenile Court. Just as much honor would attach to the Mining Commissioner as to a Mining Judge.

Mr. Mills' bill gives the Commissioner the right to decide certain disputes that formerly went before the High Court.

Further progress in committee was made with the bills respecting automobile insurance and accident and sickness insurance.

Thomas Marshall, M.P.P., Is New Liberal Whip

The Liberal Whip in the Legislature, F. Wellington Hay, having been elevated to the position of Leader, Liberal members have elected Thomas Marshall, member for Lincoln, as new Whip. Mr. Marshall, who is highly regarded by members of all parties for his urbanity, fairness and good judgment, was elected by acclamation.