

U.F.O. Ministry Subjected to Fiercest Criticism Since Taking Office, for Failure to State Policy on Minor Measure — "Dodging Responsibility," Says Opposition

RANEY'S ADMISSION INVITES ONSLAUGHT

When Attorney-General Raney failed in the Legislature yesterday to state the attitude of the Government toward a measure calling for the annual election of two members of local boards of police commissioners, he drew down upon himself and the Government the severest criticism as to Government lack of leadership and assumption of responsibility that the Drury Government has received since it took over the reins of office.

The measure, which was friendless, except for the sponsorship of T. Tooms, Peterboro' West, and a vote accorded to it by J. W. Curry, K.C., Southeast Toronto, was killed by an overwhelming shout of "No's" when the Speaker called for them. It was vigorously denounced by R. L. Brackin, Liberal, West Kent; Dr. Forbes Godfrey and Sergt.-Major McNamara, and mildly disapproved by the Attorney-General.

Hon. G. H. Ferguson, Conservative Leader, started the attack by asking the Attorney-General for his view of the measure. Hon. Mr. Raney, in reply, explained its effect, and expressed it as his personal opinion that the law should not be changed. When the Conservative Leader expressed some surprise that the Attorney-General was not prepared to give any intimation of the Government's attitude, Hon. Mr. Raney said the Government had not considered the measure, and the Government could hardly be expected to read every one of the hundred-odd bills standing in the bill book.

The debate upon proper procedure brought to his feet W. F. Nickle, K.C., Conservative member for Kingston, who raked the Government fore and aft for its failure to perform the functions of government, give needed leadership, and accept responsibility. He was squarely against the principle that the Government was not bound to take any position regarding private members' bills. They should come prepared to give private members full information as to the object and tendency of the bill, and go further and state whether they approved the principle. He described the Government's present attitude as a "milk-and-water" policy.

Irresponsible Leadership.

"It is another exhibition," he said, "of the same irresponsibility that we saw in the House this afternoon. Could there have been a more pitiful exhibition than we had in the House this afternoon of the Government procedure in relation to the free text-books bill, when the Leader of the Government, by mushy sentimentalism, tried to destroy the bill. The Minister of Education almost threatened to cut away the school grants if they made text-books free. The Minister of Labor fought as vigorously in support of the legislation as the Leader of the Government did against it, and a minute later the Minister of Mines was denouncing the Minister of Education. That is not government; that is irresponsible leadership."

Continuing, he asked why, with the paid assistants at hand, the Government could not be prepared to get up and expound the meanings of the various measures. "Is legislation to be slipped through this House unknown and unknowable?"

say the Government should have every one of these bills brought into Council. They should be considered by the Executive. When the Attorney-General takes the position he does this afternoon he absolutely overlooks the function of the Cabinet."

Should Assume Responsibility.

F. Wellington Hay (Liberal Leader) also expressed the view that there should be an assumption of responsibility on the part of the Government for measures submitted to the House. His conception of government, he said, was in line with that of Mr. Nickle. At the same time he thought there should not be a return to the old restriction of private members' thought and action.

Before the incident closed the Attorney-General arose to state that, so far from not having read the bill, he had a memorandum of its purport before him when discussing it. That drew another denunciation from the Conservative Leader, who said: "Why didn't you tell the House you had a memorandum? Why don't you be straightforward and say I have a memorandum?"

Hon. Mr. Raney said he did not have to tell the House everything, and went on to refer to the time-wasting tactics of members in the Conservative corner of the House. When he declared that honorable members on his side knew as much about constitutional law as did the legal minds of the Conservative section, Farmer members applauded vigorously.

When, in the vote, J. W. Curry, K.C., raised a lone "Aye" in support of the measure, Hon. G. H. Ferguson commented, so that the House could hear: "He thought the Attorney-General was going to say 'Aye.'"

EVEN CABINET CANNOT AGREE ON TEXT-BOOKS

R. L. Brackin's Bill Raises Hot Discussion in Legislature

PASSES SECOND READING

The bill of R. L. Brackin, Liberal member for West Kent, to provide for free text-books in public, separate and industrial schools, passed second reading in the Legislature yesterday after a long discussion, and over which the Cabinet itself was divided. Premier Drury spoke against the bill, Hon. W. R. Rollo and Hon. H. Mills supported it, as did the Minister of Education, Hon. R. H. Grant.

The discussion showed that Opposition and Labor members were practically unanimous in support of the bill and Farmer members against it. Just before the vote was taken, Hon. Mr. Raney said it was the understanding that the bill would be wide open in committee for amendments. Two Farmer members voted for the bill, Hon. Mr. Grant and T. K. Slack, Dufferin. Two Conservatives opposed the bill, Hon. Thomas Crawford and A. C. Lewis, Northeast Toronto.

The discussion throughout was somewhat informal, and many members spoke twice on the bill, though it was second reading. Mr. Brackin said the bill required school boards to supply text-books free to pupils. It was based on the principle that if the State said that children should go to school, the State should supply them with the instruments with which they worked. The bill would not put any burden on the Province.

W. H. Casselman, Dundas, said he was opposed to the bill. The House should not allow it to go to committee to be killed; it should

kill it right there. He thought they were trying to enact too much compulsory legislation in the Province.