

SATURDAY, APRIL 1,

SAYS OPPOSITION HAS NEW DOCTRINE

"Old as Parliamentary Practice," Retorts Hon. G. H. Ferguson—Government Again Attacked for Failure to Explain Legislation Before House

ASSESSMENT BILL DRAWS HOT DEBATE

The question as to what stand the Government should take on a bill introduced by a private member was the subject of another spirited controversy yesterday in the Legislature.

Hon. G. Howard Ferguson, Conservative Leader, argued that the Government should explain to the House a bill introduced by a private member. Hon. W. E. Raney held that it was not the duty of the Government to explain it on presentation, but the duty of the man who introduced the bill. The argument advanced by Mr. Ferguson was a new doctrine, he said. Mr. Ferguson retorted that it might be a new doctrine to the Attorney-General, but it was a doctrine as old as Parliamentary practice.

Appoint Official "Explainer."

W. F. Nickle, Kingston said that, if the Government was not willing to explain these bills, he thought that some member of the law branch of the House should be appointed to whom any member would have a right to go, and who would give full explanation of the import of legislation.

The bill, which was one to amend the Assessment Act, was introduced by Alex. C. Lewis, Northeast Toronto. Mr. Lewis explained that the bill had been drawn up by the City Solicitor for Toronto, and contained changes recommended by the Assessment Commissioner for Toronto. The amendments affected different parts of the act, and he thought it would be best, perhaps, if the bill went to committee, where Mr. Forman would have a chance to be heard.

"The bill is one of the kind so reprehended by certain speakers, some good in it and some bad," said Mr. Raney. "That is a fair description of it," said Mr. Lewis.

Messrs. R. R. Hall, Parry Sound; Karl Homuth, South Waterloo, and W. F. Nickle thought more should be heard of the bill in second reading. Mr. Nickle asked for some explanation of the bill.

Let Mr. Forman Explain.

Mr. Lewis said he did not pretend to have the ability to explain each section. Toronto's Assessment Commissioner prepared the sections, and he thought Mr. Forman should have a chance to be heard, which would be in committee.

J. C. Tolmie, Windsor, asked if it was not the duty of the Government to explain these bills and say whether they should go on to committee or not.

"Do you ask me?" inquired Mr. Speaker.

"I am asking through you," said Mr. Tolmie.

Mr. Raney, in reply, said he did not conceive that to be his duty.

Mr. Ferguson asked if a layman brought in a bill involving legal difficulties, how was he to explain it.

Mr. Raney wanted to know if the Opposition was putting forward the argument that it was the duty of the Government to explain bills introduced by private members. This was a new doctrine, he said.