

## Bill to Distribute Unearned School Surpluses Goes to Committee

### ABUSE DANGER REMOVED

Although subjected to criticism as a move likely to aggravate a difficult situation rather than cure it, Hon. R. H. Grant's school law amendments, calculated to straighten out the vexed school grants question, went through committee of the whole Legislature yesterday with two amendments. In response to requests from Hon. G. H. Ferguson and J. R. Cooke, Conservative, North Hastings, however, the Minister consented to refer the whole school grants subject to the Special Committee on Education, of which T. Marshall, Liberal, Lincoln, is the Chairman.

#### Distribute All Money.

The bill proposes to permit the Minister to redistribute among separate schools not earning the special grant, the unabsorbed balance of the portion allotted to the separate schools of the Province. Under the Conservative Government this balance went back into Consolidated Revenues, and the accumulated sum of approximately \$100,000 is now in dispute and likely to be the subject of litigation.

During Mr. Grant's regime, however, the amount left over each year has been redistributed among the separate schools earning a grant, on the ground that, according to the B. N. A. Act, all special grant moneys must be distributed.

The most important change made yesterday in Mr. Grant's measure was made at the instigation of Premier Drury, who, in conformity with his announcement of a fortnight or so ago, moved to amend the clause which permitted the Minister of Education to distribute the unearned portion of grants according "to the special circumstances of any particular school."

#### Open to Political Abuse.

This clause was deleted, with the words "and any other circumstances which, according to the regulations, should affect such apportionments." The Premier explained that the first clause left the grants apportionment open to political abuse.

Premier Drury was also responsible for the inclusion, among the considerations governing the apportionment of the words, "the assessment of the section and in the case of a separate school the assessment of the separate school supporters." The original phrase, "and the amount of the municipal or school assessments," had been previously deleted.

J. R. Cooke submitted the opinion that the Minister's solution would make the problem infinitely worse. Reminding the Government that last year the unabsorbed surplus amounted to \$70,000, he estimated this would mean an average distribution of \$706. He feared that an initial grant of \$706 would be sufficient to stimulate further divisions of separate school sections where otherwise they are public school supporters, with all parties working harmoniously. He saw in it a possibility of weakening public school sections through such divisions.

#### Surpluses Getting Smaller.

Although agreeing to refer the matter to committee, Mr. Grant asked that his amendment go through, explaining his desire to avoid a recurrence of the situation which gave rise to so much criticism last year. He thought that the situation in any event was gradually righting itself, by the separate schools continuing to earn more of their allotment of school grant funds. Surpluses were diminishing year by year.

Another amendment approved was one providing that for the purposes of the apportionment of the grant the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may declare public and separate schools in villages and towns of not over 2,000 inhabitants "rural" schools. At the request of the Minister the population limit was raised from 1,500 to 2,000.

A clause authorizing any school section of more than 500 population to conduct elections of trustees by secret ballot was voted out.

Hon. G. S. Henry secured the addition of an amendment making it possible for a township council to form a school area on a majority vote, instead of the four-fifths vote demanded by the present law.

## FIX WORKING HOURS FOR FEMALE LABOR

### Strong Opposition Fails to Block Hon. Mr. Rollo's Amendments

#### CAPITAL'S RIGHTS URGED

In the face of considerable opposition from both Liberals and Conservatives, Hon. Walter Rollo's bill to amend the Minimum Wage Act was given its second reading in the Legislature last evening. Although invited by Hon. G. S. Henry to participate in the debate, not one farmer member took part in the discussion.

Opposing the bill, Hon. G. Howard Ferguson said that the powers given to the board, which had been acting for only a year and a half, were too sweeping. Very careful measures should be taken in this Province to develop industry and invite capital, he said, and legislators should be very wary of any measures which might tend to discourage it.

#### Not Enough Latitude.

The present bill, he declared, tended to establish practically a flat rate for female labor throughout the Province and did not allow sufficient latitude to employers in the smaller centres, where the people desired to work all the time possible. Especially was this true of industries which worked at full speed at certain seasons, and then experienced more quiet times.

Dealing with the section of the bill which states that the orders of the board shall prevail in cases where the maximum hours permitted are lower than those mentioned in the Factory Act, Mr. Ferguson claimed that prevailing statutes should not be overridden by the orders of anybody. "Until the board has had more experience," he declared, "this measure should be allowed to stand over."

"The Minister's statement that this is the first bill introduced which directly affects Labor," said F. Wellington Hay, Liberal Leader, "is most significant, showing that the Labor conditions in this Province are not in need of any radical legislation. On behalf of the industries in the riding which I represent I feel that I must oppose this bill."