

# HURLS FIERY CRITICISM OF COMPENSATION BOARD ACROSS FLOOR OF HOUSE

**R. L. Brackin of West Kent Engages in Lively Tilt With Minister of Labor Over Alleged Shortcomings of Reimbursing Injured Workmen — Complains of High-handed Methods—Several Instances of Lack of Courtesy Cited by Members of Legislature —Premier Rises to Defend Board**

## SAYS INJUSTICES TO APPLICANTS ARE CAUSED BY WRONG METHODS

AN INNOCENT-LOOKING MOTION, standing in the name of J. B. Johnston (East Simcoe), in regard to an injured workman whose case was dealt with by the Workmen's Compensation Board, led to the most spirited debate which has occurred in the Legislature so far this session, and produced some exceedingly bitter criticism of the board for the manner in which it is alleged to treat claims which come before it.

It also provoked a lively tilt between R. L. Brackin, member for West Kent, and the Minister of Labor. Mr. Brackin was very severe in condemnation of some of the methods of the Workmen's Compensation Board, and in the course of his remarks spoke of "the unfortunate wretch who had to come before the board as a claimant."

### Subject for Commiseration.

"Not a 'wretch,'" protested a member of the House, whereupon Mr. Brackin retorted: "He is a wretch when he gets in the hands of this board. He is a respectable citizen before he gets into the hands of this board. After that he is a subject for commiseration."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" the Minister of Labor shouted across the floor.

"Don't you talk like that to me," flashed back the West Kent member, with considerable warmth. "I will handle you if the necessity arises." And then he added, as a kind of aside: "There are different ways of handling different commodities."

Mr. Johnston's motion, which was the cause of all the trouble, merely called for a return in connection with an alleged accident to Mansford H. Clement, deceased, formerly of Orillia, and for a copy of the decision of the Workmen's Compensation Board in the matter. The chief complaint of the mover appeared to be that claimants before the board are not allowed to be represented by a solicitor, and that when he (Mr. Johnston) took up the case, as member for the constituency in which the accident occurred, he was told by the board not to interfere. The mover claimed that it was necessary, especially in the case of illiterate persons, that they should have some assistance in seeking redress.

### Claims Act Not a Success.

Mr. Brackin started off by declaring that the board is not a success, though not because of the legislation which created it. It was quite right that claims should be taken from the courts and the lawyers; but, by reason of the present administration of the act, he claimed, grave injustices are being perpetrated in the Province from day to day. The board, he said, undertook to say that it would not carry on any correspondence with solicitors or lawyers to whom claimants might go to ascertain their rights;