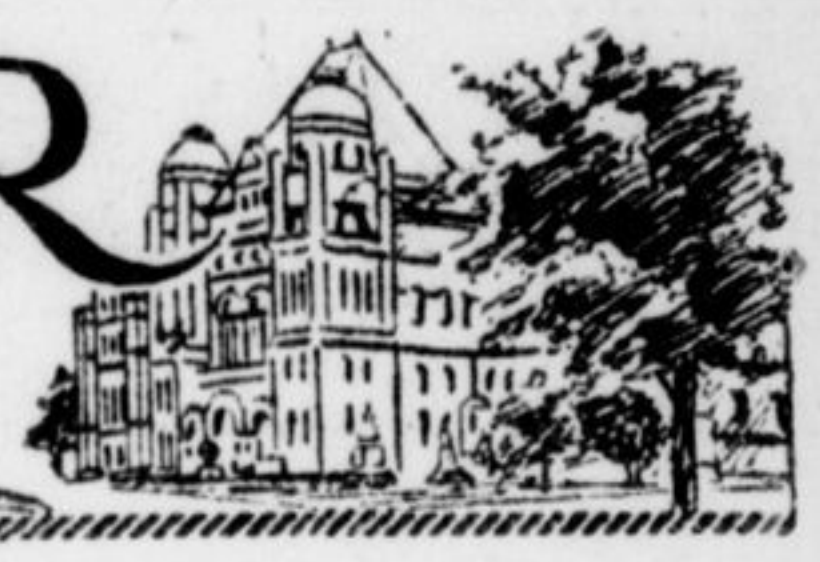


Feb. 9

# The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



Two more speeches on the debate on the Address were heard in the Legislature yesterday, and that was the total amount of the day's work. However, two speeches in a single afternoon is something of an accomplishment, and due credit must be recorded. From a political standpoint the effort of J. G. Lethbridge, U.F.O., West Middlesex, was much more interesting than that of D. M. Hogarth, Conservative, Port Arthur, though the latter had a much better prepared speech, and gave the House a great deal of information. Mr. Lethbridge evidently had not done much digging for his material, but his observations were indicative to some extent of the direction of the political winds. He made what might be described as a U.F.O. picnic speech. He gave the Farmers a chance to thump their desks, opportunities which have been none too numerous on that side of the House. He heaped laudatory references on the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, all of which were so lustily applauded that one could not help coming to the conclusion that there is a fighting party spirit behind Mr. Drury, no matter if old-line politicians do contend to the contrary.

### The O. T. A. in Politics.

Mr. Lethbridge is avowedly a prohibitionist and a strong believer in the O.T.A. He contended that the liquor question was being thrust into politics, but he absolved his side of the House from such an action. When reminded that Mr. Homuth's resolution calling for a beer-and-wine referendum came from behind the Government benches, Mr. Lethbridge commented: "You wait and see what becomes of it when it comes up." The rejoinder was loudly applauded by the Farmers and some Liberals, so that it is not hard to forecast an assassination for the beer-and-wine referendum idea. Mr. Lethbridge admitted that some things made him quite wild, one of them being "a group in this House conniving together for two purposes: first, to discredit the Government; second, to discredit the Ontario Temperance Act."

### The Plea for Economy.

The West Middlesex member was strong for economy, and his remarks in this connection found great favor among the men behind Mr. Drury. He claimed this Government should not give sums from \$20,000 to \$30,000 to lawyers and engineers for services for very short periods. Payments of \$250 a day to lawyers and engineers when a poor man received \$15 a day ex-

penses before a public committee did not help to create a satisfied public feeling. Mr. Lethbridge cited the case of Sir Adam Beck, who, he claimed, received a salary of \$18,000, and had no right to charge Toronto \$250 a day on an arbitration case. He was careful to say he had nothing against Sir Adam, but the principle of the thing was wrong. Again he got U.F.O. applause.

Mr. Lethbridge took as evidence of the Government's good work the fact that the smallest majority it had received in the House in three years was thirteen. The speech can be judged as an excellent sample of what may be expected from the Drury followers during the next election. If the Legislature is representative of the feeling of the Province, its attitude yesterday will convince the Conservatives that a new liquor policy is a thing to be left severely alone. Moreover, the Conservatives will be put on the defensive as being the cause of the present increased expenditures.

### The Backus Deal Again.

Mr. Hogarth dealt with but two questions. He had strong criticism for the Backus deal, claiming that 25 million dollars' worth of forest wealth had been given away for \$50,000. When Attorney-General Raney attempted to interrupt he was met with the remark: "Mr. Attorney-General, confine yourself to legal quibbling, of which you know something." Some people in the galleries applauded this retort, and the Speaker had to warn them. It was Mr. Hogarth's opinion that Backus today held the most valuable timber concession on the North American continent. The Port Arthur member also revamped all the details of the Nipigon power transaction with letters and telegrams.

### An Opportunity Lost.

Everybody thought yesterday that before the orders of the day were called some member would question the Premier about the evidence before the Hydro probe at Niagara Falls, which alleged that a witness had been promised a position or something if he would testify against the Hydro Commission. At least half a dozen members were talking of such a move before the House opened, but evidently each thought the other was attending to it. Premier Drury, with that Parliamentary shrewdness which he is rapidly developing, quickly got the House to Government orders, and the opportunity was lost for one day at least.

The Legislature is now well into work. There are fifty questions of the Ministry on the order paper and a dozen notices of motion, and many of the latter contain vast debating possibilities.