

PROPOSES TO AMEND SPEECH FROM THRONE

G. G. Halcrow Calls Upon
Government to Bring in
Redistribution.

FIRST NIGHT SITTING

Watson's Counter-attack
on Hogarth is Based
Upon an Error.

The Ontario Legislature last evening had its first taste of night life, so far as the present session is concerned. The late sitting was held in furtherance of the Government's plan to have the debate on the Speech from the Throne concluded by this evening, but it is doubtful if this purpose was at all advanced by the procedure. For G. G. Halcrow (Labor, East Hamilton) seized the last few moments of the evening in order to introduce an amendment to the address, which called upon the Government to bring in some form of redistribution and which, before it is disposed of by the House, will undoubtedly be the cause of a lengthy discussion.

The amendment which Mr. Halcrow proposed, while in itself rather a novelty in Provincial House procedure, is not vital in its relation to the life of the Government, simply calling, as it does, for some form of redistribution which shall embody the principle of representation by population. Its chief significance lies in the fact that it may delay somewhat the Government's program, the discussion upon it being capable of preventing the House from entering upon consideration of its budget to-morrow, as had been planned.

The failure to bring down a redistribution scheme was practically the only point during the day upon which the Administration was attacked. Edgar Watson (U.F.O., East Victoria), started vigorously enough by a statement which denied in toto Mr. Hogarth's charges concerning the Backus deal. When, however, he was forced after a sharp controversy to admit that he had mis-stated the Hogarth charges, his remarks became merely a formal defence of Drury policies. Walter Curry, K.C. (Liberal, South-East Toronto), who followed Mr. Watson, soared for the most part into the clouds of citizenship ideals and political and economic theory and only descended at times to indicate that he was to all intents and purposes a Druryite disciple except in so far as approving its non-redistribution policy was concerned.

G. G. Halcrow, the final speaker of the evening was concerned principally with private grievances between himself and other Laborites, and touched only upon general matters in order to introduce his amendment to the Address.

Watson Misses Fire.

The feature of the afternoon sitting was undoubtedly Mr. Watson's attempt at a sweeping denial of the Backus charges. With Mr. Hogarth, who had reviewed the notorious features of the deal, out of his seat, he declared ringingly that that member's statement of the case had been

entirely false. Hon. Mr. Ferguson protested that Mr. Watson could not so sweepingly discredit another member's remarks unless he were prepared to point out the point concerning which they were in error. Mr. Watson said that he did not intend to discuss the deal, but that Mr. Hogarth's statement that Mr. Backus had secured \$25,000,000 worth of timber for \$50,000 had been completely inaccurate, as the lumber magnate had to pay the regular Crown dues.

At this point Mr. Hogarth re-entered the House and pointed out that he had specifically stated that Mr. Backus paid the Crown dues. His argument had been that Mr. Backus was not paying any bonus in addition to the dues and that, in this way, he was pocketing \$25,000,000 which would have been paid to the Government had the limit been sold upon the same terms as had others in the same locality. Mr. Watson was finally forced to admit that such had been Mr. Hogarth's statement, and he had previously conceded that the Crown dues constituted the only revenue which Mr. Backus gave in return for his concessions.

Fears for T. and N. O.

Before the orders of the day were called, Hon. Mr. Ferguson drew the Premier's attention to a press report which stated that the C.P.R. was contemplating an invasion of the T. and N. O. Territory. The Conservative leader considered the pronouncement to be of utmost significance to the Government road's future. The Government, he said, was contemplating an extension to James Bay, a project of which he did not disapprove, but which he believed to have a rather slender basis. The actual feature of the Government's policy with which he did quarrel, however, was that it was neglecting the T. and N. O.'s proven territory in the silver mining area, while proceeding with this other somewhat visionary development.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson instanced particularly the South Lorraine and Kirkland Lake areas. The Keeley and frontier mines in the former district, he pointed out, had access to the T. and N. O. road only by means of a poorly constructed roadway. The Kirkland Lake area, for its part, was on the eve of a great development in its eastern section towards the Quebec boundary line, a territory which the T. and N. O. at present failed to serve.

Further criticism by Hon. Mr. Ferguson was directed towards the fact that the proposed T. and N. O. extension is routed along the west side of James Bay. He held that it should skirt the east side of the bay and thus tap the rich lumbering part of the country.

"I bring this matter before the House," Hon. Mr. Ferguson declared, "in the hope that it may not be too late—that railway facilities may yet be provided for the mining companies, and that, by branch lines and feeders, the Government line may secure the business that must come from the development of this district."

Premier Drury stated in reply that he wished to postpone consideration of the T. and N. O. situation until he should take it up in connection with the budget. He believed, he said, that he would be able to satisfy Hon. Mr. Ferguson upon all the points which he had raised.

Watson Takes Up Cudgels.

Mr. Watson, at the outset of his speech, said he would not discuss the Backus deal, as he understood another opportunity would be afforded by the Government for doing so. Then there was a breeze. "The half has not yet been told," remarked Hon. G. S. Henry. Mr. Watson took exception to the statement made by Mr. Hogarth that Mr. Backus had received \$25,000,000 worth of timber for \$50,000. "That is not correct," he declared.

"What is incorrect?" asked Hon. G. H. Ferguson. "It is all incorrect," rejoined Mr. Watson. He added that the \$50,000 did not include dues. Then, tackled by Col. J. A. Currie as to whether he had made any comparison with amounts paid in connection with other limits, Mr. Watson could only reply: "I am not discussing the matter exhaus-