

# Evades Redistribution Pending Budget Debate; May Experiment With 'P.R.'

**Premier Drury Not Inclined to Announce Government's Policy Yet When Pressed by Hon. G. H. Ferguson and H. S. Cooper—Trial of Single Transferable Vote Is Possibility**

## GOVERNMENT BLAMED FOR DELAY ON ISSUE

To a very slight extent in the Legislature yesterday the Drury Government lifted the veil of secrecy with which it has shrouded its intentions with regard to redistribution of Ontario electoral divisions. Redistribution, according to custom, is due this year, but although Hon. G. H. Ferguson and H. S. Cooper (Liberal, Northwest Toronto) pressed for some declaration on the part of the Government, Premier Drury declined to make a definite statement of the Government's intentions, even to the Ontario Legislature, until the Budget debate is concluded.

But the Premier made a statement from which certain conclusions may be drawn, one of which is that there will be no general redistribution. He also gave very fair intimation of a try-out of proportional representation and the single alternative vote in one or two ridings. He was asked specifically by H. S. Cooper as to the authority of Gordon Waldron, K.C., U.F.O. solicitor, to speak in criticism of the system of P.R., and the Premier said:

"First, as to whether Mr. Waldron speaks for the Government—he does not. Nor do I share his views. I regard proportional representation, which I believe is a part of the platform of the Liberal party and of the Labor party and of the United Farmers' party, therefore of the Progressive party—"

### Regards "P.R." as Experiment.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson—But not of the grand old party?

J. W. Curry, K.C.—The emphasis being on the "old."

Premier Drury (continuing)—as an electoral experiment well worth trying in the right direction—that and the single transferable vote. I am not prepared to make a full announcement, or to make any announcement, as to the Government's policy. This much I will say: that I intend to make an announcement when speaking on the Budget that will cover it.

"Whatever is done will be done in the interests of fair treatment of the whole Province, and, I think, when the policy of the Government is announced the people will say this, that the Government is taking action toward securing, when redistribution is brought about, a fair treatment of the subject when we know how the thing works out. I may propose such an experiment before we make final redistribution, but we will not have any redistribution as we have had it in the past—a gerrymander. I give you my word on that."

Hon. Mr. Ferguson endeavored to extract from the Premier if the Government intended to have propor-

tional representation in the city of Toronto, but the Premier evaded the question. The Conservative Leader then went on to criticize very severely the absence of any reference to such legislation from the Speech from the Throne, which he thought to be a radical departure from established custom.

"I think," Mr. Ferguson said, "that the House is entitled to something definite. The people should not be kept in uncertainty and the people should not be trifled with."

Mr. Drury—It is only a step-parentage.

Mr. Ferguson—Well, it may be a step-parentage that will step on my honorable friend, because I see that Mr. Waldron is not in favor of the object or the probable results that will accrue from proportional representation.

In introducing the subject before the orders, H. S. Cooper said that the report of Mr. Waldron's speech in *The Globe* brought up again the important question of what the Gov-

ernment intended to do with redistribution. He reminded the Government of the unfairness to Toronto in the retention of the old basis of representation. It seemed, he said, that until recently the present Government was being credited with the idea of proportional representation.

"Have they found out," he asked, "that proportional representation is feasible and with their usual tactics are they giving the people who have helped them at times a good kick, and putting the blame on to them for advocating proportional representation?"

J. W. Curry, K.C., Southeast Toronto, another Liberal member, arose in mild protest at his colleague's statement. He would not regard the Liberal party as having been kicked, he said, by having had attributed to them a desire to carry out any portion of their platform. Either the platform of the Liberal party means what it purports or it means nothing, he said, and the policy of the party has been in favor of proportional representation.

Malcolm Lang, Liberal member for Cochrane, said that if it were the intention of the Government to dispense with redistribution the effect would be to disenfranchise large numbers of people in the rapidly growing districts of Northern Ontario. He characterized the apparent decision of the Government to pass redistribution as most unusual in view of established custom, and argued that, as the Federal Government felt it obligatory upon them to redistribute this year, Ontario should be bound by the same rule.

## Legislature Measure Proposes Test for Garages

Two new bills of interest were introduced into the Ontario Legislature yesterday, one by K. K. Homuth, Labor member for South Waterloo, which would give to the Department of Highways the right to confer upon garages and mechanics employed therein, after departmental examination, a certificate of efficiency. As Mr. Homuth explained his bill, it would not put any garage out of business, but it would give motorists some guidance as to where to go for repairs by competent mechanics.

Attorney-General Raney introduced a measure to amend the Deserted Wives and Children's Maintenance Act, which would give to Juvenile Court Judges the power to try cases arising under this act. At present they have not the authority, due, according to Mr. Raney, more to an oversight in the drafting of the act than for any other reason.