

# The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



It is so seldom the Legislature has a really business session that the occasion is worthy of special mention. Yesterday for three hours the task of law making, law amending and law discussing was gone through without a wrangle or a heated remark from any member. No person arose before the orders of the day to contradict, explain or ask a question, which in itself is quite remarkable. And yet when the House runs like a well-oiled machine the proceedings are not necessarily dull.

## Rural Ontario's Kick.

Karl Homuth, North Waterloo, sitting just behind the front Ministerial bench, once more attempted to obtain second reading for his bill providing for free text-books in all public and separate schools. Immediately there was a mild roar from rural Ontario, and had it appeared that there was the slightest chance for the bill the roar would have been a great deal louder. The burden of the complaint was that rural school boards were being regulated to death; that it was more compulsion when compulsion is already very unpopular, and that rural authorities were being robbed of local autonomy.

"If it applied to towns and cities only, then all right, but not for the rural parts," said W. H. Casselman (U.F.O., Dundas), and there seemed to be general agreement from Farmer members. George G. Halcrow (Labor, East Hamilton) said he was elected on a platform of "free and compulsory education," and would support the bill. This declaration naturally is of some political moment, inasmuch as at least one member seems to regard a platform as something more than a formality. Hon. R. H. Grant, Minister of Education, whose voice is seldom heard, raised that voice in protest against the measure. He said that at present it cost only \$2.80 for a child to purchase all the books necessary up to the entrance examination.

In opposing the bill, Thomas Marshall (Liberal, Lincoln) made an observation which may provoke some controversy among educationists. He stated that the Government ought to abolish those time-honored school readers. He would put in their place the New Zealand system of a monthly school journal, from which reading might be taught, thus relieving teacher and pupils of the monotony of the same old readers. The bill was lost, about all who voted for it being Rollo Mills, Homuth, Tooms, Halcrow and Col. Currie. If Mr. Homuth is in the next Legislature the chances are he will give it its brief bit of notoriety again.

## Another One Killed.

Then Major A. C. Lewis (Conservative, Northeast Toronto) wanted second reading for his bill to amend the Assessment Act. This, said Major Lewis, was the combined thought of the Union of Municipalities, and, while it did not change the law materially, it did clarify things. Because Major Lewis had jumped on Mr. Homuth's bill, the latter was for leading this measure to immediate slaughter. Mr. Homuth's objections met with more enthusiasm from the members than Major Lewis' plea. In vain W.

F. Nickle (Conservative, Kingston) put up an argument. The bill, he pointed out, was the product of an influential and efficient organization, and it would be "intensely discourteous" to kill it before even letting it go to committee. The Premier was willing to let it proceed as far as the committee. In the meantime the discussions had got out of order, some members speaking twice, and Mr. Speaker had to exert his authority. This was the nearest approach to a row, but it passed safely over.

Mr. Nickle demanded a vote, a recorded vote at that. Premier Drury was anxious to maintain the afternoon's speed, and avoid the tedious, but interesting, process of calling out each member's name, but the tenacious Kingston man won out. Hon. Thomas Crawford rebuked the Premier for his attitude on the bill. This attitude was the same last Friday, when the Premier had favored advancing a measure, but the other members had killed it. Mr. Drury, however, said he would not impose the Ministerial will on a private bill, as such action would be "tyranny." The vote stood at 16 to 34, the majority favoring the slaughter. On the Government side, those willing to let the measure go before the committee were Drury, Raney, Grant, Watson and Willoughby.

## Slower Death for This Bill.

The third measure of the day, a bill to amend the Insurance Act, fathered by J. B. Johnston (Labor, E. Simcoe), met a slightly better fate, though its chances seem poor when the committee gets hold of it. This bill practically means that Ontario fire insurance agents shall get all business originating in the Province. It was alleged that it was mainly aimed to aid insurance men at the Head of the Lakes, who feel that much of their big business is done by Winnipeg men. Wellington Hay, Liberal Leader, was vigorous in his protests against it.

Before adjournment at 6, the party Leaders indulged in a eulogy of R. A. Fowler (Conservative, Lennox), who died during the afternoon. Mr. Fowler was in his 78th year and was the oldest member of the Legislature. Mr. Homuth, as the youngest member, also paid his tribute. The Conservative majority in Lennox last election was 314 in a three-cornered contest.

## The Feeling Back Home.

Some Liberal members who were home during the week-end claim the feeling is growing stronger that there should be some sort of understanding between their party and the ex-Liberals now in the U.F.O. ranks. These members say they heard the usual argument that unless the progressive forces get together in some manner Conservative members would be elected. It was reported that the Conservative chiefs and organizers are quite vigilant in seeking out such opportunities. In view of Leader Hay's emphatic statement last week, denying that any realignment or coalition was being arranged, the situation is quite complicated. Both the Drury and the Morrison wings of the U.F.O. are obviously playing a waiting game, and it will be weeks, perhaps months, before anything definite develops, if anything does develop.

# HIGH TRIBUTES PAID TO DECEASED SOLON

Members of Three Parties  
Alike Laud Late Reginald  
A. Fowler, M.P.P.

## WAS MAN OF MANY PARTS

Through their various Leaders, all parties in the Ontario Legislature yesterday joined in paying tribute to the character and sterling qualities of Reginald A. Fowler, Conservative member for Lennox, whose death occurred yesterday afternoon. His home was at Emerald, Amherst Island, Lennox county. Out of respect for his memory the House adjourned at 6 o'clock until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

## His Qualities Eulogized.

In suggesting evening adjournment, Hon. G. H. Ferguson, Conservative Leader, eulogized the personal qualities of the late member for Lennox. "Those of us who know him," he said, "who know something about his history and career, not only locally, but as a member of the Legislature, I am quite sure, have nothing but the warmest admiration for his character. With all those who came intimately in contact with him he not only earned respect, but created the warmest admiration and devotion for his many splendid qualities."

F. Wellington Hay, Liberal Leader, also paid high tribute to the late member, and, recalling the comparatively recent bereavements of the Liberal party, he said that the Liberals remembered the kind sympathy which had been extended from all sections of the House, and now paid its respect to a deeply esteemed Conservative member. "Mr. Fowler," he said, "was a man whose word was his bond; a man whose thought and whose desire was that in the discharge of his duties he might utilize his best thought and energies in the interests of the Province of Ontario as a whole."

## Man of Quiet Culture.

Premier Drury recalled a Sunday spent at the home of the late member many years ago, and said that in his home, as well as in his public life, Mr. Fowler was a man who earned the affection and esteem of his fellow-men. "He was a man of quiet culture," Hon. Mr. Drury said, "of high and gentlemanly ideals, a delightful man to meet in his home, the soul of hospitality, the soul of kindness, and my good opinion, formed in early years, has not lost anything by subsequent associations with him in public life. I wish to add my tribute to his worth."

K. K. Homuth, Labor member for South Waterloo, recalled pleasant moments spent with the late Mr. Fowler in quiet talks, when the late member was wont to observe that he was the oldest and Mr. Homuth the youngest member of the House. Mr. Homuth paid high tribute to his personal qualities.

The late Mr. Fowler was born in 1845 at Amherst Island, the son of Daniel Fowler, a prominent water-color artist. He took part in the Northwest Rebellion, in the Red River Expedition; was a farmer by profession; was Reeve of Amherst Island for five years, and Warden of Lennox and Addington in 1903. He was formerly a Colonel in the militia, and was first elected to the Legislature in 1914, and was re-elected in 1919.

There will be no by-election to fill the vacancy left in the Ontario Legislature, owing to the proximity of the general elections.