

TO EXEMPT COUNTRY FROM MAIN CLAUSES OF ADOLESCENT ACT

Casselman Wins Victory in Fight to Relieve Farm- ing Communities From Sending Children to School After They Reach Age of 14 Years—Grant Promises Amendment

FURIOUS ATTACK BY DUNDAS MEMBER

Important modifications in the present and intended operation of the Adolescent School Attendance Act were heralded in the Ontario Legislature by Hon. R. H. Grant, Minister of Education, last night, during the debate on the much-discussed measure of W. H. Casselman, U.F.O. member for Dundas, to suspend for five years the operation of the act.

To Suspend Act.

The Minister announced the intention of the Government, in view of apparently widespread opposition to the act's more stringent provisions, to indefinitely suspend the proclamation of the 16 to 18 years part-time school attendance clause in the act, which was to have come into effect next September 1.

The other concession of the Minister—one which Mr. Casselman will consider, and as a result of which he may withdraw his bill—is to make school attendance between the ages of 14 and 16 years under the act entirely optional in rural districts. Hon. Mr. Grant read his suggested amendment which would leave with the parent or guardian in rural school sections in a farm home discretion as to whether a child between 14 and 16 years is to attend school or remain at home.

The fight put up by the member for Dundas in opposition to the Adolescent Act was a memorable one, and for his able exposition of his case he was afterward warmly commended from many sides.

"Extraordinary," Says H. G. F.

The debate was marked by expressions of the greatest diversity of opinion as to the feeling of the general public toward the Adolescent Act. Hon. Mr. Grant instanced hundreds of resolutions supporting the act. J. C. Tolmie (Liberal, Windsor) said his city and, he believed, others were entirely favorable. R. L. Brackin (Liberal, Kent) said he was in error, and that Chatham, at

least, had declared itself against. H. H. Dewart, K.C., said that the Minister's action constituted an "extraordinary volte face," and it would not "go down" in the cities.

A score of members spoke, including W. F. Nickle K.C., Conservative, Kingston; T. Marshall, Liberal, Lincoln; K. K. Homuth, Labor, South Waterloo; R. Cooper, Liberal, Welland; J. M. Webster, U.F.O., Lambton; Joseph Thompson, Conservative, Toronto, who favored adolescent school attendance; F. G. Sandy, U.F.O., South Victoria; Hon. Manning Doherty, who heralded a rural educational survey commission; Andrew Hicks, U.F.O., Middlesex.

Reach Agreement.

Finally, on the suggestion of Hon. Manning Doherty, Premier Drury

and the member for Dundas reached an agreement, by which debate on the bill to suspend the act was adjourned until the Minister of Education should submit his proposed amendment.

"The amendment meets with my approval to this extent," declared the member for Dundas, after the debate had proceeded until 11.30. "I am willing to allow the debate to stand until the Minister submits it to the House. If it meets with my approval then I'll be content and withdraw my bill."

After declaring that Province-wide propaganda had been set on foot to bring about the defeat of his bill, the member for Dundas introduced his attack on the Adolescent School Attendance Act by declaring that in certain phases it was not feasible, and that the application of certain of its provisions was "economically harmful, and even vicious."

To the vast majority of people, "academic" education was of no practical value, he said. Under the provisions of the act all children were compelled to attend school between the ages of 14 and 16. The majority of children between these ages would attend secondary schools, where they would secure academic and not vocational education. And no "hot-house academic education" could instil the qualities necessary for success in life's battles.

This feature of the act, he claimed, had been inspired by "dreamers, idealists, faddists, and visionaries, rather than by men with a practical outlook."

General Denunciation.

That led the speaker to his general denunciation of reform by compulsory legislation. This was the day of moral, social, industrial, educational, and even political reform by compulsory legislation. "There is an uneasiness among the common people bordering closely on the spirit