

The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



The process of educating the rank and file of the U.F.O. membership to proportional representation is becoming most discouraging to the advocates of that system of voting. For five weeks now the subject has been before Government caucuses, and, from what can be learned, an agreement is no nearer, and the hope for a unanimous conclusion is abandoned. So emphatic have been the protests against P.R. that the Government hesitates to give any leadership for the present, feeling that many of its followers cannot be whipped into line.

In this connection the lessons learned this week as a result of the Casselman protest against the Adolescent School Attendance Act are not being forgotten. Premier Drury only a few weeks ago stated definitely to a delegation that Mr. Casselman's bill giving a hoist to the Adolescent School Attendance Act would never pass. True, the bill will never pass, but Mr. Casselman's objects are attained by amendments to the act as promised by the Minister of Education. The explanation accepted in Legislature circles is that the Government backed down owing to pressure of rural opinion. It is now freely predicted that the same pressure will be exerted against P.R.

Many U.F.O. members look at the proportional representation issue in this manner. They say it is difficult enough now to get out the vote, but the task would be many times harder through a complicated system of polling such as they see P.R. to be. Agrarian members, too, are admittedly suspicious of some of those ardent persons who have been lobbying so persistently in the interests of P.R. Some members adopt a stiff old Tory attitude toward these P.R. advocates, calling them fanatics and extremists and faddists with as much vigor as the apostles of the old National Policy exhibit when anything gets beyond last century. The Farmers undoubtedly have resented the persistent efforts of the past few weeks to change the time-honored marking of the ballot to that of selection. If Mr. Drury insists on living up to the U.F.O. platform on P.R. he is sure to have a merry family quarrel on his hands—a quarrel which is likely to get beyond the secrecy of the caucus room, and be aired in the House.

In view of this situation, the feeling is growing that a more sweeping redistribution measure is coming than was generally thought a month ago, when all the changes were to be confined to Toronto. The Premier is strongly desirous of playing fair, even though some of his followers would sooner play safe. P.R. and the single transferable vote, perhaps at first only as an experiment, were in line with his ideas of playing fair. If he sees he cannot carry the big majority of his party in this contention he may swing over to some sort of redistribution bill. He may do this against the definite conclusion he reached before the session opened to let redistribution go until next session and then tackle the problem from what he characterized as "a scientific basis."

The platform of two political par-

ties on P.R. has been badly loosened, and once again the Conservatives are thankful they have no platform, though it must be stated the latter would exchange nearly everything they have if they could find something to agree upon as a liquor policy. When not worrying over their own troubles, the Farmers spend some time speculating on the future of the Liberals. One of them who is noted for his shrewdness made this observation the other day: "Wellington Hay is a good fellow and a good mixer, and we often wonder why he doesn't take those Liberals of his and introduce them to each other."

This Bill Slaughtered.

The House yesterday got through considerable business of a routine nature before it broke up about 4.30 for want of a quorum. One bill was killed amidst general rejoicing. Karl Homuth (Labor, South Waterloo) asked second reading for a measure to regulate public automobile garages and service stations. The bill was intended to license motor mechanics, and provided for their examination before a competent board. By almost unanimous consent the work of slaughtering the legislation was left in the competent hands of R. L. Brackin (Liberal, West Kent), who is a personal friend of Mr. Homuth. Mr. Brackin did quite a good job in a short space of time. He said the measure was to make "more attractive highway robbery," and that it would let loose "another corps of sin-hounds to pursue the people," and that it was time "to stop pestering the public with fool regulations." Four members, Homuth, Swayze, Greenlaw and Tolmie, formed the only support the measure could get, and it will not be heard from for at least a year.

Mr. Raney's Misfortunes.

Hon. Mr. Raney pressed for second reading for his Blue Sky legislation—that is, the measure respecting the sale of securities. Hon. George Henry, who was leading the Conservatives, objected on the ground that Charles McCrea, Sudbury, desired to speak, and Mr. McCrea could not be present. Mr. Henry claimed the bill affected New Ontario more particularly, and that Mr. McCrea should be heard. Reluctantly Mr. Raney and the Premier gave consent, with the understanding that it come up on Monday.

Next the Attorney-General tried to get second reading for his bill respecting the registration of guests at standard hotels. Among other things, this bill would make it illegal for a guest to register under an assumed name. Mr. Raney's efforts with this measure met with discouragement. It was Friday afternoon, and the trains were pulling out for home, and, one by one, the members disappeared until Hon. Thomas Crawford and John Joynt informed the Speaker in almost the same breath that the House had no quorum.

Arrest Geo. Gillmore

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