

ANTI-HANDBOOK BILL READY FOR ONTARIO IF DOMINION'S FAILS

Attorney-General W. E. Raney Pilots New Measure Through Stormy Sea of Opposition to Its Second Reading, After Being Target for Scathing Innuendoes

OTTAWA MEASURE RANEY'S CREATION

Following a three-hour debate, marked alternately with humor, invective and a few personalities, Attorney-General Raney's bill directed at the business of handbooking in the Province of Ontario received second reading in the Legislature last night.

Vigorous Opposition.

Opposition of a vigorous type was offered to the measure by J. A. Currie, Conservative member for Southeast Toronto, who accused Mr. Raney of secluding a clause to give a monopoly on handbooking to "his friend" Abe Orpen, and from J. A. Pinard, Liberal member for Ottawa East, who declared that it was neither courteous nor decent for the Attorney-General to press through the measure when such action could only be interpreted as a want of confidence in the good faith of the Minister of Justice at Ottawa, Sir Lomer Gouin.

Mr. Dewart, while favoring, he said, a proper move to wipe out handbooking in Ontario, advised caution in delving into what might prove to be a field of forbidden legislation for the Province. "Let us have a sure bill; let us have a certain bill," he declared, "a bill founded on certain jurisdiction."

Raney Takes No Chances.

The Attorney-General, as the mover of the bill, was the principal participant in discussions, and he stated that if the King Government were absolute master in its own house, he in all probability would not be pressing his bill for second reading. But, as had happened with other legislation on former occasions, the Senate might throw out the Gouin bill, in which event if the House passed the bill before it Ontario would have its own enactment to fall back upon.

So vigorous were the participants in the debate in their reference to one another that Mr. Speaker had to intervene on one occasion and ask that the principle of the bill be discussed and not honorable gentlemen of the Legislature. The cross-floor feuds were for the most part directed in two channels, between the Attorney-General and Messrs. Currie and Pinard, and between Mr. Pinard and the Prime Minister, with Mr. Dewart, in the earlier stages, venting some criticisms on what he deemed to be the apparent lack of knowledge on the part of Mr. Raney in regard to the Ottawa legislation.

Stops Handbook Men.

In essence the bill which the Legislature accepted in principle yesterday prohibits the publication of race-track information, or prices paid at the tracks, upon which the handbook betting business in Ontario subsists.

In introducing his measure for second reading, Attorney-General Raney explained that it was designed to cover "a subject that ought to be covered, and that I anticipate, will be covered by Dominion legislation." The matter was one, he thought, that was intended to have been covered by the Criminal Code, but had been rendered non-holding because of the ambiguity of the words "intended to assist in or intended for use in connection with bookmaking." The subject was one,

he believed, that properly came within the purview of the Government of Canada.

H. H. Dewart, K.C. (Liberal member for Southwest Toronto) inquired if the bill was identical with that introduced at Ottawa by Sir Lomer Gouin, Minister of Justice. Hon. Mr. Raney replied that, although it covered exactly the same ground, it must deviate in phraseology because of the difference in jurisdiction between the two measures. He was not prepared to compare the phraseology of the two bills word for word at the moment, in which connection the Southwest Toronto member offered criticism for his inability.

"The question of constitutionality will perhaps be raised," Hon. Mr. Raney said, "if this bill is passed and becomes effective as a law and the Ottawa bill is not passed. Frankly, I think I would not press this bill if the Government at Ottawa were in control of the situation, but it is well-known history that the Senate at Ottawa often rejects bills that are passed by the House of Commons—even bills that are introduced by the Government, so it may be this fate will overtake this bill."

Purpose of Bill.

"Therefore, I propose to press this bill to a stage at all events where something definite may be known. If it is known definitely before this House adjourns that the Ottawa bill has had the assent of the Senate, then I shall probably not press the bill to third reading. In any event, the bill will be subject to a section enacting it upon proclamation by the Lieutenant-Governor, so if this bill comes into effect and is enacted, and the Ottawa bill is subsequently enacted, this bill will not be proclaimed."

Mr. Raney then went on to deal with his personal record as regards race-track gambling, speaking in that connection to the remark of Sir Lomer Gouin, that even the Ontario Attorney-General had not asked for legislation such as was embodied in the Gouin resolution. Mr. Raney said that his attitude on the subject was well known; that he had not deemed it ethical for him, as Attorney-General, to make representations to Ottawa concerning matters under discussion in the Dominion House.

Higher Ups Make Millions.

Comparatively, Mr. Raney thought, the legalized business of racetrack gambling was a greater evil than the handbook business, chiefly for these reasons: "First," he said, "because it is a discrimination brought about by men of political influence in Canada, political influence in this Province, for their own advantage, under which these men and others, who have come in under the sheltering wing of their legislation, have reaped millions of profit—legislation which makes it criminal for half a dozen Chinamen to engage in gambling in a back room, but makes it no crime at all—in fact, rather encourages that sort of thing—when it is done on a race-track for the benefit of some public men, or some men who were public men, and certain professional race-track owners."

Dewart Objects.

Mr. Dewart raised and pressed a point of order as to whether the Attorney-General, in reviewing his personal attitude toward race-track betting, and in dealing with race-track gambling generally, was within the rules of the House, but Mr. Speaker, while agreeing with the principle of debate which Mr. Dewart had enunciated, thought the Attorney-General had not transgressed that rule.

Dealing with the opinion credited to the Minister of Justice, that Ontario could, by enactment of a prohibitive tax, wipe out the race-track betting, Mr. Raney said that the Government had given every consid-

eration to that possibility and had no doubt "that there is no question at all that the Province cannot prohibit any lawful business under the guise of a prohibitive tax. I have no hesitation at all," he continued, "in telling this House, as I have on former occasions, that, in my view, there is no power in this Legislature to impose on the race-tracks a prohibitive tax—a tax that is designed, not for the purpose of raising revenue, but for the purpose primarily of putting these betting houses out of existence."

The bill, he believed, had the unanimous consent of opinion—even of newspapers which supported the legalized race-track betting. While it was probably true that the legislation would tend to increase the monopoly of the race-track betting house business, he supposed that was inevitable.

J. A. Currie (Conservative, Southeast Toronto) started out by saying that the bill should be named "A Book Bill for the Incorporation of Handbook Betting," and also "A Bill to Interfere With Unlicensed Printing." He had a great deal of sympathy for the people who wanted to do away with handbooking. He did, too. "But," he added, "if that bill was drawn up by the solicitor of Abe Orpen it could not be better for him. It gives an absolute monopoly to him."

Mr. Dewart thought that the Ottawa bill, if it were obtainable, would, in addition to its undoubted constitutionality, better cover the exceptions to which Mr. Currie had referred. He had no objection, he said, to the Attorney-General taking a chance on legislation upon necessary occasions, but in this instance the necessity was doubtful in view of the introduction of the Gouin bill.

Curry Approves.

J. W. Curry (Liberal, Southeast Toronto) expressed his entire approval of Mr. Raney's bill. In his opinion, it was one which would work untold good upon numerous women and children, victims at present of the gambling vice. It did not seem to him that objections previously taken were valid ones, or that the requests for delay constituted such evidence as he would have expected from those desirous of seeing the bill pass. Amendments to meet the criticisms advanced by Mr. Currie could be made in committee.

Currie Doesn't Approve.

Naming openly in the House Abraham Orpen as the "boss bookmaker," John A. Currie, Conservative, Southeast Toronto, opposed vigorously Mr. Raney's bill, on the ground that the bill "is intended to give a monopoly to Mr. Orpen and the Metropolitan Racing Club for handbook-making in this city," and on the ground also that not for 200 years, except in the time of the war, "had there been an attempt made by a British Parliament to suppress news publication in a newspaper."

Mr. Currie asked the Attorney-General how he intended to keep the United States papers from coming into the country. If the bill had been drawn up by the solicitor of Mr. Abe Orpen, it could not be better, he asserted. The bill of the Minister of Justice wiped out this exception, he claimed.

Mr. Raney rose to his feet and told the House that the bill introduced by Sir Lomer Gouin "had been drafted in my office before the bill which is before the House was introduced."

J. A. Pinard (Ottawa East) took up the discussion after supper, and, after referring in rather severe terms to "sanctified moralists," in which category he included the Attorney-General and Hon. Mr. Rowell, he advanced the opinion that the bill was class legislation.

Premier Defends Bill.

Premier Drury spoke briefly, defending the Attorney-General from the accusation that he had designedly excepted incorporated racing club premises. That discrepancy in the bill—if it existed—could be remedied in committee. The measure was introduced, as everybody knew, Mr. Drury said, in furtherance of a promise made by himself to the people of Ontario last summer.

Mr. Drury said that the opposition that was being manifested against the measure was "characteristic" opposition whenever legis-