

# The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



Either the Easter vacation or the April showers must have had a moderating effect on the Legislature, for yesterday saw some progress made without a harsh word being uttered.

Hon. Manning Doherty's amendments to the Agriculture Development Act were blocked in committee for more than an hour before 6 o'clock, and even then no person got angry. The opposition all came from two members, Hon. Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Nickle of Kingston, but they kept up an incessant flow of criticism and questions. Hon. Manning held his temper so well and displayed such remarkable patience that Mr. Nickle accused him of trying to "smile away criticism." At 6 o'clock Mr. Ferguson was still trying to pound home his argument and draw admissions from the Minister, and meeting with little success.

### To Consolidate Liabilities.

The amendments to the act provide that loans may be made against farms to 50 per cent. of the Government's valuation, and "to consolidate outstanding liabilities incurred for productive purposes." Mr. Ferguson at once characterized the bill as "a dangerous measure," one which would be reducing the security of the Province. He stressed the point that Ontario was simply going into the loaning business. He tried his best to get such an admission from Mr. Doherty, for obvious political purposes, but the Minister was cautious, continuing to smile the bill through.

Mr. Ferguson further alleged that the new clause permitting loans for production purposes was throwing the door wide open under a subterfuge of words. He even accused the Minister of not being particularly enthusiastic for the measure, only fathering it under pressure. Mr. Doherty assured the Conservative Leader he was quite prepared to accept responsibility for the bill, and he further pointed out that the Provincial Treasurer was taking in more money in his savings banks than would be required for the loaning scheme.

### Class Legislation.

Mr. Nickle's criticism was very pointed. He told the House that under this bill every precarious loan would be thrust upon the Province. It was, he added, "the rankest kind of class legislation," since it applied to farmers only. The Kingston man, however, did gain a little from Mr. Doherty, succeeding in getting the word "agricultural" inserted in the Minister's clause. It now reads that loans may be made "to consolidate outstanding liabilities incurred for agricultural productive purposes."

When the same bill was again in committee during the evening session, Mr. Ferguson reopened his attack, again trying to draw the Government on going into the loaning business. Mr. Ferguson, referring to farmers, added that the Minister to Mr. Doherty's left, Hon. Mr. Raney, was "not much of an agriculturist."

"Oh, yes, he is," replied Mr. Raney.

"What have you got—a garden?" asked Mr. Ferguson.

"A farm," retorted the Attorney-General, which left the House wondering if its legal head was contemplating a change of occupation. It was Mr. Raney's joke, and the Conservative Leader was momentarily nonplussed.

Mr. Hay argued that there ought to be more Ministerial responsibility than merely leaving these loans to a board. Since the loans had

aggregated nearly three millions in two years, the business was likely to expand to huge proportions. He thought the Minister himself ought to give the loans supervision, and argued that a 50 per cent. valuation was sufficient. Mr. Doherty then said quarterly reports would be submitted to the Minister, while the House would be given an annual

report. This statement gave Mr. Ferguson another opportunity for criticism, claiming that such reports constituted no check. The Conservative Leader, while most critical of the measure, apparently did not desire to force a vote, because some of his own followers are favorable to the legislation.

### Three More on the Budget.

Three speakers also added their orations to the Budget debate, making 31 members who have so far participated in this one debate, and not one of them has submitted an amendment. The three heard yesterday were Capt. Ramsden (Liberal, Southwest Toronto); W. D. Black (Conservative, Addington), and T. K. Slack (U.F.O., Dufferin). The debate could have been continued at greater length, but as it nears its end the parties are jockeying for positions. The Government party has more speakers who are anxious to go on than the others, and the Oppositions are desirous of forcing them forward so that their men may reply if necessary. At least seven more members, including the party Leaders, will yet have to be allotted time for their speeches, and perhaps the number may reach ten. There now is no chance of the debate being concluded this week, but efforts will be made to wind it up early next week.

### Capt. Ramsden's Suggestions.

Capt. Ramsden, in the course of a remarkably coherent speech, had several constructive suggestions. For instance, he advised Hon. Peter Smith to try selling bonds over the counters of the Provincial banks. The small investor would then be given a chance, and the bonds could be sold at par. He thought the Government ought to have the services of an expert financial adviser, similar to what Toronto has. Capt. Ramsden, by pointing out what the Government paid in rents, showed that the erection of a big Provincial building on University avenue would be a good investment.

He also drew attention to the new anaesthetic produced by Dr. Cotton of Toronto, adding that the University of Toronto and the General Hospital had been offered this discovery, and had failed to take advantage of it.

Mr. Black, as a good Conservative, prophesied utter defeat for the U.F.O. at next election, a statement which, of course, was violently contradicted by Mr. Slack, who spoke later. One point in the latter's speech was a criticism of the Government's immigration policy, another evidence of the independent feeling engendered by the group system of government. Mr. Slack feared the immigrants Mr. Doherty proposed bringing out would eventually drift to the cities. "I believe in taking the short course, and bringing them right to the cities first," added Mr. Slack, amid laughter. He facetiously went further, and advised bringing out professional men, doctors and lawyers, so as to cheapen these professions for the common people. In Dufferin, said the member, the school attendance had shrunk 100 a year every year for the past fifteen years.

The debate was adjourned by Mr. Hay, in behalf of the Liberal Whip, Mr. Marshall, who has been ill.

Another attempt was also made yesterday by Mr. Raney to obtain second reading for his blue sky bill, but, as on half a dozen former occasions, the men who wanted to speak to it were absent, and it had to go over again.

Hon. Peter Smith, Provincial Treasurer, was once more in his seat, after his battle with the flu.