

# The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



Though Premier Drury described Wednesday's exciting events in the Legislature as a "superficial flurry," they lead directly to a general election in June. The "superficial flurry" has advanced by four months all election plans in the minds of the Ministry. Yesterday afternoon the Premier made known the Government's immediate intentions, which include the passing of non-contentious legislation, the passing of the estimates, an attempt at redistribution, and dissolution by May 4.

However, the best-thought-out plans of this Government, and many other Governments, too, have often failed of fruition. It is by no means certain that the Province is to have a redistribution for this election; in fact, the most astute political guessers are saying that the candidates will fight in the ridings exactly as at present constituted.

### Three Interlocking Bills.

Yesterday the Premier introduced three bills having to do with electoral reform. These three bills are: one dealing with redistribution; one dealing with proportional representation, and one dealing with the single transferable vote. They are naturally interlocking. Today the Premier will endeavor to get second reading for these measures and have them referred to a special House Committee comprised of five Liberals, one Independent, five Conservatives, and 11 Government members. It is his intention to have Mr. Speaker Parliament preside over this committee.

Mr. Drury has thus thrown redistribution to the House, though he said the Government's policy in this respect would be one of absolute fairness, and to "hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may." The three bills may reach the committee stage, but few members are found optimistic enough to think the same bills will emerge from the committee this session. There are several reasons for this present lack of hopefulness for a measure, or measures, of redistribution.

### Redistribution Not Popular.

In the first place must be put the natural reluctance of sitting members toward any realignment of the present ridings. The present members were the winners in these same ridings, and naturally most of them think they can repeat that feat. During the last four years they have cultivated public opinion in their constituencies, and are not very enthusiastic for any project robbing them of the rewards of that effort. Redistribution seldom finds vigorous champions among elected members. The chaps who were beaten are often much more favorable to electoral reform. Of course, such an attitude of mind is not adopted by all members, but it is undeniable that such a feeling does exist.

Now that the real political crisis has cleared the air, or darkened it—whichever you choose—the average representative is anxious to leave Toronto as soon as possible and begin his campaign to get votes. Any overwhelming anxiety for redistribution will not hold members when they know an election is 10 weeks away.

### Conservatives Oppose P.R.

The second reason for the belief that the redistribution bills will

never emerge from the committee is the attitude of the Conservatives toward P.R. and the single transferable vote. Every time this system of polling has been mentioned this session it has met with Conservative scorn and Conservative threats. All the members of the party are not opposed to the principle of P.R., but they do think the system should not be thrust upon the people without some educative campaign.

In any event the Conservatives can be depended upon in the present instance to battle against P.R. to the utmost of their power. Some of them have threatened to filibuster any such measure if it comes into the House, that is, try to talk it out. In the three weeks remaining to this Legislature it would not be a very difficult matter for a group of determined and organized men to talk out any measure. In this respect Hon. Mr. Ferguson is particularly fortunate in being surrounded by half a dozen ready speakers, men who can split hairs, if necessary, and who are shrewd politicians.

In addition, the three redistribution measures will have to face opposition from within the Government party. It is known that about a third of the U.F.O. members are opposed to P.R., and as Mr. Drury's proposals all involve that principle these members will be sure to voice their opposition. It is difficult to imagine how they can be brought into line with the "independent feeling" running so strong just now.

### Party Advantage.

Premier Drury stated yesterday that all the material for redistribution was collected, and he could see no reason why the measure should not be completed and passed. This opinion is not shared by many in the House, the majority, apparently, thinking the electoral reform necessary is a bigger task than appears on the surface. No matter what theories may be advanced about justice and fair play, the element of party advantage will figure just as conspicuously in this special committee as in any others that have gone before. True, if a measure is evolved there may not be some of the grotesque geographical results of other redistributions, but party advantage will play its part all the same. The struggle for party advantage leads to jangling and controversy. With all these things in mind, it was stated by more than one prominent politician yesterday that it will be a miracle if redistribution comes about.

### All Is Election Talk.

The crisis and the impending dissolution have attracted many old political zealots to the Legislature corridors. Men hardly ever seen, except on election nights, were there yesterday. Men who want to be candidates were there getting the latest information. In addition were present many of the members' hangers-on who follow in the trail of an election campaign. Election talk was in the air to the exclusion of almost everything else. Only a casual interest was taken in House proceedings as Mr. Raney's betting information bill and Mr. Biggs' motor vehicles bill ran the gauntlet of committee. The galleries were filled afternoon and evening with people looking for excitement, but no Legislature can stage two days like Wednesday one after another. Such days come only once in the compass of the longest political lifetimes.

## MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE MADE TO LAWS REGULATING AUTOS

Reckless Speed on Highways  
Now Over 40 Miles  
an Hour

### FINES ARE TO BE HIGHER

In direct contrast to Wednesday's proceedings in the Legislature, yesterday was a day of peace and calm. From about 4.30 in the afternoon to late at night the House was in committee on Mr. Biggs' bill to consolidate various laws relating to motor vehicles.

There was considerable discussion on the clause relating to motor vehicles stopping while street cars discharged or took on passengers. J. A. Currie (Conservative, Northeast Toronto) thought that an exception should be made where safety zones were provided, but the Minister of Highways observed that such safety zones were of little use unless they were elevated.

A. C. Lewis (Conservative, Northeast Toronto) thought that motor cars should be made to stop on the Toronto-Hamilton Highway when suburban cars, which operate on the side of the highway, stop for passengers. Mr. Biggs, however, declared that the best remedy for that situation was for the railway to build platforms for the passengers on the side of the highway away from the traffic, so that the passengers could thereby be discharged and taken on without danger and without any interference with the stream of traffic.

Penalties for persons driving while under the influence of liquor are as before, but a clause has been added providing for suspension of the delinquent's license at the discretion of the court. In the first offense suspension may be for three months; for a second offense it may be for between three and six months, and for a third offense the license shall be cancelled.

Other revised clauses have been arranged as a result of representations of the Threshermen's Committee. They provide that no vehicle shall be operated over the highway if equipped with a flange, rib, clamp, or other device injurious to the road's surface, and that no vehicle shall be moved over the highway if its gross weight exceeds 500 pounds per inch on its tires, wheels or roller.

A table is also added prescribing the width of tires for certain loads, the scale being a graduated one—from 4,600 pounds or less calling for 3½-inch tires up to 18,000 pounds calling for 14-inch tires. Thus, 5,300 to 6,000 pounds requires 4½-inch tires; 12,800 to 16,000 pounds requires 10-inch tires, and other weights are regulated on the same ratio.

A final change substitutes a "white or a green" light for the previous compulsory green one which had been prescribed for traction engines.

### Bill Is Now Ready

#### Re Banting and Best

Following his announcement in the Legislature yesterday regarding Government plans for redistribution and election, Premier Drury said that the bill providing for recognition of Dr. Banting and C. H. Best had been drawn up, after consultation with the Board of Governors of the University of Toronto. The bill was ready, but he thought it should be placed before a small committee of the House before it was introduced. One member from the Conservative, Liberal and Independent parties, he suggested, should be on the committee, and, in addition, the three medical men of the House, Dr. Forbes Godfrey, Conservative, West York; Dr. H. A. Stevenson, Labor, London; and Dr. G. M. Leeson, South Grey.