

# The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



Dramatic events crowded thickly in the Legislature last night. The break had to come some time. For a week nerves have been overwrought, and human nature could not stand the strain much longer. Toward 10 o'clock Premier Drury entered the redistribution debate, and made as impassioned a speech as the House has ever heard. He again described the obstruction as a tyranny of words, "a tyranny we find ourselves unable to break, except by an appeal to the sovereign people. I propose to break it in that way."

Then again: "We will appeal to the country under conditions as they are." And later: "We will drop these orders (redistribution), pass supply, and get to the people."

## Long Fight Is Over.

The long fight over redistribution is ended. There will be no rearrangement of seats for the next election. Dissolution will come soon, perhaps on the date set by the Premier, May 4. Obstruction won the day, because there is no method under the Legislature rules by which organized, determined blocking tactics may be overcome. When the Premier uttered his ringing sentences about going to the country, the Conservatives, who have been doing all the fighting, joined in the cheers and applause. They have won their round, but can they justify themselves with the people? The Premier is sure they cannot, and he will not be slow to carry his argument to that effect to every corner of the Province.

Premier Drury candidly confessed that events of the past week had given him unusual tribulation. "The obstruction developed has come as a great surprise and disappointment to me. I had hoped, and honestly hoped, to get a fair measure of redistribution and appeal to the country in a reasonable time." He had fought and hoped against the introduction of any closure measure, but the right of free speech should not be abused, but, unfortunately, they could not control a tyranny of force.

"The events of the past week have been terrifically painful to me, more painful than anything I have gone through, and I have taken my share of knocks in my life."

He kept the House guessing as to what was coming by stating that the Government could not accept an ultimatum from one-fourth of the House to gerrymander the Province with the minority vote. "There comes a time when patience is exhausted," he went on. "I propose tonight we shall go on with the estimates, letting redistribution stand," a sentiment which was met with "No, no" from the Conservatives.

## Liberals Willing to Stay.

Earlier in the evening, after Col. J. A. Currie had concluded his six-hour speech, which consisted mostly of selected readings, Liberal Leader Hay pleaded for co-operation to find some way out of the impasse. He characterized the Conservative tactics as a melodrama, and a determined effort to make it impossible to get legislation. At the same time Mr. Hay stated emphatically that the redistribution measure should have been introduced earlier in the session, and should have stood wholly and clearly above all else. He charged that the Conservatives did not want any kind of

redistribution unless they had the say as to what kind of redistribution it would be. Party politics was first and uppermost in the minds of Mr. Ferguson's men, and the country second.

"We are prepared, as Liberals, to see that redistribution will come about, no matter if we have to sit here until Christmas," declared Mr. Hay, amid the applause of two parties. He said Liberals would place no obstacles in the way, but would do what they could to put the redistribution bills into effect, because they were along the lines of progress. Mr. Hay saw a great deal of stubbornness among the Conservatives, but he pleaded for some sort of co-operation. Liberals would welcome a declaration for a fight to a finish, or any plan by which the warring groups could get together.

Following the Premier came Mr. Ferguson, who again sought to justify the tactics of obstruction. He knows he will have to do considerable explaining along this line before election day, and he is very desirous of getting the explanations made as quickly as possible. Mr. Ferguson pressed for the discharge of the bills immediately, and after some violent argument the Premier made the necessary motion. Redistribution had blown up. At once there was an exodus from the House. The Conservatives were jubilant.

## An Air of Relief.

All in all, a great air of relief was noticed when the Premier had made his announcement. Members were thoroughly tired of a few days' obstruction. Loss of sleep and attacks of nerves had had their effect, and it was impossible that business could proceed in an orderly manner. As has been stated before, few members in their own hearts desired redistribution at this stage. They seemed to have come to the conclusion that such legislation had no place in the dying days of a Parliament, when nothing but elections is talked about. Redistribution, it is claimed, is for a Parliament in its first or second session, not the fourth, when the votes figure so prominently in men's minds. In any event, the die is cast, and the private members seem more or less secretly pleased. They know now where their fights lie, and can make their plans accordingly.

## Mr. Dewart Helps Premier.

By a bit of clear thinking Hartley Dewart got a considerable part of the voluminous order paper cleared yesterday, an act which was greatly appreciated by the Premier. It seemed rather strange to see Mr. Dewart voluntarily go to the aid of the Government, since he has often manoeuvred things to place them in an awkward predicament. At the opening of the House the Government introduced three important bills, among them being some rather sweeping changes in the Workmen's Compensation Act. On the order paper no fewer than eight motions for the return of documents

having to do with workmen's compensation have appeared day after day.

Each of these eight motions was debatable, and workmen's compensation is one of those subjects this House can discuss at great length. Anyway, Mr. Dewart pressed for the return standing in his name. He drew from Hon. Walter Rollo the information that the return was ready, and could be brought down in "fifteen minutes." Mr. Rollo could not tell why it was not brought down, and looked rather helplessly at the Premier. Mr. Drury frankly admitted the Government never took up the motions for all these returns because they feared so much time would be taken up with debates.

Of course Mr. Ferguson was at once on his feet, dealing with his favorite topic of blaming the Government for delay. M. M. MacBride next had to adopt his favorite mode of procedure by moving the adjournment of the House to interject his side of it. Mr. Dewart then stated that, so far as his motion went, he would not precipitate any discussion. It was information he wanted, and he thought the seven others might do likewise. The ex-Liberal Leader quickly sounded the seven members, and all agreed. The Premier eagerly grasped at the opportunity, called the motions, no speeches were made, and eight of them carried in three minutes.

"I appreciate courtesy when it is extended like that," added the Premier, and he and Mr. Dewart gravely bowed to one another, as though it were the beginning of a strong and lasting friendship. The incident provided the one green isle in the Premier's sea of trouble. Help had come from a quarter he least expected. Courtesy Week affected the Legislature, but not for more than fifteen minutes.