

BILL GIVING POWER FOR VOTE ON O.T.A. APPEARS IN HOUSE

"Implements Promise Made During Elections," Attorney-General Explains

WILL BE DEVISED LATER

Hon. Mr. Raney Is Advised Decision Rests Solely With Government

Legislation empowering the Ferguson Government to take a referendum on the Ontario Temperance Act was brought down for first reading in the Legislature yesterday afternoon. Attorney-General Nickle's explanation of the measure was listened to with intense interest by the members.

"To Implement Promise."

"This is a bill," he said, "to implement the promise made by the Government during the last election to provide machinery, if and when the Government thought necessary, to submit such questions to the people, by way of plebiscite as the Government might deem advisable."

Hon. W. E. Raney—Does the bill indicate the questions?

Mr. Nickle—No.

Mr. Raney—The questions and the date and everything are left to the Government?

Mr. Ferguson—This is just the machinery.

Mr. Raney—Just an empowering bill?

Mr. Nickle—Just an empowering bill.

Mr. Raney—Leaving everything in the hands of the Government?

Mr. Nickle—Yes.

Character of Bill.

The bill introduced to the Legislature by the Attorney-General would repeal Section 147 of the Ontario Temperance Act and substitute a new Section 147 with nine subsections. The two important subsections are as follows:

"The Lieutenant-Governor may from time to time direct that there shall be submitted to the electors of Ontario qualified to vote at elections to the Assembly any question or questions as to the enactment of legislation repealing or amending this act, or as to prohibiting, regulating, controlling or otherwise dealing with the selling, keeping for sale, having in possession or transportation of liquor in Ontario."

"The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council by his proclamation may fix the terms under which any such question or questions shall be submitted."

The other sections deal with the polling. Section 3 of the act says that the act shall come into force on the day on which it receives Royal assent.

Hales Makes Explanation.

Before proceeding with the orders of the day Attorney-General Nickle read to the House a statement from James Hales, K.C., Chairman of the Ontario License Board, by way of explanation of reports of his London, Ont., speech before the Ministerial Association.

In his report to Mr. Nickle, Mr. Hales explained that in appearing in London he was accepting an invitation of the Ministerial Association to address them. He believed there might have been 18 members who heard his address on that occasion. But, instead of casting any reflections on members of the medical or other profession, Mr. Hales stated that, on the contrary, he had nothing but words of warm praise for the good work done by the majority in assisting in efficient enforcement of the O. T. A.

STANDARD HOTELS WILL BE SUBJECT OF GOVERNMENT BILL

Quality of Service to Be Regulated According to Local Needs

QUERIES BY MEMBERS

Legislation respecting standard hotels will be brought down during this session of the Legislature, Premier Ferguson said yesterday afternoon. This legislation will not follow closely the report of the Hotels Commission, it is understood, but will fix some standard of service to be lived up to by the hotels. It is expected the measure will make careful differentiation between hotels in large centres and hotels in rural and small communities, so that impossible or unreasonable demands of service to patrons will not be imposed upon the hotelkeeper in small places.

Shevlin-Clarke Settlement.

Answering a question in the Legislature yesterday, asked by Hon. W. E. Raney (U.F.O., East Wellington), as to payments made to the Shevlin-Clarke Company under the settlement reached two years ago. Hon. James W. Lyons, Minister of Lands and Forests, replied that the following payments had been made: May 3, 1922, \$250,000; May 31, 1922, \$173,117.68; December 27, 1922, \$131,874.32; October 13, 1923, \$9,681.32; August 14, 1923, \$80,430.80; August 30, 1923, \$26,365.35; August 27, 1923, \$26,365.35; September 7, 1923, \$7,859.96. The company was not now indebted to the Province under the terms of the settlement. Mr. Lyons said. No alteration had been made in the terms of the settlement, and no change had been suggested by the company.

Who Made Promises?

Another question by Mr. Raney asked if any member of the Government, before the election, made a promise or statement to the effect that, if a Conservative Government were elected, there would be a referendum or plebiscite on the liquor question, and, if so, what member or members of the Government made such statements or promises, and when or where. Premier Ferguson replied that every member of the Government gave assurance that, if the Government were elected, and a substantial public opinion warranted it, a plebiscite would be held, but that the Government would enforce the act. Mr. Raney challenged the reply as not being a direct answer to the question, and the Speaker is to make a ruling on the challenge.

E. Proulx (Liberal, Prescott) asked what were the duties of one J. I. Hartt. The reply was that he is an Inspector of Crown Timber Agents, and has the supervision of timber operations.

J. A. Currie (Conservative, Southeast Toronto), asked if the late Government or this Government received any petition or petitions from the electors asking that a referendum be taken on the liquor law, and when such petition was received, and what the Government was going to do about it. The Premier replied that such a petition was presented to the late Government in the fall of 1921, containing approximately 150,000 signatures. The policy of the present Government had already been announced, the Premier said.

Hon. Dougall Carmichael (U.F.O., Centre Grey), asked for particulars of the resignation of Mr. Hutchison, District Representative for Simcoe County. Hon. J. S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, replied that no reason was given in the letter of resignation, but that complaints were as to lack of co-operation from him. There was no charge that Mr. Hutchison had acted in a partisan way while employed by the late Government.