

Wednesday, March 5th

LOCAL OPTION IDEA FOR LIQUOR'S SALE MOOTED IN HOUSE

**Proulx of Prescott Would
Thus Do Away With
Vote of Whole Province
on O.T.A.—Wallis, Al-
goma, Wants Govern-
ment Control, and Sev-
eral Conservatives Ask
for Referendum at Once.**

VARIOUS OPINIONS ON WET SUBJECT

With eight members holding forth during afternoon and evening sittings of the Legislature, the Budget debate reached its final stage last night. Premier Ferguson expressed a desire to wind up the discussion on Wednesday night, in which event second reading of the Ontario Temperance Act amendment will be brought on Thursday.

Debate on O. T. A.

Outstanding in yesterday's discussions were the declarations of the eight speakers on the heralded O. T. A. referendum. E. Proulx (Liberal, Prescott), favored the institution of a system of local option Government control without referendum; A. G. Wallis (Liberal, Algonoma) said he favored a change to Government control; W. G. Weichel (Conservative, North Waterloo) and M. Vaughan (Conservative, Wexford), went so far as to favor an immediate vote of the people on the question.

Quebec Plan Criticized.

Of the other four speakers, Hon. H. C. Nixon, former Provincial Secretary, did not mention the subject of O. T. A.; J. G. Lethbridge criticized Quebec's system, but did not commit himself as to the necessity of a vote; and Charles McKeown (Conservative, Dufferin) stated he was behind the Prime Minister in his intention to bring on a vote when public opinion warranted it.

Aside from the O. T. A. issue, which overshadowed discussion, the remarks of J. G. Lethbridge (Progressive, West Middlesex) on St. Lawrence developments were listened to with interest. The Progressive member urged extreme caution in venturing into expenditure on St. Lawrence developments, and thought the Province should consider along with the proposal Quebec's system of securing rentals for water usage, and letting private interests develop under a measure of Government control.

Mr. Nixon, after tendering the customary congratulations to the Speaker, referred to the address of John A. Currie made last week in the House, and he wondered if he had not voiced the policy and the hopes of the Government that the Government itself dare not voice. If he were not expressing the hope and policy of the Government, Mr. Nixon added, then there must be an insurrection in the camp. He wondered how far wrong he would be if he hazarded the guess that the mind of the Government, when the House rose, would be permitted to be persuaded that the time had come for a plebiscite on liquor laws, and that it would be about June that the plebiscite would be submitted.

Mr. Nixon got into a clash of debate with the Premier on the matter of recognition of the Farmer party, and Mr. Ferguson declared that he had said very clearly that the statutes provided that an additional indemnity of \$1,500 is to be paid to the Leader of any group of 15 or more members in the Opposition recognized as such by the Speaker.

Must Ignore Groups.

He had said time and again, the Premier continued, that he would recognize the Liberal party as the official Opposition in the House. "That I repeat today. There may be a half-dozen groups that I do not know of. They may have names or they may not have."

Rights of the Farmer party were being trampled upon, Mr. Nixon argued, and said that, as the majority Opposition party, "we are entitled to recognition as an official Opposition, as the chief Opposition group." The Premier replied that his interpretation of the election was that the people were looking for a return of the old party system, "and for that purpose I intend to recognize the Liberal party as the official Opposition."

"We, Mr. Speaker, must register our protest, and we look to you for recognition," said Mr. Nixon, and quoted the words at the head of The Globe editorial page to buttress his argument.

"Budget With No Budget."

The North Brant member criticized the Budget speech in that it contained no Budget. In years past there had been many claims of various figures as to the deficits incurred year by year by the Drury Government, "and the thing that is puzzling us is, Who are we to believe among these financial jugglers and acrobats?" He commended the suggestion of Aurelien Belanger (Liberal, Russell) for a committee of experts to devise a bookkeeping system to end all such disputes. He could not see that the Province was ahead if no attempt were made to balance the Budget, and asked, if money was to become cheaper, why the Provincial Treasurer had sold long-term bonds at a high rate of interest.

The Public Accounts Committee, not the Government, voted down the proposal of a year ago to measure films, Mr. Nixon said in answer to Mr. Price, when the Provincial Treasurer declared that the Chairman of the committee on that occasion was J. Walter Curry, Toronto Registrar. Mr. Nixon said he wondered if the Premier would repeat today his assertion of a few years ago that W. F. Nickle was not a "good Tory." The Drury Government was the best friend the North country ever had, he continued.

Criticizes Picture Deal.

He wondered if all the money had been collected by the present Government that it was possible to collect, and criticized the Government for buying a moving-picture plant before obtaining the sanction of the House. Respecting the charge that the 1922 fuel bill for buildings under the Provincial Secretary had not been paid for a year, Mr. Nixon said that the public accounts would show that votes had been put through for every institution. In conclusion, he urged the Government to do its utmost for the Provincial Savings Offices.

"Inch for inch, foot for foot, I would put the tariff wall up against the United States, if not a little higher," said W. G. Weichel, amid Conservative applause. He thought members in the Opposition would agree with him that what was needed was not a policy of free trade, "but a policy of protection, and a wall so high that they can't get into this country." Mr. Weichel favored an embargo on the export of pulpwood, and suggested, if the finances of the Province allowed it, a subsidy to bring Alberta coal to Ontario to be laid down at \$11 to \$12 a ton, "and beat the coal barons of Pennsylvania and the United States."

Resents Raney's Remarks.

Mr. Weichel declared the Kitchener police force always was trying to do its best to enforce the law. Kitchener and Waterloo County, he said, were built up by thrift and by energy, by hard work and the wearing of overalls. He resented very

much Mr. Raney's question in the House a few weeks ago as to alleged lack of enforcement of laws by the Kitchener police, and also Mr. Raney's remarks about Kitchener at the Ferguson meeting during the elections. He read the letters of Mr. Raney and the Mayor of Kitchener on the latter incident, already published.

Bootlegging was the most flourishing industry in Ontario today, he said. "I can show you that within five years men have acquired fortunes running up into hundreds of thousands of dollars, and we here, with taxation mounting up all the time, allow that sort of thing to take place, instead of having a sane liquor law." There was a whole lot of emotional legislation placed on the statute books of the country. In his opinion sentiment should not take the place of intellect. Paid organizers were going around the country, he said, and they did not care how much trouble they caused or how much money went to bootleggers.

Raps Reformers.

"But, I tell you, place this matter before the people, and see what answer you'll get," he declared. A lot of the reformers, he added, would like to bring in laws to prevent people enjoying themselves even on a Sunday, from going to a band concert or taking a ride on a street car. "Bootlegging is the thing the people want to vote down at the coming referendum," he added.

Too Many Commissions.

Mr. Proulx criticized the Ferguson Government's venture into the motion-picture business at Trenton, stating: "I have a suspicion that the building there was purchased from a particular friend of my friend from West Hastings. The Government has already spent about \$30,000, and I don't think that is the last."

Mr. Ireland—Would my friend like to know that the valuation put upon that building and equipment was \$72,000?

Mr. Proulx—There are many buildings worth \$70,000 that would not sell for \$20,000. The question is, was it a necessity? I think it was a needless expenditure.

Politics at Work.

Proceeding, the member for Prescott thought the Ferguson Government might follow the course of the King Government and effect economy in a reduction in the Ontario Civil Service.

"The Government," he said, "has appointed quite a few employees since they came to power. I put a question on the order paper the other day about a friend of theirs, formerly a member, who has been appointed to a \$3,500 a year job, and I am told that, under the guise of

inspecting timber in Northern Ontario, he is carrying on a political organization."

Coming to the question of the Ontario Temperance Act, Mr. Proulx accused former Attorney-General Raney of misrepresenting conditions in the Province of Quebec under Government control. Hon. Mr. Raney, he said, might to better advantage spend his time investigating conditions in the Province of Ontario under prohibition.

Bootleggers' Riches.

Speaking of the large amount of money which he said the bootleggers of the Province of Ontario were making, he said: "If all this money went into the Provincial Treasury, my friend the Provincial Treasurer, I think, could balance his Budget. In the Province of Quebec they made \$4,000,000 last year, and there is no debauchery in Quebec."

Mr. Proulx suggested that the Ferguson Administration "be bold enough to make a change in the O. T. A. without a referendum." He advocated a system of local option Government control, under which municipalities dry before the enactment of prohibition would remain dry under the new system until they voted for change. A change without referendum, he stated, would have the merit of saving \$50,000 cost of the vote of the people.