

Saturday, March 15th

Premier Explains Idea.

The Premier, in moving for second reading, said the necessity for such an appointment had grown out of the development and expansion in Northern Ontario, and out of the fact of there being such "magnificent distances" in the Province. For a long series of years it had been thought that one of the parts of the Province suffering under a handicap because of its remoteness from the Capital of the Province was that region of Ontario west of the White River. The distance from Toronto to Port Arthur was as far as from Toronto to St. John, N.B., and from Fort Frances to Toronto was farther than from Toronto to Halifax.

Some time ago, he proceeded, the suggestion had been made to have a Minister located in that part of the Province. To the Premier's mind that would not serve as well as the present arrangement. The need of the district was somebody on the ground. Things of importance to be studied were the creation and development of school sections, and location and advice on the construction of roadways. A variety of matters of this kind, small in themselves, but important, rendered it advisable to have someone on the ground to see the people personally, discuss matters with them, give them advice, and to confer on these matters with the Government. These things, he said, would not conflict with or abridge the activities of members.

To Do Some Exploring.

During his speech the Premier said the Government expected to carry on actively and vigorously an exploration program in that part of the country, and that qualified technical men were exploring the iron deposits all over the north-western part of the Province. The Premier spoke highly of Mr. Keefer's qualifications.

Mr. Lang said that most people in Northern Ontario expected to see the member for Port Arthur (F. H. Keefer, Conservative, who is the Legislative Secretary) chosen for the Cabinet. When the Legislative Secretary appointment was announced it appeared to all of them in the North that there must have been some reason in the mind of the Premier for not taking him into the Cabinet. It would have been justified if there had been another Minister to take care of the vast interests of the North Country, he said. Just what authority the appointee would have he was not able to find out, Mr. Lang continued.

Suggests Division.

Mr. Lang suggested dividing the Department of Lands and Forests into two separate departments—one of Forestry and one of Lands and Colonization. If this appointment allayed the feeling in that part of Ontario, he felt it would do some good at least. Mr. Lang said he always claimed that the land regulations in the North were behind the times, and should be changed. He would have no objection to having the jurisdiction of the new office enlarged to take in his riding and said he would be willing to keep in touch with him and assist him in every way he could if he came into his riding.

Peter Heenan said that he had learned that the people in his part of the country were opposed to the appointment. Deputations came to Toronto only on large questions. The

people in the North country had confidence in the present Northern Ministers. He believed the position was not necessary, and was made for nothing else but political purposes.

Unnecessary, Says Heenan.

Premier Ferguson then read several telegrams he had received from the Mayor and ex-Mayor of Kenora, from the Mayor of Keewatin and Fort Frances approving the appointment. Mr. Heenan maintained, however, that the appointment was not necessary, and declared that he would oppose the measure.

Hon. Beniah Bowman said he felt, as a member, that they wanted to go to the departments and to the Minister, as was done in times past. He thought the appointment was somewhat in the nature of a fifth wheel, and would not work out as satisfactorily as the Prime Minister anticipated.

Hon. Manning Doherty said he wished to express his admiration for the Prime Minister for the artistic manner in which he had brought that matter before the House. It surely was artistic, he continued, to put the dire needs of the Conservative party as the needs of the great North country.

"Putting Something Over."

"You can always rely that when the Prime Minister dilates on the needs of the North country he is always trying subtly to put something over," he said. Before the elections, he said, the member for Port Arthur advertised himself quite widely as a would-be Cabinet Minister. He had not any doubt but that at bottom the Prime Minister's desire was to be faithful to his friends and to see that they were taken care of, and that was the explanation of the bill. He warned Mr. Lang that if Mr. Keefer ever came into his riding to stick pretty close to him "or else you can't come back here." If any opponents of the Government came back after the elections the appointment would not be an entire success, but if they did not come back the appointment would be looked upon as a success.

Mr. Sinclair declared that he had no ill feeling toward the North, and that any opposition that might be given to the bill could not be construed as an opinion adverse to the North country. The bill had been in effect since July 16 last.

Must Be "Urgent."

The situation must have been pretty urgent in Northern Ontario, and the work now must be pretty well advanced. He said it was a vicious principle to have incorporated in a bill, and it showed the length to which the Government would go in the matter of administration and legislation. The bill simply was placed on the desks, and the Government said to pass it. It would act to the detriment of the North country if the Secretary did not devote his whole time to the development of that country.

Premier Ferguson introduced a bill into the House which extends the present act respecting the protection and boring of wells to gas and oil wells. He also introduced a bill involving minor changes in the Highway's Traffic Act, largely dealing with the weight of traffic and the regulation of tonnage. A. C. Garden (Conservative, West Hamilton) introduced a bill giving municipalities authority to govern the housing and storage of explosives, and F. G. McBrien (Conservative, Southwest Toronto) introduced a bill permitting the reduction of business assessment from 25 per cent. to 10 per cent. on lands in Toronto rented by returned soldiers for the business of parking cars in downtown districts.

Other bills of Mr. McBrien governing adjustments of local improvement taxes paid by school boards were sent on to the Municipal Com-

mittee, and second reading was given to the bill of F. H. Spence (Conservative, Fort William) validating the sale of certain lands in the Township of Neebing for tax arrears. Second reading was given to the bill of C. E. Wright (Conservative, Centre Simcoe) to empower townships to enlist aid in fighting forest fires.

Second reading was given to the bill amending the Public Service Superannuation Act. It provides that a man retired after 25 years' service comes under the terms of the act, and adjusts payments as between various types of employees made to families after an employee's death. Persons paying into the Teachers' Superannuation Fund who join the Government service will not lose the benefit of their former contributions.

Second readings were given to the bills licensing sawmills, and to the bill prohibiting the export from Canada of hardwood from Crown lands.