

Tuesday, March 18th

Bill Regarding Bonuses.

Second reading was given to the Government measure regulating the bonusing of industries by municipal corporations, the new act permitting only a fixed assessment for ten years, not renewable. After reviewing the history of municipal bonusing in this Province, and efforts made to curb it, the Attorney-General referred to the recent conference with the Premier of Quebec, and said that Mr. Taschereau assured them that Quebec was anxious to co-operate with Ontario so that commercial and industrial enterprises in respect to bonusing would be on exactly the same footing in the two Provinces.

Hon. Manning Doherty, Progressive Leader, said that there had been passed in the House the matter of bonusing the iron ore industry, and he wondered if it was consistent to abolish municipal bonusing and embark on a policy of Provincial bonusing. The Premier said he did not think the cases analogous. Where there were hundreds of municipalities bidding one against the other the result was an unhealthy competition. The Province, on the other hand, was one entity, and the result was not the same. He said one could not go through the Province today without seeing in many of the smaller places dismantled buildings once industrial concerns which had been bonused. As soon as the artificial aid had been withdrawn the industry vanished, he said.

Effect of Cheaper Power.

D. J. Taylor (Progressive, North Grey) thought that cheaper power in large cities as compared with the smaller centres acted as a form of bonus, to the detriment of the small places. In answer to a question from Edmond Proulx (Liberal, Prescott), the Attorney-General said the Government was willing, if Quebec were, to eliminate even the right of fixed assessment. Hon. F. C. Biggs (Progressive, North Wentworth) thought that perhaps the fixed time of 10 years was too rigid. If the 10-year time were expiring now, for instance, it would be hard on many industries to have their taxes increased. The Attorney-General thought that there would be the experiment of the tried-out 10-year period to guide those in charge of legislation 10 years hence, if this point were raised then. He also announced that the bill would come into effect on July 1, so that pending votes in some municipalities would not be affected by the new measure. Mr. Nickle said, further, that the Government would not permit exceptions to be made to the bill by private legislation.

New Crown Attorneys.

Second reading was given to the bill piloted by the Attorney-General to permit the Government to appoint Crown Attorneys in counties in which there is a city of more than 30,000 population, at a fixed salary, instead of fees. The bill also gives the Government power to fix fees in smaller places at an average of five years past instead of three.

John A. Currie (Conservative, Southeast Toronto) suggested that Crown Attorneys should be placed in charge of districts consisting of groups of counties, rather than the present system, and that fees be abolished altogether. In some places now, he said, the Crown Attorneys' offices were used for collection agencies. He also complained of the type of men often used as interpreters, who, he said, made it their business to get fees for the lawyers from the foreigners. In answer to this the Attorney-General said that he had instructed the law clerks to prepare legislation giving Police Commissioners in large centres the right to appoint an interpreter, and to pay him a salary for his work.

Travelling Magistrates.

Complaints were made by W. C. Chambers (Conservative, West Wellington), and echoed by Mr. Proulx and John Joynt (Conservative, North Huron), that the system in counties of having one Magistrate caused expense to many who had to appear before them on trivial offenses, and who had to travel to the county town for the hearing. "At present, in Wellington, our Police Magistrate is not what we think he should be," said Mr. Chambers. Mr. Nickle said that he had issued instructions time and again that Magistrates must go to the case, rather than that the case must come to the Magistrate. That was the principle upon which he tried to administer justice in small places. If any member of the House heard of any injustice suffered by a Magistrate improperly refusing to go to a case rather than the case coming to the Magistrate, he invited him to lay the particulars before the Attorney-General. He agreed with Mr. Proulx that the holding of these courts in various parts of the country made known a great deal of fireside law.

Malcolm Lang (Liberal, Cochrane) said that in his part of the country the Crown Attorney got the worst of it in respect to fees, as he did not receive enough for the travelling he had to do.

The amendments to the Ontario Telephone Act were put through committee, and Mr. Nickle asked that the clause be dropped which gave the Ontario Railway Board power to enforce the decisions of the Dominion Board against a company incorporated in Ontario. He hoped, he said, for the formation of a joint committee representing both boards to adjudicate upon these matters of service between companies incorporated one at Ottawa and the other in Ontario.

Various private bills were put through committee; also the bill appointing the Legislative Secretary for Northern and Northwestern Ontario. Peter Heenan (Labor, Kenora) said that he would work hard and do all he could for the building up of the North country with anyone appointed by the bill.