

Tuesday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>

## SECOND O.T.A. QUERY IS NEATLY SHELVED BY CYNICAL RETORT

**"Anything May Emanate From Ottawa," Is Comment of Premier—Government Sees Attempt to Evade Highway Costs in Incorporation Bills**

### SKELETON HOUSE HAS QUIET DAY

For the second time since the present session of the Legislature opened Premier Ferguson yesterday declined to be sounded on the question of 'wet' policy.

"Anything is apt to emanate from Ottawa these days," was his short, direct and cynical reply to a question put to him in the House by J. W. Widdifield (Progressive, North Ontario), and dealing indirectly with an Ottawa despatch quoted by Mr. Widdifield, and which inferred there would be a Provincial election and liquor vote some time in June of this year.

#### Speaker Intervenes.

Mr. Widdifield had reserved his sounding tactics until the House was about to adjourn. Then, rising, he attempted to read the Ottawa despatch in full, despite Premier Ferguson's objections.

"The member is not entitled to dilate on the question," said Mr. Ferguson. "If he will ask a question I will answer it."

Quite unruffled, Mr. Widdifield continued to read from the article until the Speaker intervened.

"I don't want to be arbitrary," said the Speaker, "but the rules are quite clearly laid down. The member is not entitled to make a speech."

"Then," said Mr. Widdifield, smiling, "I would like to know what the Premier has to say as to the truth of this despatch from Ottawa."

The Premier's answer, given above, brought a laugh to the House, and concluded a 35-minute session confined solely to introduction of legislation.

#### Bills Not Favored.

Calling the attention of the House to the fact that many municipalities this year were bringing in bills for purposes of incorporation, Premier Ferguson stated that the Government did not look with much favor on this contemplated legislation. It was the Government's belief that the municipalities' sole reason for cutting adrift from the country was to avoid payment of their fair share toward construction and maintenance of highways.

"And as far as roads are concerned," said the Premier, "towns should continue their payments as well as the rural districts."

First reading was given to a bill to amend the Department of Education Act to the extent of including the interest section of the Municipal Bill, dealing with education, in the Education Bill. This change, it was explained to the House, had been urged by the Statute Revision Commission. A bill amending and consolidating the Trustees Act was introduced by Hon. W. F. Nickle, Attorney-General.

#### University Legislation.

Permission for universities and museums to secure and transport ore specimens without the necessity of making returns required by existing legislation is sought by Hon. Charles McCrea, Minister of Mines, in an amendment to the Unwrought Metal Act. Mr. McCrea stated yesterday that the original legislation was aimed at tendencies to "high-grade," but never had been designed to interfere with the activities of educational bodies.

First reading was given to a bill authorizing the Provincial Treasurer to pay to the University of Toronto \$13,480 per year for twenty years out of the consolidated revenue fund, for the purpose of purchasing new properties on St. George Street for university extensions. A resolution from Premier Ferguson, dealing with this bill, had been placed on the order paper previously.

#### Currie Has Criticism.

Col. J. A. Currie precipitated a brief flurry, during the afternoon, by taking exception to the manner in which the questions of the day were called. Col. Currie thought that, in view of the fact that there were a number of important queries on the paper, House procedure had been lax, to say the least. It was his contention that the questions should be called individually, and that "the sooner we stick to the rules of the House, the better." The argument terminated with a ruling from the Speaker that he had called the orders in customary fashion. Friday, he stated, was considered the regular question day.

Interest in yesterday's activities was lukewarm. It was common knowledge that W. E. N. Sinclair, Liberal Leader, was not to continue the debate on the Speech from the Throne until today, so, consequently, the attendance of members was small. When the House sat at 3 o'clock but 29 out of a total of 104 members were present, 23 of these being Conservatives.

### Dean of Legislature Has Many Questions

Costs of the Government's maintenance of highways are asked by Sam Clarke, dean of the Ontario Legislature, in questions he placed yesterday on the Legislature order paper. Mr. Clarke also asked for the itemized cost of the Agricultural Inquiry Committee appointed in 1924; on whose authority the sessions of the committee have been held since the opening of the 1925 Legislature; and how much the Government owes on account of this committee. Queries were filed, additionally, by Mr. Clarke with regard to the identity of persons who tendered for the 1925 supply of flour for the Belleville school for the deaf; the names of successful tenderers; prices quoted by the tenderers, and successful prices.