

Wednesday, Feb. 17

SINCLAIR AND RANEY MAKE DIRECT ISSUE ON SUPPORT OF O.T.A.

Ontario Liberals Stand Behind Act as Choice of People, W. E. N. Sinclair Tells Legislature in Slashing Criticism of Government's "Indecision" and "Broken Faith"

SURPRISE DIVISION CONTINUES DEBATE

Amendment to the Address by Hon. W. E. Raney Asks Administration to Strengthen Temperance Act—Any Announcement on Liquor Policy Will Be Public, Reiterates Premier in Caustic Reply

A declaration by W. E. N. Sinclair, Liberal Leader, that Ontario Liberals stood behind the O.T.A. as the people's choice, and his challenge to Premier Ferguson that he tell the country what he had on his mind in regard to the O.T.A.

An amendment to the Speech from the Throne from Hon. W. E. Raney, Progressive Leader, to the effect that the Government promise to support the O.T.A. and strengthen any weakness in it, and an attack by Mr. Raney on the Government's administration, particularly relative to the O.T.A.

A caustic condemnation of Mr. Raney and his tactics by Premier Ferguson, who reiterated his assertion that when the Government had any announcement to make on the question of "wet" legislation it would make it publicly.

A totally unexpected division of the House over the question of a night session, with a win for the Government by a large majority.

These were the many features of yesterday's sitting of the Legislature when the House met in afternoon and evening sessions.

Division Is Surprise.

The division proved the biggest sensation of the day. It had been known generally that Mr. Sinclair and Hon. Mr. Raney were prepared to assail the Government policy of the past at length, and crowded galleries both afternoon and evening testified to the interest taken by the public in the continuation of the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

But the division, coming with the unexpectedness with which it did, and over such a trivial matter as a question of adjournment, pricked the House to a state of tense eagerness which far outdistanced any thrill that may have outgrown from the stirring remarks of either of the Leaders of the Opposition groups. It was quite evident from the vote taken on the division that the Government was prepared to "sit the night out on Mr. Raney" if his speech had been sufficiently lengthy. As it was, Premier Ferguson, with a half-hour retort to Mr. Raney's charges and inferences, carried the debate along until 10.30 o'clock, when he moved its adjournment.

Both Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Raney found much fault with the alleged

"right-about-turn" tactics of the Government in regard to prosecution of the Ontario Temperance Act, and from their condemnatory remarks many verbal sparks flew back and forth across the House.

There was no sparing of feelings, and if yesterday's storm, after the apathetic lull of the past week, is any indication of the fervor with which opposing forces will march through the present session, there are, as one member put it last night following the adjournment, "some hot times ahead." In this heckling connection Hon. Mr. Raney was the particular target of the Government benches. On one occasion the Speaker of the House was compelled to intervene and demand that Government members accord Mr. Raney the hearing that was due him.

Premier Belligerent.

Premier Ferguson, rising to speak, was greeted with intense applause from his supporters. His eagerness to refute, as he claimed, many of the statements of Mr. Raney, whom he termed a self-acknowledged "apostle of all virtues and temperance sentiment in the Province," was quite evident. Literally speaking, he went after Mr. Raney "hammer and tongs," while his supporters banged desks lustily at each bit of hammering. The Premier will likely continue the debate today.

Text of Amendment.

The amendment to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, moved by Mr. Raney and seconded by J. W. Widdifield, Progressive member for North Ontario, follows in full:

"That the basis upon which the Government rests under our institutions is that the majority must prevail; that, the people of Ontario having by their votes declared for prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating liquor, prohibition must prevail until the people by their votes pronounce against it; that no self-respecting Government could do otherwise than accept the situation as above stated. That the question of the prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating liquors ought not to be a question between the political parties, but ought to be dealt with entirely on the basis of the will of the people as expressed by their votes on the subject; that it is the duty of this Legislature to strengthen any weaknesses that may from time to time be revealed in the Ontario Temperance Act, and that it is the duty of the Government to use its best efforts to give the law active, vigorous and efficient enforcement."

Says People Want Answer.

"Under the rules of Parliamentary procedure," said Mr. Raney, speaking to the amendment, "it may be possible for the Government to avoid a direct vote on my amendment. But I warn the Government that the people are no longer in a mood for further evasions or subterfuges. If I do not misunderstand them, the people will insist upon a direct and unequivocal answer to this question, and they want that answer now."

Declaring that the O.T.A. differed from other legislation in that it was the people's own act, on which they had twice voted, Mr. Sinclair came out squarely behind the measure. He assailed the Conservatives for any proposals to change the act, arguing that they were pledged to support the people's choice.

Defines Liberal Views.

"The Liberal party stands for the vote of the people as expressed by the people in their referendum," he declared. "As long as the people say so by their vote, the Liberal thought and policy is the enforcement of the O.T.A. Is it not the tariff that creates smuggling? How many of my honorable friends opposite would do away with the tariff to do away with smuggling? The situations are parallel."

"There are constant rumors of impending changes in the Ontario Temperance Act. This question of liquor