

If the Province was going to do anything, he said, it should be done "now." By that he did not necessarily mean "this session." If the Government was sympathetic to the bill he would be prepared, he said, to have it stand over until next session.

"You see, Mr. Prime Minister," he smiled, "how frank I can be at times."

Continuing, he begged the Prime Minister to be "merciful" regarding the measure. If sympathetic toward it, he would accept whatever procedure he, the Prime Minister, would adopt. He would rather, he said, have the bill given "sudden death" than have it shunted to the Elections Committee—the fate that befell it in 1926—with no sympathy whatever for it.

Attorney-General's Views.

Hon. W. H. Price, Attorney-General, said the question before the House was one which had received the consideration of Governments for many years. Irrespective of party, he thought Mr. Raney's measure, as styled, was going, perhaps, "too far." Many men, he said, entered public life at a sacrifice to their businesses, and it was not fair that the public should be deprived of contributing their support to those who fought their political battles.

No one, he said, deplored any more than he did the conditions of which the Progressive Leader had spoken, but it was his opinion that such conditions would be hard to rectify. All parties, he said, had funds to carry on elections. While it was not his desire or intent to cast reflection on the Church—which, he said, was above reflection as long as it kept to its own field—there were instances in the last election, he said, where collections were taken in churches and meetings were held in church basements.

"Subscriptions in churches, unless for church or missionary work," said Col. Price, "are entirely out of place."

That, he said, did not excuse brewers and distillers from endeavoring to get control of the political parties.

There was legislation in 1914, said Col. Price, covering the matter of contributions. It was provided that all contributions over \$50 must be published. Yet how many people heard of the agents making known the amounts contributed? The "desire" back of such bills, said he, was "wonderful"; but, he added, "it is practically impossible."

"Was there any law," Mr. Raney queried, "regarding campaign funds of central committees?"

"Only the Federal law," said Col. Price. "Why," said he, reverting to his statements of impracticable legislation, "half the sections of the Election Act are never acted on."

"Do you suggest that the members elected to this Legislature do not publish the statements required by the Election Act?" interjected Mr. Raney.

"Not at all," replied Col. Price.

Why, he went on, should Mr. Raney discriminate in his proposed bill? "What's the difference between brewers and distillers and any other large corporation?" he asked.

Not Near Election.

As for Mr. Raney's legislation, he went on, "I think it is the disposition of the people to keep away from such matters when an election is over, since it creates bad feeling. However," he said, "I feel that anything that can be done to elevate the political life of the country should be done."

In the proposed measure, he declared, there were many sections that would fail to work out right. As for the feature of publicity, said he, "I don't think that the thousands of people throughout the country who make contributions in good faith want their names mentioned."

"But I feel confident," he went on, "that this discussion, and the consideration of this bill, with other bills in the last ten years, and the laws at the present time, will do good and we may make some progress."

Says Enactment Should Be General.

Liberal Leader Sinclair then took a hand in the discussion, declaring: "It seems that the 1914 legislation goes even farther than the legislation proposed in this bill. If we are going to eliminate the taking of contributions for political purposes it should be general, and contributions from all sources, big and small, should be prohibited. I am at a loss to know why legislation should be proposed which does not cover all the sources of election funds."

"The object must be to purify public morals," he continued, "and if so, why are only certain businesses in the community mentioned in the legislation. So I feel it difficult to give this bill support."

Mr. Raney's argument in reference to evidence of the Customs probe, as to what happened in Ontario was not conclusive, said he. The situation in British Columbia was undoubtedly a regrettable one, but there is no direct evidence on record, as I take it, to show that there were contributions in Ontario.

If the legislation, he went on, was to bar all political contributions it would make candidates liable to pay all their expenses, and some might not be able, because of financial reasons, to seek election.

Wants Compulsory Voting.

The remedy for the situation, he suggested, "will be law making voting compulsory." "Until you make voting compulsory," he emphasized, "you will not strike at the great evils that arise in election campaigns."

"I do not know if we should say the final word on this bill today," he added, "but if we're to meet the whole situation, let us attack it from the line of contributions from all sources. If my honorable friend is prepared to go the whole way and eliminate all contributions, then I am with him in his bill, but while he says contributions may be made by some and not by others, I am not with him."

In conclusion he emphasized that the members should go into the situation fully in further consideration of the measure.

Asks Quick Action.

J. Albert Pinard, Liberal member for East Ottawa, was keen for "quick action" on the bill. He expressed himself as in favor of an immediate vote of the House to see what would be done with the measure. The bill erred noticeably, he thought, for its failure to include in the list of "campaign contributors" the names of prohibition and temperance associations.

Mr. Pinard criticized Mr. Raney for not giving his own opinion in support of the bill. The Customs Inquiry Commission was costing the country \$1,500 a day, he said, and "not working to the best interests of the country." He supported Col. Price's belief that many Parliamentary members could not meet their election expenses.

"It is impossible," he added, "to make elections with prayers, and the parsons that sit in this House know that as well as I do."

As far as he was concerned, he was prepared, he said, to take all the subscriptions that came his way, regardless of whence they came, and in this connection he asserted: "As far as that goes, I hope they're never published either."

Premier Cannot Concur.

Premier Ferguson expressed himself as being sympathetic with the object of the bill, but he could not concur with all Mr. Raney's argument, nor could he accept Mr. Sinclair's suggestions.

Honest contributions, said he, aided in educating public opinion. A candidate, in placing his views before the public, a costly process, in which he might properly accept financial aid, was attempting to influence

public opinion. "So," he added, "if one should say that all contributions are to be eliminated it might do a serious wrong to the people of the Province."

"I do not think," said he, "that my honorable friend's bill has had the consideration at his hands that his subjects usually have. It is bristling with weaknesses."

Mr. Raney, said he, confined it to a class "that he regards as publicans and sinners." Why should the honorable member have this regard for brewers and distillers? It involved an understanding of the liquor issue in the Province, the Premier felt. It was "utter nonsense," he declared, to take the view that money from the sale of liquor was "tainted." Mr. Raney, said he, had not objected when he was Attorney-General to putting in the public Treasury a million and a quarter of dollars from sale of liquor in the Government dispensaries. The liquor business, declared Mr. Ferguson, was recognized commercially as legitimate if properly controlled.

Effect in Hydro.

The Premier contended that the bill, as now worded, would work many hardships. For instance, the great Hydro enterprise campaign could never be re-conducted, if the bill were law, for the reason that the many public-spirited men who "dug down in their pockets" to help that campaign along would be prohibited by the terms of the measure from again doing so.

"The bill, in its present shape, is crudity itself," said the Premier.

While quite in sympathy with the principle of the bill Mr. Ferguson said it was "totally inadequate" and would put Ontario in "a most absurd position" if it were adopted.

"I have no thought of killing the bill," said he, to Mr. Raney. "But unless you dress your children up in some better clothes, I'm afraid I can't let them mingle with the people of this House. The trouble is that this child is too low in the neck and too short in the skirts."

Mr. Ferguson asked if he understood that Mr. Raney would withdraw the measure until another year. Mr. Raney said, "No!" The Prime Minister then asked that it be sent down to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Not Perfect, Says Raney.

In reply to the other speakers, Mr. Raney emphasized that he did not submit the measure with the idea that it was perfect legislation. "It isn't customary at second reading," said he, "to analyze a bill with a microscope. There may be changes that should be made. It may be to extend the list of corporations. The thing is are you in accord with the principle of the legislation?"

The 1914 legislation, he declared, made no provision for publicity, and so it was not complete.

If provisions prohibiting corrupt contributions could not be enforced, queried Mr. Sinclair, how could provisions for published statements be enforced?

A man was not always going to subscribe in his own name, Mr. Ferguson said.

A provision for published statements from central campaign committees could not be evaded, Mr. Raney replied.

"What is the object of publicity if the funds come from an honest source?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"You don't know that it is honest until there is publicity," said Mr. Raney.

H. C. Schofield (Conservative, Toronto St. George) wanted to know if there should be a thought of political contributions through church papers.

Mr. Raney replied he would be glad to go into that if there was an evil in it. What he wanted, he emphasized, was that the bill be given second reading, and it could be thoroughly discussed in committee.

Second reading was then given.