

Laugh Quiets Tiff in Legislature As Leaders Come to Verbal Blows

Party Chieftains Object, Declare Question, Explain, Emphasize, Maintain and Retort, When Measure Proposing Higher Fees for Clerks of County or District Courts Is Considered by House in Committee

RIGHT TO CRITICIZE UPHELD BY SINCLAIR

A lively tiff between Premier Ferguson and Liberal Leader Sinclair and Progressive Leader Raney featured the proceedings in the Legislature yesterday afternoon.

The trouble started when the House in Committee dealt with an amendment to the Conditional Sales Act, a measure providing an increase in fees for Clerks of County or District Courts in regard to the handling of documents having to do with conditional sales. The increases proposed varied according to the work involved, but the proposed increase of certain of the fees was to the extent of 500 per cent.

"A Vicious System."

And to this Hon. Mr. Raney objected. Was it not sufficient just to double the amounts, if any increase at all was to be made? "The fee system," he declared, "is a vicious system, and should be avoided as far as possible."

"Why is it vicious?" asked Col. Price, sponsor of the bill.

"It is on the wrong basis," replied Mr. Raney. "But in these cases it perhaps can't be avoided. Yet the proper basis is a salary basis."

He emphasized his thought that the Government should consider the proposed amendment. Clerks, apparently, got sufficient remuneration from fees already, he maintained, for "you never heard of them resigning because they weren't making enough money."

"Might Work Hardship."

"This legislation," he declared, "is wrong in principle, and might work a hardship on the public."

"Perhaps," he added, "these fees are out of ratio to other fees—such as chattel mortgage fees."

"Then the chattel mortgage fees should be increased," retorted Col. Price.

"How far is this going to go?" asked Mr. Raney.

"The question," said Mr. Ferguson, "is not of the increase of the fee, but how much the service is worth to the public."

"The County Clerk becomes a tax collector for the Province," said Mr. Sinclair.

"Twiddle and Twaddle."

Mr. Ferguson turned his guns on the Opposition. "You are making a mountain out of a molehill," he declared, warmly. "This is all twiddle and twaddle—piffling nonsense."

Mr. Sinclair immediately objected. Yesterday, said he, measures had been rushed through the House that might have been thoroughly discussed. Criticism had been withheld to expedite business.

"But," he emphasized, "if the Prime Minister resents the criticism of the Opposition, I serve notice, not in writing, but right now, on the floor of the House, that henceforth I will criticize measures whenever and however and as long as I like."

"I didn't think the Prime Minister was so impatient," interjected Mr. Raney.

Hour's Discussion.

"We've been listening to this talk for an hour," Mr. Ferguson snapped back.

"And an hour more, if it is necessary," retorted the Opposition.

But then a Government member eased the tension with a laugh. The joker was no other than George S. Shields, Conservative member for Toronto Woodbine. During the afternoon, Mr. Shields, repeating his manoeuvres of other afternoons, had left his bench, which was at the far end of the Tory benches, on the Opposition side of the House, and had crossed over to the solid Government side. During the proceedings he had been wandering about, sitting here, sitting there.

"Wanderer" Tunes In.

But just as the words between the Leaders grew warm, his migration ended. He regained his own seat. Removed the length of the Chamber from the chieftains in the House, he sat, hand to ear, trying to "tune in." The Leaders' words grew louder and penetrated even to Mr. Shields's little corner of the House.

He decided to settle the matter. Smiling on the House, he declared: "As a layman here, it's up to me to protest against the petty squabbles of lawyers."

When the laughter died away, the House, without further discussion, passed the amendment.

EXPENDITURE TABLED ON CHORLEY PARK

M. A. McCallum Secures Interesting Figures on Government House

NO AUTOS MAINTAINED

A rise and fall in the cost of maintenance of Government House was outlined in the Legislature yesterday when M. A. McCallum (Progressive, South Bruce) called for a schedule of the costs during the past six years. The amounts were as follows: 1920, \$30,036; 1921, \$33,086; 1922, \$33,136; 1923, \$56,386; 1924, \$42,252; 1925, \$41,605; 1926, \$39,143.

As for the number of servants at Government House, said the Prime Minister, there were three permanent employees and fourteen temporary ones. No automobiles were maintained for Government House service.

A Teachers' Excursion.

To a query by J. G. Lethbridge (Progressive, West Middlesex), "How many school teachers of the Province went on the Northern Ontario trip given by the Education Department in 1926?" Premier Ferguson emphatically replied: "There was no excursion to Northern Ontario given by the department to school teachers." In 1925, he explained, a hundred and seventy-seven teachers had taken a northern trip, but it had been arranged by teachers' associations. Not all the teachers of the Province had been given the chance to make the trip, the travellers being representatives of districts. The Government had met part of the expense, paying out in this connection \$8,000.

When the House opened, several Government bills were introduced, among them being an amendment to the Hydro-Electric Railway Act of 1914, and a measure having to do with the Hydro Power Commission, a ratification of agreements similar to those legislated every year.

Second Reading Given.

Second reading was given to the following acts: Respecting Township of Thorold; respecting Town of Sudbury; respecting the General Synod and the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada; to amend the Act to Incorporate the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Canada; respecting the Town of Cobalt; to amend the Athletic Commission Act.

The House in Committee carried the following bills: Respecting the game, fur-bearing animals and fisheries of Ontario; respecting protection of cattle; to amend the Bulk Sales Act, 1917; to amend Voters List Act, 1926; to amend the Hospitals for Insane Act; to improve the quality of dairy products; to amend the Milk, Cheese and Butter Act; to amend the Conditional Sales Act.

HIGHER HYDRO BONUS IS SOUGHT IN MOTION

Progressive Urges Equalization of Rates to Smaller Urban Centres

PLAN FOR FARM POWER

Equalization of Hydro rates to the smaller urban centres is emphasized in the following notice of motion which F. G. Sandy, Progressive member for Victoria South, has placed on the order paper of the Legislature.

Mr. Sandy's motion, which will likely be considered by the House at an early date, reads: "That, in the opinion of this House, the bonus to Hydro-Electric power lines in rural areas ought to be increased to 80 per cent. of their cost, and that the time has come for the formulation of a scheme for the equalization of Hydro rates to the smaller urban centres, and for the formulation of a plan to finance the ever-increasing demand for power for farm purposes, and for the use of smaller urban centres."

When Scholfield Leaves Business Is About Ended

When proceedings opened in the Legislature yesterday, half the benches were vacant; and, as the business of considering bills was slowly forwarded, members who had put in an appearance began slipping out of the chamber.

Finally there were but twenty-five Government members in their seats. What a chance for the Opposition to show strength in numbers! But the Liberal and Progressive benches were vacant to a similar extent, only seven of the Opposition being on duty.

The general exit was summed up in the words of H. C. Scholfield (Conservative, Toronto-St. George).

The House was in Committee passing a lengthy bill section by section. Mr. Scholfield and two neighbors in the back row of Government benches chatted in undertones.

Finally the bill under consideration was passed. Would the House adjourn? Members watched the Prime Minister. But no, there was more business. "Order Number Forty-six," announced Mr. Ferguson, calling another bill.

There was a moment's silence, and in that moment the words of Mr. Scholfield, chatting with his neighbors, rang through the House: "I'm going home pretty soon, now."