

BUDGET DEBATE ENDS AND CONTROL MEASURE ARRIVES DOWN TODAY

House Resolves Into Committee of Supply Without Dissent, Following Finance Probe and Heated Retort to Lyons Charges by Liberal Leader and Vigorous Replies and Criticism by Premier

RANEY HOLDS FIRE FOR LIQUOR BILL

The Budget debate died quietly at 6 o'clock last night. The motion of Hon. Dr. J. D. Monteith, Provincial Treasurer, that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the estimates was passed without dissent, and, for the first time in the recollection of the oldest members of the House, without any obstructive amendment from the Opposition ranks.

Liberal Leader William E. N. Sinclair and Premier Ferguson were the only two speakers of the afternoon. Hon. W. E. Raney, Progressive Leader, waived his opportunity to speak to the financial statement and will reserve his fire, it is understood, for the second reading of the Government liquor-control bill, which comes down to the Legislature today.

Galleries Disappointed.

The Prime Minister's failure to reveal the much-discussed measure yesterday upset newspaper calculations and undoubtedly disappointed the crowded galleries.

"I will relieve the nervous tension that seems to exist here," said the Prime Minister, in reply to a question of Mr. Raney, "and inform the House that I propose to introduce the bill tomorrow."

There was a prolonged "Ah!" from the galleries. Then they sat back and heard Mr. Sinclair and the Prime Minister cross rapiers over the question of the Province's finances. The Liberal Leader prodded Government policy in this respect from every angle.

In addition, he scored Hon. James Lyons for past statements regarding the Liberal party in Ontario, and reminded the former Minister of Lands and Forests in the Ferguson Administration that he "wasn't the man to vilify" the name of the party.

The Prime Minister treated Mr. Sinclair's criticism in a bantering way, terming it "childish," and what might be expected from one who in the last election "sat up nights" figuring out a Cabinet that never was to be.

At the outset of his remarks Mr. Sinclair referred to the Prime Minister's words when he noted the crowds in the galleries, apparently on hand to greet the Government-control bill "I assure the Premier," said the Liberal Leader, "that the large gallery is on hand to hear what I have to say."

Two Days of Jubilation.

As for Mr. Ferguson's announcement that the liquor bill would be introduced Wednesday, he said: "At last the long months of suspense are over. The caucus has met. Sunshine radiates on the countenances of the Government supporters. But it is a wonder the bill was not brought in today. However, I understand a second caucus is necessary before the bill is brought before the House, so the jubilation may go on for two days."

Mr. Sinclair turned to a new topic. During the Provincial Treasurer's Budget speech the Liberal Leader's "deskmate" had been a newspaper reporter playing "Hansard." Mr. Sinclair recalled that during the Drury regime the Conservative Opposition had objected to reporters sitting on the floor of the House "verbatiming" speeches.

"I haven't funds to get my speeches reported," Mr. Sinclair added, and so he had to take his chances on what the press "gave him."

Couldn't Be Done.

As for the Budget debate, he prophesied that the Premier would say: "The Opposition has not made one constructive criticism." How could the Opposition make detailed criticism, Mr. Sinclair asked—especially new members of the Opposition—when so many Ministers refrained from telling, in the debate, of departmental work?

As for the public accounts, he thought them but a compilation of figures without explanations. The Provincial Treasurer had praised the concise and abbreviated accounts, as compared with former lengthier volumes. But during the Drury regime, Mr. Sinclair noted, items in the public accounts were explained.

He referred to items in this year's public accounts, payments to construction companies. The names of the companies were familiar, said he, because the names had been subject of discussion in the Public Accounts Committee last year. But there was no explanation of the present record of payments.

"And so," he summarized, "the public accounts, instead of being information for the people, are concealment from the people."

No Retrenchment.

The Provincial Treasurer had referred to the period of retrenchment ushered in by Mr. Ferguson. "But," said Mr. Sinclair, "there was no such period. Why, in 1924 the Provincial Treasurer had foretold the cutting of \$5,000,000 off the expenditures. But since that year expenditures had been increased, until for 1926 they were \$4,000,000 more than in 1923."

The Government proclaimed that it was "chopping off" the debt. But, said Mr. Sinclair, if any chopping was being done, "a dull axe" was being used.

He was critical of the Government's debt-retirement scheme. If it was proceeded with, he declared, the Province would find in a number of years "that there is not enough annual revenue to take care of the debt," and that "greatly increased taxation" would result.

Urges Cut in Expenditures.

There were Government expenditures, he declared, which he thought could be eliminated. He noted, ac-

ording to the public accounts, that \$4,338 was paid for Ministers' travelling expenses. Surely, he said, the Cabinet members were being paid enough in salary and sessional indemnities without taking "this honorarium of travelling expenses."

In this connection he noted that Hon. W. F. Nickle had received \$38.40 for travelling expenses.

"I wonder," he went on, looking over records in the accounts, "who gets the car tickets, and why there is so much travelling around Toronto on street cars."

"How would you have the messengers and staff get around?" asked Mr. Ferguson.

"How do I get around?" retorted Mr. Sinclair. "I pay my own way. I'm just pointing out where the Government can save the money of the people of Ontario."

\$540,000 Travelling Expenses.

In all, he emphasized, travelling expenses paid by the Government amounted to \$540,000. "Surely this is an unduly large amount," he added.

"Did not that include payment for services?" asked Col. Price.

"No," said Mr. Sinclair; "that did not include amounts paid for travelling expenses and service rendered the Government by the traveller."

The Government, he declared, had, in connection with its finances, boasted of getting "cheap money." But surely the Government could not take credit for this. Money was indeed "cheaper"; rates were down; but it was general through the Province and the Dominion, and due to the administration of the Federal Government.

Still Can Borrow Money.

"The Lord sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," he went on. "The Ferguson Government is bad enough, dear knows, but not so bad that it can't borrow money the same as any other institution."

Mr. Sinclair attacked the Government's stated policy of tax reduction. He said that the tax on carbonated drinks had been dropped because "the Government had been too lazy to collect it." Had there been no election last fall there would have been no tax reductions.

In the early stages of the campaign Premier Ferguson, he said, had not gone very "jumpy." Things had not gone very well, and the Prime Minister had been forced to look around for some "soothing syrup." And so the amusement tax, the motor license and the municipal income tax cuts had been introduced to meet the situation.

Criticizes Bank Policy.

Mr. Sinclair spoke of the Provincial banks and of the time when they paid 4 per cent. interest, and when farmers were able to borrow money at 6 per cent. Why, he asked, hadn't the Government, when it reduced the interest rate to 3 per cent., reduced the loan rate the same extent, instead of one-half of 1 per cent.?

The Liberal Leader said that the Government's claim to possess "a restraining influence on expenditures" was purely imaginary. The public accounts did not show it. They showed an increase in expenditure of

\$4,000,000 in 1926 over 1923. If the same policy of "restraint" were to be followed in the present fiscal year as in the past, the public, he contended, might well prepare itself for a \$60,000,000 expenditure.

"I say to the Provincial Treasurer right now," declared Mr. Sinclair, "that he had better beware, or when the next election bell rings he may have to seek the seclusion of some other department, as the former Treasurer (Col. Price) has done. I really feel sorry for him, for he has to carry the burden of all the other Ministers who spend the money."