

Thursday, March 10th

### ASKS FOR CO-OPERATION.

Mr. Ferguson entreated the Opposition to co-operate with the Government in considering the bill; to offer constructive criticism, and not to "thresh old straw that has been threshed for years, and which is still being threshed every Sunday in Massey Hall."

He invited from the general public suggestions of a "helpful character," of which, he said, there had been a conspicuous shortage since Dec. 1. And in the brief period between the introduction and the formal first reading of the measure he detailed briefly its aims.

As "three outstanding features" he named "the provision for the appointment of a strong, capable and highly efficient Control Board, commanding public confidence in such a high degree as to restore respect for the law and make its operation effective"; the "scrupulous observance" of the pledges given by the Prime Minister before the election; and the reliance by the Government, for the success of the law, on "wise and efficient administration," rather than statutory enactments.

In other words, the bill, as introduced, deals in "broad principles," and confides the application of these principles, "within well-defined limitations," to the Control Board.

#### Supreme in Its Power.

The board thus will be supreme in its powers, and cannot be interfered with either by courts or by the Government. To its charge will be entrusted, among other rights, the right to regulate equipment and management of Government stores and warehouses; prescribe duties of all employees of the board; govern the purchase and supply of liquor under the act; prescribe for hours of sale; determine classes and brands of liquor to be kept for sale; prescribe hours that stores shall be kept open; for distribution of price lists; for fees payable in respect of permits and licenses issued under the act; and for "local-option" votes where it considers them advisable.

Salient points detailed by the Prime Minister included yearly individual permits to residents of Ontario; monthly permits to transients; special permits to physicians and doctors; special permits for ministers of the Gospel for sacramental purposes; and no dispensing of liquor by druggists.

#### Permit From Board.

He further stressed that breweries and distilleries can sell in the Province to the board only under a permit from the board; and that a board official would be placed in every brewery to check up consignments. Establishment of stores will be left to the board.

In respect of liquor consumption, he emphasized that none might be consumed in a public place; that it had to be consumed in the residence or temporary home of the purchaser. Enforcement of the act will be carried out by special inspectors appointed by the board, the Provincial police and municipal authorities. All prosecutions will be conducted by the Attorney-General's Department. Imprisonment, on the first offence, will be meted out to anyone selling liquor, he said. One appeal of conviction, only, will be allowed to a County Judge.

#### Crowded Galleries.

Inasmuch as the majority of these "features" had been forecast in the press in recent weeks, they failed to provide for the packed and expectant galleries of the Legislative

chamber the "kick" that may have been anticipated. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister supplied a great thrill in the dramatic manner in which he handled the situation, and in the emphatic way in which he delivered his inaugural remarks to the bill with which he hopes to "beat the bootlegger" and "make for better conditions throughout the Province."

Long before 3 o'clock all available seating space in the House was taken. Corridors without swarmed with people. It was one of the biggest "moments" in the history of the Legislature.

#### Regrets Delay.

The Premier took the floor at 5.37 p.m. "Mr. Speaker," he began, when the desk-thumping had finally ceased, "I regret that there has been some delay in the printing and delivery of the bill which I am about to ask the permission of this House to introduce. But that was inevitable, for I felt that it was desirable that this bill should be in print, so that the press and the public at large should have the bill in its entirety before them. Therefore, I am presenting it today in galley form. There may be some few verbal changes, though I don't know of any.

"I move, seconded by Mr. Henry, that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled 'An Act to Regulate and Control the Sale of Liquor in Ontario.'"

There followed another salvo of applause.

"It is desirable," Mr. Ferguson resumed, "that I should, though this is only the first reading of the bill, make a few very general observations regarding the purpose and the scope of this legislation.

#### Three Features.

"There are three outstanding features in the legislation which the Government has introduced to give effect to its temperance policy.

"The first, and the most important of these, is the provision for the appointment of a strong, capable and highly efficient Control Board commanding public confidence in such a high degree as to restore respect for the law and make its operation effective. The personnel of this board has already been announced, and has been received with universal approval.

"Secondly, there is the scrupulous observance of the pledges given to the public by the Prime Minister during the recent general election campaign. These pledges gave the assurance that the measure would be in the interest of real temperance. Carrying out that undertaking, the bill forbids any public drinking of liquor. The use of liquor is strictly confined to residences, and what constitutes a residence is clearly defined by the law. The principle of local option prohibition is preserved and may be applied to new areas as desired by the electors.