

Commission to Decide.

"I want it to sink into the minds of the people of this Province," he declared, "that the Commission is going to administer this act in the interests of the public and for the public service. We're not here to increase the consumption of liquor. We're here to protect the people—especially the rising generation—from being poisoned under the vogue of the past few years."

Mr. Ferguson explained that under the act a permit-holder need not apply personally at a store to get his liquor. He would be able to get it, as in the past under the O.T.A., by applying personally or by ordering it through the mail.

Should Be Reasonable, He Says.

The law, to be effective, he said, had to be reasonable. If stores were to be established for the purpose of supplying people with liquor, it was proper that people should be given reasonable opportunity to exercise their privileges. In the past, he said, the cry had been to suppress open drinking. Now that the Government had decided that people should drink in their domiciles or not at all, "political prohibitionists" were saying that the home was to be "debauched," and that drinking should be done "in the open."

"What inconsistency!" declared the Premier, who added that the Government proposed to educate the public to an extent where no longer "the finger of scorn" might be pointed at Ontario as "the spot in the Dominion where respect for law was almost universally lacking."

Mr. Ferguson said that "adequate enforcement" of the new act would be had from inspectors, to be appointed by the Control Board, the Provincial Police, and local constabulary. Prosecutions would be effectively handled by the Attorney-General's Department.

Reasons for Wide Powers.

The Control Commission had been given wide powers, he said, for four reasons. Exercise of sound judgment and discretion would do more to improve conditions in Ontario, he declared, than any inflexible legal enactment. In the second place, the Commission had been accorded sweeping authority because the bill did not purport to prohibit the use of liquor for beverage purposes. "But it does intend to, and will, prohibit the abuse of liquor as a beverage."

There was no other "control law," said the Premier, like Ontario's. The best features of other "control" legislation had been extracted and supplemented, so that now the Province "had the very best piece of liquor legislation in existence on the continent." He admitted that it undoubtedly was a "venture," and that it might be the case that certain conditions would arise that had not been anticipated. That, he said, was where the Commission would come in again. Its wide powers would enable it to meet such conditions satisfactorily.

Wide powers, he said, had been given for a fourth reason. The legislation was to be administered in the interests of the people of Ontario, and not on behalf of any one party, group or organization. To meet such a situation it was necessary that the board be given extensive authority. The act saw to that; and now no court or Government could overrule the board in whatever action it saw fit to apply.

Hopes for Better Days.

"I'm hoping, and I'm more or less confident," said the Prime Minister, "that if we get the co-operation we are after we will be able to get back to the old days of convention, when it was taboo for young people to indulge in strong drink."

Young people, he said, did not drink in those times. Why? Because it was not done. It had not been tolerated by public sentiment. It had been frowned upon. The conventions of society had ruled it out and had made it impossible.

"I hope," he repeated, "to get back to that desirable condition of self-control. It will be a big factor in the satisfactory administration of this law."

Mr. Ferguson went on to speak of the feature of revenue. There had been statements, said he, that the liquor sale, filling the Government coffers, would "debauch Ontario." People who voiced such opinions, he declared, bid for fame by rash, unthinking statements.

Estimates of Revenue.

The estimate of revenue, said he, was an easy thing to work out. Through "licenses, permits, etcetera, the Government would receive in the first six months \$1,000,000, and all those permits and licenses would be cancelled on Oct. 31. Why, said he, when Mr. Raney ran "a medicine shop" in 1922, he was able to make \$1,200,000 profit. "And now," he went on, "we're going to take care of all the trade, and I believe we'll make several times that much. I think we will make five times that much for a start—and there is nothing startling in that statement."

He noted that his Government had three times reduced the price of liquor in dispensaries, "until liquor can be bought, brand for brand, much cheaper than in Quebec." "We've always handled tainted money," he went on, "and taken our share of the profits. Nor is that the only tainted money that we've taken and applied to hospitals and roads, and everything. Who battled more to get revenue from the gambling in this Province than my honorable friend?"

"The first thing the Prime Minister knows," interjected Mr. Raney, "I'll be popular with his side of the House."

"I've never foreseen that," retorted Mr. Ferguson.

It was foolish, he went on, to raise the cry that the Province should not take revenue from the liquor business. "Let us get away from all that puritanical type of hypocrisy," he declared. "Let us say to ourselves frankly that there is business going on, and that if men indulge in luxuries, on the race-track or in the liquor stores, who should better contribute to the Province and to aid the poorer people of the Province?"

Beer at Cost, He Says.

The Government, he emphasized, did not intend to profit from the sale of beer. The workingman was to get beer at cost.

"I am greatly pleased with the attitude of the public toward this legislation," he continued. "People, regardless of political affiliation, believe that this Government is in earnest, and desirous of having the support and good-will of everybody. Not that we are asking anybody to sacrifice his views."

The Government, he emphasized, urged: "Let us all think of the public welfare in the light of the public verdict." "I can't," he said, "foresee any attitude more honestly taken by any Government."

"Now," he went on, "I appeal not only to my honorable friends opposite but to the people of the Province: Let us all try and see if we can't earn for this law public respect, and generally improve the conditions of this Province."

It was interesting, he said, to note the comments of the press on the Government-control bill, and so he read sections of editorials in the *The Globe*, *The Mail and Empire*, *The Toronto Star*, *Ottawa Journal*, *Hamilton Spectator*, *Hamilton Herald*, *Brantford Expositor*, *London Free Press*, *London Advertiser*, *Peterboro Examiner*, *St. Thomas Journal*, *Kingston Whig-Standard*. "With one accord," he said, "all approve the measure, and exhort their readers that the measure be given public support."

Statement by Church.

He referred to a recent statement by the United Church Social Service Department, which said that, while the Church objected to the Government becoming agent for the liquor trade, it was democratic, and when the people gave a verdict for a law it would obey that law. He referred to press interviews with clergymen who had opposed the Government-control principle but who now said that the bill should at least be given a trial.

He had received letters from clergymen, temperance organizations, many sources, in line with these interviews, he said. The writers, said he, were not giving up their principles, but were prepared to support the new measure since it was the will of the people to try a new method of handling the liquor problem.

In making such references, said he, he was not boasting, but indicating to the House and to the public generally the trend of public opinion in respect to the problem.

"Give this measure a fair chance, is all that this Government expects," he emphasized.

He read from *The London (Eng.) Spectator* an article dealing with the revulsion of sentiment against prohibitive liquor measures, which, he said, applied to Ontario under the O.T.A.

"The bill," he concluded, "is the best judgment of the Government after careful deliberation. There is a minimum of liberty and a maximum of restriction and penalty. As for details of the legislation we are glad to accept suggestions from any quarter of the House."

Sinclair Has Statement.

Liberal Leader Sinclair said that he had prepared his remarks before the Premier had delivered his speech in connection with the second reading, and with the permission of the Speaker he proposed to read what he had to say.

Col. John A. Currie (Conservative, St. Patrick-Toronto) protested that Mr. Sinclair was "taking advantage of the House by reading a statement."

"Let the member say what he has to say in the open," said he.

But Premier Ferguson was agreeable to having the statement read. "I've heard the honorable member's speeches," he said. "I'd like to hear him read one."

Col. Currie continued his protest. Mr. Sinclair could refer to voluminous notes, but not read an address, he reiterated.

"I suggest to the honorable member, in all kindness," Mr. Sinclair replied to the Colonel, "that if he

would read his speeches the House would appreciate it."

Then he continued to read his statement.

Liberal Leader's View.

"Upon the second reading of a bill, under the rules of the House," he said, "discussion is upon the principle embodied in the bill, and not upon the details as to how that principle is to be carried out. Discussion of the details is, rightly, left to the committee stage, when each clause is taken up and discussed by itself. So today we are limited to a discussion upon the principle of the bill now before the House for second reading."

"The Liquor Control Act is a Government measure, sponsored by a Government having a large majority and fresh from the people. It will pass the House and become law very much, if not altogether, in its present form. It comes to this House by virtue of the endorsement by a majority of the people of Ontario of a policy of Government control of the sale of liquor, promulgated in the manifesto of the Premier on Oct. 19 last as the policy of the Conservative party."

"It stands upon an entirely different footing from ordinary Government measures brought in from time to time upon which the people have not been consulted. In the case of such bills we try to interpret public opinion and give opposition on behalf of the people. But here the people have given their direction to the Legislature before the bill comes before us, and the Government by this bill are bringing in legislation the principle of which has been submitted to and endorsed by a majority of the people."