

ON VERGE OF VOTE WINDSOR MEMBER CONTINUES DEBATE

Near-Division on Liquor Bill
—Second Amendment by
Progressives

CLASH AMONG LEADERS

Homuth and Wilson, Con-
servatives, Favor Sale
of Beer by Glass

Premier Ferguson missed, by an eyelash, obtaining second reading to his Liquor Control Act in the Legislature yesterday.

With the House about "set" for a vote on the two amendments to the motion, and the motion for second reading itself, Frank W. Wilson, Conservative member for East Windsor, threw a monkey-wrench into the machinery by rising unexpectedly to speak. Mr. Wilson, with his advocacy of "beer by the glass," carried the debate along for some time, and evoked sufficiently lengthy remarks from Opposition members to necessitate an adjournment of the debate before its anticipated second reading could be reached.

A New Amendment.

John G. Lethbridge (Progressive, West Middlesex) moved yesterday an amendment to Hon. W. E. Raney's amendment of the previous day. It read as follows:

"That this House is further of the opinion that the Liquor Control Board to be appointed to administer the proposed law ought to be a non-partisan body, with authority to employ and discharge its subordinates without interference by the Government of the day or members of the Legislature or Patronage Committees, as fully as the Hydro-Electric Power Commission now has authority to do."

Mr. Lethbridge's amendment, which was seconded by John W. Widdifield (Progressive, North Ontario), was based on Section 12 of the new act, which, contrary to belief, he said, did not empower the Control Board to make appointments without approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. Thus, he contended, the appointments were still in politics.

Premier Not in Agreement.

"This Government," replied Premier Ferguson, during the course of the afternoon's discussion, "is responsible for the expenditure in connection with this organization. It must have something to say as to the scope and size of the organization. The Commission will name its staff, fix salaries and duties, under the act. There is no analogy with the Hydro Commission, which is a municipal body.

"In the last analysis, whether the Control Board succeeds or not, this Government must take the responsibility for everything in connection with it. The desire of the Government is to keep as free as it possibly can from the suspicion of improper influence or activity in connection with the administration of this law, and, while we must have something to say about the total amount of expenditure, we give them the freest possible hand within that scope to select their officers and carry on administration of the act."

Mr. Ferguson saw in the Lethbridge and the Raney amendments direct challenges to the Government and expressions of want of confidence in the Government and its policy.

"The challenges will stand," said Hon. W. E. Raney.

With the House on the verge of

a division, Mr. Wilson entered the proceedings, and the "votes" were off—for the day, at least.

Appeals for "Beer by Glass."

Some of the features of yesterday's debate on second reading, in addition to the Lethbridge amendment, were two strong appeals for "beer by the glass" from within the Conservative fold. Mr. Wilson was not half as energetic in his advocacy of this sort of sale as was Karl K. Homuth, former Independent Labor member for South Waterloo (now Conservative), who resumed the debate at 3 o'clock, and whose efforts were later made the objects of biting criticism from Liberal Leader William E. N. Sinclair. Others who carried the discussion along during the day were: M. E. Scott (Liberal, South Oxford), and Edmond Proulx (Liberal, Prescott). Leslie W. Oke (U.F.O., East Lambton) moved the adjournment of the debate, and will resume this afternoon.

Criticizes Sinclair.

"I think every member was quite surprised," said Mr. Homuth, on resumption of the debate, "when the Leader of the Liberal party, instead of taking a stand either for or against this bill, simply read a short statement, in which he stressed the responsibility of those of us who ran on a Government-control platform in the last election, and at the same time placing that responsibility on some members of his own group. I would think that the Leader of a great party would have taken a position either endorsing the policy of Government control or condemning the policy. It does leave him in this position, however; that if, after four years, this bill has been a success, he can say: 'I did not oppose it on its second reading'; but if it is not a success he can go out on the highways and byways and say: 'I told you so.'"

Defends New Law.

Defending his support of the new liquor law, Mr. Homuth said he would far rather accept the responsibility for bring about "better conditions" than to have to take any responsibility for the deaths from wood alcohol, and "those other terrible things that happened under the Ontario Temperance Act."

Proceeding, Mr. Homuth said that respect for law in the British Empire was built up because of the personal responsibility every British subject felt was his to do and practice liberty. His interpretation of liberty was the right for a man to do that which he wants to do, provided that in so doing he did not infringe on the right of others.

After saying that everywhere restrictive laws were being wiped off statute books; after upholding the virtue of tolerance, and after saying that the electors of Ontario realized the futility of trying to enforce the Ontario Temperance Act, Mr. Homuth proceeded:

Not Entirely Satisfactory.

"I have no hesitation in saying this bill, as drawn is not entirely satisfactory to me. I wish it would go farther than it does. I think it is one of the very important features of Government control that men can go in when they wish and get a glass of beer. I appreciate that the Prime Minister made certain promises prior to the election, and it would ill become me or any other member to ask any member to break a promise made to the people. But I do believe as time goes on we will realize the necessity for this; that the Control Board will see the necessity for permitting the sale of beer in at least some municipalities of Ontario where people do not look upon beer as an intoxicant, and do not drink beer particularly because of its alcoholic content, but because it has always been looked upon by them as a part of their daily life and food.

"I think we should make beer not only as cheap as possible, but easily accessible to the workingman, and all who desire it, and by so doing we are going to stop that desire on the part of the people for strong liquor which has grown up under the Ontario Temperance Act. If we can get the people of Ontario drinking beer, instead of the strong liquor they are drinking today, we will have accomplished a thousand times more than the Ontario Temperance Act ever accomplished.

Sinclair Protests.

Liberal Leader Sinclair took occasion at this point to refer to "the clash" on Tuesday between the Prime Minister and Hon. W. E. Raney over what should and what should not be debated in connection with the bill. He stated that the Premier had taken the Progressive Leader to task for "threshing old straw," and had given an exhibition of "ill temper" in trying to tell Mr. Raney what he should say.

Why, he asked, had not the Prime Minister protested against the "old-straw" talk of Mr. Homuth, his "newest recruit," who, undoubtedly, he said, had transgressed on the rules of the House?

"Why?" said Mr. Ferguson. "Do you want me to tell you why? Because he (Mr. Homuth) had been entirely in order. There is a substantive motion and an amendment on the order paper, and the whole field of the bill is covered by them."

Mr. Sinclair doubted it, and proceeded to "go after" Mr. Homuth for "standing up and telling him what to say." Mr. Homuth, he contended, had not stuck to the principle of the bill. Was there anything in the bill about cigarettes? he asked. No! And yet Mr. Homuth had talked a lot about cigarettes in Kansas. What had cigarettes to do with the measure? he asked, in reference to Mr. Homuth's allusion to restrictive laws which had been abolished.

"I would like to say to my honorable friend," interjected Mr. Homuth, "that if a certain other party was in power at the present time there would be a lot about cigarettes."

"I've no doubt," said Mr. Sinclair, "if that other party was in power my honorable friend would be just as eager to support it."

Speaker Intervenes.

At this juncture Mr. Speaker took a hand in the proceedings, and ruled that there would be no further interruptions of the Liberal Leader's remarks.

Mr. Sinclair wanted to know what "beer by the glass" had to do with the motion before the House. Mr. Homuth's idea, it seemed to him, was to get beer as cheap as possible, and open the floodgates on it.

"Hear, hear," said Mr. Homuth. "Let me suggest, then," said Mr. Sinclair, "that the honorable gentleman's attitude is not in keeping with the attitude of his Leader. This bill, I understand, is to be a restrictive measure."

Mr. Sinclair was afraid that Mr. Homuth had considerable to learn about "servility and the obedience to command" which, he said, characterized the "Ferguson following." Only yesterday, he claimed, the Premier had thrown out the warning to stick to the principle of the bill.

"And yet," he said, "we have his baby-follower deliberately transgressing authority today."

Too Much Power Delegated.

Mr. Sinclair agreed with Mr. Raney that power by Order-in-Council, as vested in the Control Board, was exceptional. He realized that the board should have authority to deal with certain minor questions, but argued that the Legislature should not allocate its powers on major matters. He viewed Mr. Raney's amendment as a suggestion of amendments that would be moved to clauses of the bill when in committee, and he thought that, if it was to remain on the order paper, the House should confine its discussion to the questions it embodied.

John G. Lethbridge (Progressive, West Middlesex), next speaker, objected to the Premier's statement that the O.T.A. had failed after a fair trial under four Administrations. Had not the Ontario License Board sent out a questionnaire asking opinions of the O.T.A., he said, and had not between 75 and 96 per cent. of the replies stated that the O.T.A. was a very beneficial measure?