

RANEY IS AROUSED AT PREMIER'S REPLY IN LIQUOR DEBATE

Says Ferguson Turns Discussion of Bill Into a Comedy

HANNA'S SALARY \$20,000

Other Commissioners to Receive \$10,000—Committee Discusses Bill

Intimations from Premier Ferguson that the Government had under consideration the rearrangement of the tax on 4.4 beer, and that he was prepared to pay D. B. Hanna, Chairman of the Liquor Control Board, a salary of \$20,000 a year, and the two other Commissioners "possibly half that" and an indignant retort to the Prime Minister by Hon. W. E. Raney, Progressive Leader, to the effect that he was not going to "be made a fool of," and that he was "through" and would "go home" if the debate was going to be turned into "a comedy," were features of the debate on the new Liquor Control Act, in committee stage, which began in the Legislature at 9.30 last night and adjourned at 12 o'clock, with fair progress in the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill having been made.

The clash between the Prime Minister and Mr. Raney provided, possibly, the best "kick" of the evening. Mr. Raney, in speaking to the definition of "residence," as contained in the preliminary section of the act, expressed the difficulty the Government would experience in enforcing the "residence" regulation, unless some definite time limit was placed on a permit-holder's temporary domicile.

"Guest-Room" Definition.

The hotel "guest-room," he said, was open to great abuses. For instance, a man might register at a hotel, with a grip containing only a suit of pyjamas, go to his room, open a bottle, and hold a party. Furthermore, said Mr. Raney, there was nothing in the act which prevented that man from consuming only one drink, then transporting the remainder of the bottle to another temporary residence.

"He either has to drink it all," said Mr. Raney, "or the terms of the act should be such as to allow him to take it with him."

"What do you suggest should be done?" asked Mr. Ferguson.

"I'm not suggesting," said Mr. Raney. "I'm asking the Prime Minister."

"I think my honorable friend will agree with me," said Mr. Ferguson. "that it would be better for the man to take only one drink. For if he took more he might go home without his pyjamas, and get the dickens from his wife."

Raney Is Aroused.

Mr. Raney was at once on his feet. "There has been considerable said in this House," he declared, "about the

seriousness with which we should treat this legislation. If we're here to make a comedy of it, then I'm through with it. And I'm going home. I'm here to offer constructive criticism. While I'm not in sympathy with the principle of the law, I'm here to make the law as good as it possibly can be made. But if I'm going to be made a fool of I shall give it my consideration no longer."

The Prime Minister insisted there had been no intention on his part to discredit the Progressive Leader, and he regretted that a different interpretation from what he had intended had been placed on the remark. Mr. Raney's criticism would, he said, be given every consideration.

This question of transporting liquor from one temporary residence to another proved to be one of the main bones of contention in the night's discussion. Suggested amendments to the "native wines" definition caused other arguments. Premier Ferguson granted the inclusion of "cherries" under this section, but when other Conservative members attempted to make the amendment read "Ontario natural products," he promptly put the lid down.

4.4 Beer as Screen?

The House no sooner had started discussing "interpretations" in Clause 2 of the new act, than Hon. W. E. Raney, Progressive Leader, expressed the belief that the Government would make a mistake were it to continue the sale of 4.4 beer. Would it not serve as a screen, he asked, for the sale of "stronger" beer? Would it not be better for purposes of law enforcement to return to the old "interpretations" of beer before the O.T.A. came into force, and up to 1925 in the time of that act?

Premier Ferguson stated that the Government proposed to keep the 4.4 beer under license and control of the Commission. It had been proved non-intoxicating, he said. The Government, he added, was particularly anxious to avoid abuses of the liquor traffic, and so to avoid any possibility of "screened sale," as Mr. Raney had suggested, it was bringing 4.4 beer under license, in order that a check might be kept on where and how it was sold.

Pinard Favors Sale.

J. A. Pinard, Liberal member for East Ottawa, expressed himself as in favor of the sale of 4.4 beer, and argued that every restaurant and store in Ontario should be allowed to sell it. He thought that it should be put on the same basis as dry ginger ale and coca cola, and asked in this connection if some statement as to relief on the tax on it would not be forthcoming from the Government in a month or so. He thought that the workingman should get this beer at the lowest possible cost, or any one else that wanted it.

Premier Ferguson admitted that the Government had been giving consideration to the possibility of rearranging the tax on this beer, so that "it would be more equitable, and would bring relief along the lines" that Mr. Pinard had suggested. But it would never do, he said, to permit the sale of light beer promiscuously. Such sale might make it very difficult, he contended, to check up illicit traffic in "stronger" beer.

E. C. Graves (Conservative, St. Catharines) thought that if the tax on 4.4 beer was removed it would accomplish much in the way of diverting users of hard liquor to the use of 4.4.

"Not on your life!" interjected Karl Homuth (Conservative, South Waterloo).

Thought Wise Move.

Mr. Graves claimed that 4.4 was not "as foolish a drink" as many people tried to make out. By taking the tax off it, and controlling it, the Government, he said, would be making a wise move.

Mr. Homuth said that the sooner people could be turned from hard liquor to beer the better. Removal of taxation on beer might help, but 4.4, he said, was an "absolute farce" and should not be entitled to mention with the Liquor Control Act "in the same breath."

George Hillmer (Conservative, Halton), in speaking to the clause defining "native wine," argued strongly that "cherries" should be included with grapes as a product from which such wine might be manufactured. He said that last year many tons of cherries had been manufactured into wines — against the law, possibly—in the guise of being used for "coloring" purposes.

Cherries Allowable.

The Prime Minister saw considerable merit in Mr. Hillmer's suggestion, and consented to an amendment to the clause that would embody this suggestion. Great quantities of cherries had gone to waste last year, he said, and it certainly would be in the interests of agriculture if some use could be made of surplus crop. And cherries, he said, could be no more harmful than grapes.

"Why not go farther?" asked Hon. Finlay Macdiarmid.

"I know all about dandelion wine," said Mr. Ferguson, "if that's what you mean."

W. G. Weichel (Conservative, Waterloo North) felt that, while on the subject of wine, the House might just as well know what wine could be made from. He told how a friend of his had given him a drink "of the best stuff I ever tasted. And," said he, "it was made from the bloom of the Canada thistle."

"Even Dandelions."

"Insert not only the word cherries," said he, "but put in cherries, berries, even dandelions."

"Don't let us get away from the point," said Mr. Ferguson. "Cherry-growing is an industry."

M. Vaughan (Conservative, Welland) suggested that native wine be anything made from "fruits grown in Ontario," in keeping with a definition of "wine" further on in the section.

"The term fruits is not wide enough," chimed in A. C. Calder (Conservative, Kent West). He suggested insertion of the words "Ontario natural products."

Premier Ferguson pointed out that these suggestions were quite irrelevant. The subsection regarding native wine, he emphasized, had to do with the wine manufacturing industry, and not with private wine making.

Mr. Calder was on his feet again introducing an amendment, seconded by Mr. Weichel, to strike out the definite reference to grapes and substitute "Ontario natural products."

No Further Than "Cherries."

"Speaking for the Government," said Premier Ferguson, "I am prepared to accept the amendment 'or cherries,' but I am not prepared to go any further than that."

Mr. Calder was silent.

With the provision for the manufacture of wine from grapes or cherries, the subsection was carried. Without discussion the committee then carried the definitions of "package," "permit," "physician," "prescription" and "public place."

Next came the subsection declaring "residence" to be a tent or a guest room in a hotel or club.

William Newman (Liberal, North Victoria) urged the Government to define a residence in local-option localities as a "man's home, where he resides." He pointed out that he came from a local-option centre. On the exit of the bar-room days he and

other men had established a hotel with the understanding that no liquor was to be drunk in it.

Drinking in Tourist Camps.

Yet, under this act, he said, guests in that hotel could have liquor in their rooms. Tourists' camps in the locality would now become places for drinking. This he objected to.

"Dangerous Feature."

If a man was allowed to drink in his house, said Premier Ferguson, how could distinction be drawn between a brick house, a frame one or a canvas one? Yet, he said, in referring to the provision for drinking in tents, Mr. Newman had touched on "a dangerous feature, and difficult situation in connection with the law."

"We must recognize that," he said. "The only thing to do is to frame serious legislation and administer it on broad lines, and do the best to build up behind it public sentiment, and make it impossible for any person to go into a community and start carousing, as my friend suggests may be done."

"I recognize the difficulty. And I don't see how it can be provided against, except by public co-operation and support backed up by enforcement officers."