

Second Readings Given.

Second readings were given to T. L. Kennedy's bill to amend the Consolidated Municipal Act to the extent of granting municipalities power to license vendors of fruits and vegetables; and to acts respecting the solemnization of marriage; the Niagara Parks; and Hon. John S. Martin's bill respecting live stock and live stock products. The latter measure, Mr. Martin explained, was being passed at the request of the Dominion Government. It concerned "stamping," and was being enacted, similarly, in other Provinces. Ontario, he said, reserved the right to repeal the legislation.

In getting second reading to his bill to provide aid in the construction of works in rural power districts, Premier Ferguson said the measure was merely a follow-up of the Government's proposal to provide grants to rural extensions in future from capital, instead of from ordinary revenue, as has been the case in past years. This change, he reiterated, would enable the Government to carry on a much larger program of rural extension.

In committee, the House passed the following measures: To amend the Hospitals for the Insane Act; to amend the Registry Act; to amend the Land Titles Act; the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act; the Fruit and Vegetables Consignment Act (with a slight amendment) of 1927; an Act for the Protection of Neglected and Dependent Children; and an Act to Amend the Corporation Tax Act.

HOUSE IN COMMITTEE APPROVES REDUCTION IN RACE-TRACK TAX

Raney Offers Strong Protest Against Change, Declaring Ontario Gambler's Paradise and Long Meets Bad Influence on Community — Price Favors Racing, But Against Betting Aspect

BELANGER'S "LAMB" ESCAPES "BUTCHERS"

The Ontario Legislature in committee yesterday approved of the Government's proposal to reduce from \$7,500 to \$5,000 the per diem tax on race-tracks, at the same time retaining authority through Order-in-Council to increase the daily levy to \$10,000, circumstances warranting, and passed the amendment to the Corporation Tax Act which embodied the reduction.

Hon. W. E. Raney again strongly protested the passing of the measure, demanding that the Government withdraw the offending clause in the interests of the people of the Province, and forcing the House to a division of committee when the Government refused to listen to his request. The bill carried with a substantial majority, all Conservatives voting behind it. E. Proulx (Liberal, Prescott), J. A. Pinard (Liberal, Ottawa East) and L. W. Oke (U.F.O., Lambton East) cast their votes with the Government's supporters.

Amendment Not Pressed.

Aurelien Belanger, Liberal member for Russell, who on the occasion of the bill's second reading gave notice of an amendment which aimed at a sliding scale of track tax impost, with authority to impose it removed from the hands of the Government, declined to press the amendment yesterday after Hon. Dr. J. D. Monteith, Provincial Treasurer, had intimated that the Government could not see in it sufficient merit to justify any change in the proposed levy system, observing to the House that, in view of the Government's big working majority, he preferred "to withdraw his little lamb rather than send it to the butchers."

Mr. Belanger criticized the principle of delegating taxing powers to the Government, stating that merely because there had been several instances of this thing in the past the Legislature was not compelled to continue the practice.

Provincial Treasurer Monteith explained, prior to Mr. Belanger's withdrawal of "the little lamb," that the Government had given serious consideration to the Liberal member's proposed amendment and had failed to find in it the merit which would justify its inclusion in the bill. The new regulation, he said, would not be applied in any discriminative sense, and was, in his opinion and that of the Cabinet, the most equitable solution to the race-track tax situation.

Dominion Control.

Premier Ferguson and Attorney-General Price replied vigorously to Mr. Raney's criticism, the former pointing out that a prohibitory tax on tracks might lead to a testing of the Province's authority on race-track matters and a setting aside of the Province's legislation in that regard. Col. Price said that the Ontario Government really had no control over the race-tracks, which were under Dominion legislation. It was his contention that the proposed reduction was not a reduction at all—merely an attempt by the Government to encourage a type of track meet that, in the long run, would prove beneficial to the Province, in that it would discourage other meets of a lower standard.

Hon. Mr. Raney declared that even horsemen admitted that there were too many race-tracks and too many racing days in Ontario. On ten tracks, said he, in the Province there were 140 days of racing every year. "Ontario," he emphasized, "is a paradise for race-track gamblers."

He referred at length to the report of Dr. Rutherford on race-track activities in the Province in 1920. It had been found, he noted, that the long race meets had a bad influence in the community.

Strictly Commercial.

The race-tracks of the Province, said Mr. Raney, were, with the exception of the Ontario Jockey Club at the Woodbine, strictly commercial propositions. The Woodbine, said he, was a business with the prestige of a social event added.

"That's what you think of it since you've acquired a share," chided Mr. Ferguson.

"Who requested the reduction in taxation?" Mr. Raney asked, as he continued with his argument.

Dr. Monteith said there had been no personal requests, and that the proposal was entirely a Government matter.

"So much the better," said Mr. Raney. "For I was afraid the Government had committed itself to some reduction of the tax. Now it can listen to an argument to look into the whole matter."

The Hamilton track complained, said he, that it lost \$33,000 last year. The original investment on the Hamilton track in 1910, said Mr. Raney, was \$4,000. From 1910 to 1917 the profits on that track amounted to \$378,300, and in August, 1917, the assets of the track not distributed stood at \$688,229.

Omit Fall Meets.

"If Hamilton cannot carry on its autumn meet at a profit," Mr. Raney declared, "let it drop it. If two or three associations omit their autumn meets, so much the better for the community."

The Hamilton track, said he, had averaged a yearly profit of 3,000 per cent. In 1920 its "rake-off" was \$444,927.

Between 1910 and 1917, he went on, the Windsor Jockey Club had made more than a million dollars on an investment of less than thirty thousand dollars.

Several race-tracks in this Province, he emphasized, were operated by men from the United States, men who had been driven from the States by public opinion.

In naming American operators of Canadian tracks, he mentioned John Maddigan, head of the Fort Erie track, who, he said, came from Houston, Texas.

"Do you know," Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, inquired, "that Maddigan was born in Norfolk County?"