

Wednesday, Feb. 15th

Old-Age Pensions.

On the question of old-age pensions, he pleaded, as he has pleaded in recent interviews, a "go-slow" policy. Ontario, he said, wanted, as well as any other Province did, to care for its old people, but circumstances here were different than in the West, where the Federal arrangement is being adopted. A survey of the situation, as forecast in the Speech from the Throne, was absolutely necessary, he contended, before any definite action could be taken. His argument on this issue developed before adjournment into more or less of a free-for-all, with different members contributing pointers, suggestions, if not advice. This development, as a matter of fact, took a lot of the "edge" off Mr. Ferguson's remarks.

Altogether, this Leaders' day proved to be one of the most hectic in the history of the local House.

Once There Were Seven.

In his opening remarks Mr. Sinclair noted that there was one vacancy in the House, but this was a mere trifle, for two years ago there were seven empty seats.

He congratulated Joseph P. Earney (Conservative, Kenora) on his address in moving the adoption of the Speech. It was, said he, delivered in a non-partisan way, and its thought regarding Northern Ontario was information to members of the House. Then he spoke of the remarks of Horace S. Colliver (Conservative, Prince Edward) in seconding the motion. Mr. Colliver, said he, had omitted any reference to the policy on which he had been defeated, and any reference as to how that policy looked to him now. "He may have had reasons," the Liberal Leader added.

Then he referred to the Hollinger disaster, expressing the hope that out of the inquiry would come something that would avert similar catastrophes in years to come. Next he spoke of the condition of health of the Earl of Oxford. He was, said he, a great man, who had served his day and generation and left his mark on the British Empire.

Continuing Mr. Sinclair turned his attention to the Speech from the Throne. He termed it "a wonderful product," "the Government praising the Government."

There had been praise, he continued, for every Government department with the exception of Hon. Dr. Godfrey's. Perhaps this was because the Health Minister was away at the time.

"It speaks for itself," said Dr. Godfrey.

"It was silent," retorted Mr. Sinclair.

Cupboard Was Bare.

The Speech from the Throne, he continued, took him back to his childhood days, reminded him of the Mother Hubbard rhyme about the bare cupboard. The Speech, like the cupboard, contained neither meat nor a bone.

The Speech had a reference to the Interprovincial Conference, but, said Mr. Sinclair, it was strange that in this regard the only thing mentioned was the constitutional question which was a matter of dispute at the present time. He read a press report saying that the Ontario Government members "brought back their own views" from the conference. "Naturally," he commented. "For this Government is too set in its views to have them changed."

It was also suggested, said Mr. Sinclair reading further reports, that the Federal authorities be debarred from future interprovincial gatherings. He wondered just how high up in Ontario Government ranks were the men who gave such information to the press.

There was a reference in the Speech that suggested that Mr. Ferguson wanted to get back to the old colonial doctrine—a doctrine that had proved the undoing of Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, and, which might prove the undoing of the Ontario Premier. The Government wanted to stick to the pact of Confederation.

But surely, said Mr. Sinclair, it should recognize that changes, advancements, evolved in the passing of time. The Government had not stuck to the old Confederation dictum as to the number of members in the Legislature, the time of sessions. It seemed strange that such a matter should be touched on in the Speech from the Throne. There was only one objective for such a reference that he could see. The Government seemed to be "playing politics" into the Speech.

Mr. Ferguson's Silence.

Mr. Sinclair dwelt for a few minutes on the question—as referred to in the Speech from the Throne—of Ontario's constitutional rights to water powers. He did not know, he said, that any one was trying to do away with the rights. In view of Mr. Ferguson's present silence on the St. Lawrence question, it was funny, he claimed, that Mr. Ferguson should suggest, through the medium of the Speech, any need of protecting them.

Mr. Sinclair referred to the recent submission to the Supreme Court by the Federal authorities of the seven questions dealing with St. Lawrence development. He understood, he said, that the questions had been agreed to by the Ontario Government.

"No, no," interpolated Mr. Ferguson.

"I understood," said Mr. Sinclair, "that Mr. King asked you to include any questions you thought should go in."

"In answer to our protest," said Mr. Ferguson, "he referred the protest to the Minister of Justice, who said we might include anything we wanted. But we were never consulted on the question in the first place."

"That seems to be the whole trouble with the Government here in Toronto," said the Liberal Leader. "It kicks if Ottawa doesn't consult it on everything. Why should Ottawa consult the Ontario Government, anyway, on Federal affairs? I have a distinct recollection that the Ferguson Government does things without consulting the Legislature or the people."

Mr. Sinclair suggested that Mr. Ferguson put his St. Lawrence power question before the public in a purely business way, and not tinged with politics. In that event, he would find every one in the House, Liberal and Conservative alike, standing by him in maintaining the rights of Ontario as to water powers. There was no need, he giped, of inserting political pinpricks in the Speech from the Throne.

Just to "Beat Ottawa."

While intimating he would withhold most of his fire on the Ferguson policy of research, Mr. Sinclair charged that the Prime Minister was prepared to spend \$1,000,000—as announced—merely to "beat the Federal authorities to it."

In the same ironical mood, the Liberal Leader claimed that the Throne Speech "cupboard" owed its "boreness" to the fact that the Government had "loaded everything on the band wagon before the last election." At that time, said he, there had been bribery of the people by the Government on the main issues—500 miles of highways construction; promise of reduction of the motor license fees.

"And the Government got that all back," said Mr. Sinclair, "by having father, mother, sister, brother, and even the cook take out operators' permits. Some families paid out six and seven dollars to save five." (Laughter.)

Income tax and amusement tax reduction and the unborn liquor law were other mediums through which the Government bribed the people, said Mr. Sinclair. "But sometimes," he added, "these things promised before elections have a funny way of coming back to the promiser. Even now, we read that the theatre owners have been taking the tax that was taken off and have been putting it down in their pockets; and that the Premier—if he finds the thing to be true—will put the tax back on again. Well, I don't know what good that will do, unless he will have it to take off again on the eve of the next election."

The New Gazette.

Mr. Sinclair gave other reasons for the bareness of the cupboard. He said that the Cabinet apparently thought it could do the whole work of the Legislature. He said, in this connection, that The Ontario Gazette was now being used solely as an advertising medium for the Cabinet members and their friends. He said that it had now become "the great public journal of the Conservative party in Ontario," maintained at higher advertising rates than ever before, with estates, etc., paying the bills. He twitted the various Government Ministers for articles they have contributed to this "new" Gazette, saying that the "Santa Claus of them all" was published on Christmas Day, when Premier Ferguson's "research" remarks to the C.M.A. were given in full. A "dressed-up" speech, he termed it, printed at an expense to the general public of some \$64.

"Even The Globe," said the Liberal Leader, "got jealous of The Gazette. Another newspaper started in Toronto? Oh! Oh! Why, they even wrote an editorial on it. But just let me say that if ever a newspaper had cause to write an editorial The Globe had it on this occasion."

Mr. Sinclair dragged in the Tory convention at Winnipeg by the heels at this juncture. He referred to Mr. Ferguson as having got through a Provincial election with flying colors, and as having patched up several controversial matters. "Then," he said, "it looked as if the head was all ready to have the crown dropped on it. Well, the head got out to Winnipeg, but the crown didn't drop on it."

Liberals banged benches as their Leader proceeded to read an Oshawa paper's story of the Winnipeg "fireworks"; its eulogy, in general, of the Meighen speech, and its biting story of Mr. Ferguson's appearance—his look, "like a million dollars," when he started to speak, and his "ten-cent appearance" when he had finished. More Liberal bench banging!

Mr. Sinclair's sarcasm grew to withering proportions when he inferred that the "bareness" of the Throne Speech cupboard may have been due to the Cabinet Ministers' interest in the bowling alley in the Administration Building.

New Bowling Alley.

"They used to run this Province on \$6,000,000 a year," he said, "but the men who ran it that way didn't run it with bowling alleys. You might have found an odd bottle of Scotch with them, but not a bowling alley. Why, words scarcely can express it! Maybe the Cabinet was down on the alley all winter and had no time to prepare any information for the Throne Speech."

In view of the fact that the present alley had cost the Province \$7,445, he suggested that the Administration Building should not be called the East Block or the Whitney Block or the Henry Building, as some have named it, but the "Bowling Alley Block." (Laughter.)

He referred to the ban on "afternoon tea." "With 4.4," said Mr. Sinclair, "you had to sit down and couldn't stand up. But with tea you can't sit down and have to stand up."

Next Mr. Sinclair turned to discussion of the Liquor Control Act and the administration of Strong Man Hanna.

He referred to Mr. Ferguson's election speech in Newmarket in October, 1926, in which a "strong man" was mentioned, and the liquor control policy described.

"Was Mr. Hanna the man the Premier had in mind then?" Mr. Sinclair asked.

"Yes," said Mr. Ferguson.

"And you had already discussed it with him?" "Yes."

"Well, here's what Mr. Hanna has to say about it," Mr. Sinclair continued, and read from an interview in which the "Strong Man" stated "it all happened in less than two weeks," and declared that he was approached to take the position only ten days before the announcement.