

Wednesday, Feb. 15th

### Educating the North.

Mr. Ferguson spoke at some length on the Government's policy of affording "reasonable educational opportunities" to people in remote sections of the Province by means of correspondence courses and travelling schools. He said that the correspondence courses had been wonderfully successful; that now older people were availing themselves of them as well as the children. The travelling school cars had also worked so well that the Government intended this summer adding two more cars to the system. Mr. Ferguson referred, indirectly, to the flooding of the North with "Soviet" propaganda, saying that if the courses and the cars only succeeded in teaching the foreign-born children how to read a Canadian newspaper and properly imbibe a Canadian spirit they would have accomplished much and justified their existence.

The Premier spoke of the establishment this year of a Library School — "something," he said, "greatly needed in Ontario. In the past all Ontario librarians have had to go to the United States for training."

### To Make Highways Pay.

On the question of highways and highways administration, he reiterated his hope that by next year the Government would be able to bring in a scheme whereby the highways would be made self-supporting.

He also said that "the public might just as well realize that if they are to have the road service it now enjoys they who use the roads must pay for them. The time is rapidly approaching," he stressed, "when we will have to increase the gas tax to take care of our system and our service."

Operators' permits had been introduced, he said, to provide a close check on reckless motorists and in general to better protect the motoring public of the Province. He could not understand the Liberal Leader's criticism of the cost of the individual license. It was a small thing. "You haven't a large family," Mr. Sinclair interrupted.

"Down in Québec, where they have large families," said the Premier, "they pay \$5 a head for a motoring permit, and they say nothing about it."

"But most large families can't afford a car," said Aurelien Belanger (Liberal, Russell).

### Rural Hydro Extension.

Mr. Ferguson dwelt with the question of rural Hydro extension, saying that in the last four years 3,233 miles of line, serving 25,000 rural customers, at a total cost of approximately \$7,000,000 had been built. Of this cost, the Provincial Treasury had met one-half.

He referred to Dr. Edward Ryan's very satisfactory survey of conditions in Ontario mental hospitals, and intimated, while in this departmental field, that the Government had in mind the appointment at an early date of a supervisor of the ordinary public hospitals. This official's task would be to co-ordinate services, cut down expenditures, and, broadly speaking, improve conditions.

One of the Government's endeavors was directed toward encouraging the training of nurses for occupational therapy work.

### The Research Fund.

Regarding the research fund, the Premier said: "I would like to make it clear that this Government is in no way endeavoring to compete with the Dominion Government in research work. The steps we are taking are being taken with the full cognizance of the Dominion Government. I have discussed this proposed fund with Hon. James Malcolm, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and with Dr. H. M. Tory, Chairman of the National Research Council."

"While they believe this effort should be centralized under one head at Ottawa, we believe the best results can be accomplished in an atmosphere in close proximity to some large educational institution

"Ours is to be largely complementary to what is going on at Ottawa. Here we have the problems and here we have the student body from which to train young men. I think the Government would be sadly remiss if it didn't give our capable men the opportunity to engage in research work here, at home," declared the Premier.

### On Liquor Control.

Premier Ferguson had the House and crowded galleries intensely interested from the moment he first mentioned the phrase, "the Liquor Control Act."

"My honorable friend (Mr. Lethbridge) emphasized the point that we are in the liquor-selling business. I never knew any member of the Government or any of its supporters to deny that. I am unable to suggest how we can control the liquor situation unless we are in it and governing its developments.

"Our suggestion from the first was that, rather than allow a great army of bootleggers to sell a great variety and quantity of liquor, under all sorts of circumstances, the Government had better take hold of the situation and sell the liquor itself, thus regularizing the situation and removing many of the existing evils.

"The first great problem facing the Government was to drive out the bootlegger. I believe my honorable friend will agree with the general public everywhere that we have done that in practically every part of this Province.

### Some "Peddling" Done.

"I am not saying that you won't find in certain localities some fellow purchasing liquor from a Government store, possibly in a perfectly legitimate way, and later peddling it at so much a drink. That has happened throughout the centuries. It happened under the old license system, and in a most aggravated way under the Ontario Temperance Act. It will happen in individual cases until we catch that particular bootlegger. This Government has the most firm determination that it is going to put in jail every one of those men we can lay our hands on. If we have the co-operation of the public in this effort it will do much to foster public opinion, and will greatly assist the officers of the law in their endeavors.

"My honorable friend says the liquor interests supported this law—as if he is the first who ever thought of that. But the great body of temperate, law-abiding citizens, who had become weary and fearful of the consequences of conditions which had been prevailing for over ten years, supported this law. They turned for relief to a new method, and felt that the Government should take hold of the situation itself and remedy it.

### Calls Control a Godsend.

"I am not alleging that there have been no disappointments, but I would ask the House to remember that this law has been in force eight or nine

months, and that it came into force to combat an organization which had been in force for ten years. It had to overcome public opinion which had developed during those ten years. It had to change conditions. It had to alter the attitude of the people, formed over that decade. After eight or nine months, I say with the utmost assurance that this law has proved a godsend to Ontario, so far as it has gone," exclaimed Mr. Ferguson, while supporters thundered applause. The Opposition groups sat in stony silence.

"I don't feel," continued the Premier, "that men holding positions of public influence should be offering carping criticism before this legislation has had a reasonable trial, and before the public has been given a fair opportunity to judge if it is the right system for controlling liquor or not.

"This Government proposes to see it has that fair opportunity, and also proposes to eliminate all defects and weaknesses from time to time, as may be needed, in its enforcement and operation."

### Not Changing the Act.

"For the reason that we intend to see that this law has every reasonable opportunity for a fair trial, this Government has determined that not in any material way will it be amended until that reasonable time has passed. For the present, the Liquor Control Act is going to remain as it is, except for some minor amendments which the Attorney-General may want for its better administration. In the meantime, it is going to remain as it is until it has had a fair trial.

"It has been claimed that this act is into politics. Whether it is or not, it has met with public approval. I could, if I had time, read letters which the Government has received commending this law from people who were opposed to us in the last election. Everywhere I have gone men who opposed its origin—outstanding prohibitionists—have come to me and told me of the vast improvements which have resulted from the operation of this act.

"You can go into villages about the Province, of course—you can even go into back alleys of this city—and find infractions of this law, but today there is a stronger and growing opinion toward law observance and law enforcement in the Province of Ontario."

### Not Patronage—Efficiency.

Mr. Ferguson recalled Mr. Sinclair's words about a Government candidate getting a job in a liquor store. Government candidates, said the Premier, seemed all to be pretty nice fellows and should make good officials in the stores. They were men of "unsullied reputation, standing in the community," the type the Commission wanted in the stores. "In fact," said the Premier, "I asked some men myself if they would take positions."

"You did!" said Mr. Sinclair, in amazement. "I thought that the Strong Man was to do that! You should draw some of his salary."

Mr. Ferguson went on to say that he had approached a lifelong prohibitionist an active Churchman, and told him it was his duty to serve the public in a liquor store. "And he accented," he concluded.

"And did he stay with his Church?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"All Churches haven't the same views," said the Premier.

"My friend," he went on, "complains about the price of the bottle. I was surprised to know that he was interested in liquor prices. True, we've endeavored to sell liquor at a reasonable price, not extort unreasonable profit."

"What about the complaint of the bottle being too small?" asked E. Proulx (Liberal, Prescott).

"The only remedy is to buy another, as far as I know," replied the Premier. "I'm not conversant with that part."

Turning, in concluding his address, to the subject of old-age pensions, the Premier stated that it would be a mistake to deal with this problem in any partisan spirit. It must be considered as a great human and social problem, a problem which not only Ontario, but every country had to face. And it should be considered also from the business standpoint. He recalled correspondence between the Province and the Federal authorities on the question. And the problem, he noted, was one of those considered at the last Interprovincial Conference.

The Dominion Government, some years ago, had appointed a committee, and it was decided that the question should be one on which the Provinces should confer and work out for themselves. Notwithstanding this, said Mr. Ferguson, the Dominion Government had framed an enactment imposing liability on the taxpayers of the various Provinces, and it was to be administered through the various Provincial Governments.

The Federal Government, said he, had done this without asking Ontario to express its views, except through one letter. The majority of the Provinces were opposed to the Federal plan, and looked on it as a Dominion liability, he declared.