

Saturday, March 17th

## EFFECT OF NEW BILL ON INSURANCE AGENTS IS ARGUED BY HOUSE

### Will Price Amendments Put Small-Town Salesman Out of Business?

#### LEGISLATURE SAYS "NO"

The Ontario Legislature spent a full hour yesterday afternoon in arguing over whether amendments proposed in Attorney-General Price's bill to amend the Insurance Act would put the small country agent out of business or not.

E. Blake Miller, Liberal member for East Elgin, said, in effect, it would. Attorney-General Price said it wouldn't. Premier Ferguson said it wouldn't. Even J. A. Pinard (Liberal, East Ottawa) hooked onto the Government's way of thinking. Finally the House, less Mr. Miller, decided it wouldn't.

#### Reappears Next Week.

At the suggestion, however, of Liberal Leader Sinclair, the bill was allowed to stand over, and will reappear early next week.

The new bill proposes to abolish the present \$3 insurance agent fee and the \$10 insurance broker fee and leave to the discretion of the Superintendent of Insurance and he, alone, the question of how much these fees are to be increased in future.

Mr. Miller's protest was on the ground that a higher fee would mean the end of the small town agent. Premier Ferguson said there was no intention on the part of the Government to impose any burden on the Village Clerk, or the Secretary of the School Board or other small town officials who sold insurance on the side. The sole motive behind the amendment was to give the Superintendent of Insurance power to more adequately regulate agents in larger centres who were not carrying on business satisfactorily. While the Government believed it should have an increased revenue out of agents, it did not propose to get it from the small agent, but rather from the "bigger fellow with the bigger earnings."

#### Fee by Population.

Attorney-General Price suggested that the fee to be imposed should be governed by the population of the town or city in which the agent concerned did business. Those he aimed at were the agents who placed a few risks to benefit themselves or relatives, and got a good commission out of it at the expense of the bona fide agent who provided real service to the community.

Mr. Pinard said insurance conditions were very bad, and he heartily approved of the principle of the measure. "Why, in Ottawa," he said, "every one who is discharged from the Government service for old age or inefficiency starts selling insurance."

In discussing another section of the bill which permits fraternal societies to issue endowment insurance, provided they are on an actuarial basis, the Attorney-General intimated that very soon all societies of this nature dealing in insurance would be forced to operate along these lines.

## Progressives Say It With Flowers On Mr. Widdifield's 59th Birthday

Shortly after the Legislature opened yesterday a page boy trotted into the House carrying a large vase filled with a gorgeous array of tulips and daffodils. Under the stare of the members he pattered up the aisle and set this bouquet on the desk of J. W. Widdifield, M.P.P. for North Ontario, and Whip of the Progressive party.

Mr. Widdifield blushed. Members

banged their desks.

"What is it? Twins?" shouted Hon. Dr. Forbes Godfrey, Minister of Health.

"Are the flowers for the honorable gentleman because he voted with the Government last night?" asked J. A. Pinard (Liberal, Ottawa East).

But they were both wrong. It was Mr. Widdifield's fifty-ninth birthday, and the floral remembrance came from his colleagues of the Progressive party.

## One Important Bill Concerns Hospitals

Important legislation having to do with hospital administration was forecast in the House yesterday afternoon by Premier Ferguson.

Liberal Leader Sinclair had inquired: "Will there be much more legislation?" "There is one important bill," the Prime Minister replied, "but it takes time to work it out. It has to do with hospitals. There may be also some small amendments, but they will be to improve the machinery and working out of some of the acts."

## Beer Sales in 5 Months Total 3,385,125 Gallons

The Government replied to a number of Opposition questions yesterday. The Attorney-General made public in this way the information that 3,385,125 gallons of beer had been sold under the five months' operation of the Liquor Control Act in 1927. "Hard" liquor sales amounted to 561,880 gallons. Liquor, beer and wine sold through Government stores aggregated 1,242,843 gallons. Brewery warehouses sold 1,671,711 gallons. Sales of beer direct from the warehouses amounted to 1,107,732 gallons.