

Friday, March 23rd

PLAN OF EXPENDITURE IN DEVELOPING NORTH STRONGLY DEFENDED LOCKING OF MOTORS WHILE LEFT STANDING NOT TO BE ENFORCED

Hon. William Finlayson Replies to Criticism by C. G. Fletcher

RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN

An Opposition resolution, urging the House's disapproval of the Government system of expending moneys under the Northern and Northwestern Ontario Development Act, was withdrawn yesterday by its sponsor, Charles G. Fletcher, Liberal member for South Essex, after Hon. William Finlayson, whose Department of Lands and Forests was directly concerned, had strongly argued that the present system had been in vogue for sixteen years, that not a single dollar had "gone astray" in that time, and that while the "estimates" system as urged by Mr. Fletcher was "a simple thing" in Older Ontario, it could not possibly be applied to development in the North.

The Resolution.

Mr. Fletcher's resolution was worded as follows:

"That in the opinion of this House, the development of Northern Ontario is of vital interest to all the people of the Province, and that moneys granted by this House from time to time under the Northern and Northwestern Ontario Development Act should be used only after appropriations therefrom have been approved by the House in estimates, showing the work proposed to be done in each district, the estimated cost thereof, and the relation of the proposed work in each district to the general scheme of the development."

Speaking to his motion, Mr. Fletcher first contended that the system of just voting a cold, unestimated \$5,000,000 made possible a growing of the Northern Ontario development fund beyond the necessity of use. At one time there had been some \$3,000,000 in the fund. Then came a vote of \$5,000,000 more, bringing the total up to far more than was originally considered.

In the second place, said he, this passing of \$5,000,000 in "bulk" was not following the Parliamentary procedure of estimates.

Sees Too Much Latitude.

The present handling of moneys for work in the North, he emphasized, allowed a great deal of latitude. "It might be possible," he suggested, "for the department to bring pressure to bear in an election campaign, in view of the fact that so much labor is employed, to have their employees vote for the Government candidate."

The Minister's Reply.

Mr. Finlayson, in reply, said that every year for a good many years a similar resolution had been before the House. Since 1912 the present system of doing business had been in operation. Last year, at the request of the Leader of the Opposition, he had undertaken to supply for the benefit of the Legislature more details regarding the various expenditures on Northern and Northwestern development. These details, he said, appeared now in the public accounts.

Mr. Finlayson spoke at length of the difficulties encountered in Northern development work. No one knew when a road might be needed. No one could tell what obstacles might be encountered in the building of that road. He cited contingency after contingency which his department unexpectedly had to face, and in connection with which no estimate could possibly have been made.

Meant to Take Weapon From Criminal, Says Attorney-General

BILL IS WITHDRAWN

The proposal of the Ontario Government to empower cities to require locks on, and the locking of, all motor vehicles left standing was withdrawn in the Legislature yesterday afternoon by Hon. George S. Henry, Minister of Public Works and Highways.

This legislative suggestion was bodied in a bill introduced recently to amend the Highway Traffic Act. When the measure came before the House in committee yesterday some vigorous protest was raised to this particular proposal. One objection was that it would affect several thousand users of the old-time cars which had no locking devices as required. Another was that it might result in some cities passing "locking" by-laws while others did not, and was therefore "checkerboard legislation" that would perhaps work a hardship on the motoring public. It was also suggested that the proposal, if enacted, might have some effect on insurance claims in the case of cars being stolen.

To Check Criminals.

Attorney-General Price declared that the proposal was really an attempt to "take away a weapon from the criminal." Many a Judge, said he, deplored the fact that cars were left unlocked on the streets, and that crooks found it easy to steal a car as an aid in some crime. He admitted that there were many things that could be said against the project, but emphasized that it was aimed to "make it harder for the criminal."

Members suggested that perhaps "public opinion" was not just "ripe" for such a move.

"Perhaps," Hon. Mr. Henry finally agreed, "we might withdraw it for this year and give it more careful thought for a year hence."

A clause was added demanding that motorists passing safety zones travel at a rate that will not endanger pedestrians, and restraining motorists from passing such zones at more than ten miles an hour.

This bill also generally prohibits the use of spotlights fixed on a car above the height of the headlights. It provides that any additional lights be used below the level of the headlights with rays pointing to the right and seventy-five feet ahead.

Legislation Advanced.

Six bills were given third reading, and ten passed Committee of the House. Aurelien Belanger's (Liberal, Russell) bill to amend the Theatres and Cinematographs Act was one of four given second reading. Hon. George S. Henry, Acting Leader of the Government, in the absence of Premier Ferguson, had no opposition to state. While the measure might require some "dressing up" in committee, the Government, he said, approved of its principle.

"Attaboy, Bill!"

Hon. William Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests, had the hearts of his Legislature audience "pit-a-patting" yesterday afternoon. He had been talking about Northern Ontario—its wonders and its possibilities—and had expressed the belief that every person should "go up and see for himself" before criticizing Government policy of expenditure with regard to development of this part of the Province.

"I sincerely trust," said he, "that some way will be found this summer to take the Legislature on a trip up there."

There were no "Hoorahs," for House rules and regulations won't permit them, but from one section of the Opposition benches an enthusiastic "see everything that's possible" member piped a faint:

"Attaboy, Bill!"

Railway Cars and Automobiles Disappear in Northern Muskeg

Northern Ontario is, so to speak, the land of the "swallow."

Speaking in the Legislature yesterday concerning his department's development of that section of the Province, Hon. William Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests, stressed the difficulties experienced in road building, and related the actual story of how an automobile, crossing a particularly soggy piece of new road last year, had sunk completely from sight.

Some "swallow!" But that is a mere nothing.

Whole stretches of track on the C.P.R., the C.N.R. and the T. & N.O. have been known, at times, according to Mr. Finlayson, to go the way of the automobile. The C.P.R., for instance, was compelled, because of muskeg, he said, to rebuild one section of its road ten times. And 20 or 30 cars have been known to vanish at one gulp from old Mother Earth, he said.