

under the new law had substantially improved. This, he added, had thrown open the question for discussion, and while he was bound to respect the opinion of the two Conservative members he was far from being convinced that conditions were better.

"I am open to conviction," he said "Oh, no," glibed the Government benches.

"One thing I am convinced of," he went on, "is that the new act has been a good thing for the Government from a revenue point of view."

Quoting the Provincial Treasurer's pre-session statement to show that a revenue of \$8,225,000 through profits on sale of liquor, permits, and through fines from infractions had accrued to the Government during the last fiscal year, he stated that it was quite clear that, had there been no such revenue, the Province would have registered a deficit of millions of dollars.

Mr. Lethbridge pointed out from a Toronto paper news item that the Liquor Control Board had sold close to \$60,000,000 worth of liquor during the year, which, he stated, was approximately \$2,000,000 more than the Province had spent on all other purposes, schools, roads, administration of justice, Northern development, included.

Increase in Drinking.

"An Ottawa despatch, dated July 6, 1923, stated," he declared, "that since Government control went into effect there has been an increase of nearly 200 per cent. in the consumption of liquors."

"This statement is based on customs duties collected on imports of ale, spirits and wines during the fiscal year ending March 31, 1927-28."

"Out of 144 cases coming before the city Police Court in the City of London during the month of April, 1923, 103 were for infraction of the L.C.A. Liquor was the cause of 71 per cent. of the charges laid."

"I could weary the House with similar statements, and it seems that the end is not in sight, as the breweries and distilleries are constantly increasing their output."

"These are some of the things, Mr. Speaker, that cause me to say that I am not yet convinced that things are better under the present law of Government sale, but, rather, are going from bad to worse."

Applause for Premier.

When Premier Ferguson rose to speak the Government members started an uproarious banging of their desks that lasted for minutes. Finally, when the tumult died away, the Prime Minister smiled his benign smile on the assemblage and remarked: "How can I help it if it is a one-man Government."

He then went on with his speech, and particularly addressed his first words to Progressive Leader Lethbridge. He had, he said, listened with interest to Mr. Lethbridge's address. "But," he added, "I decline to accept without question many of the thoughts that evolve from beneath that benevolent old dome over there."

Mr. Ferguson recalled that Mr. Lethbridge had said: "We all think alike." "All the Liberals and alleged Progressives liked that sentiment," the Premier continued. "It inspires me with the idea that the honorable member from West Middlesex has had a long, lingering affection for the party he supported until he reached to beyond the years of mature and sound judgment."

Mr. Ferguson had compliments for the new members in the House, for Hon. Mr. Dunlop, who 25 years ago this month was first sworn in as member; for the Hamilton mover of the Address in reply to the Speech; for the seconder, "the doughty little warrior from South Bruce."

Parliamentarians' Visit.

Then, going on to refer to the Speech from the Throne, he regretted that the Opposition had felt that it was "meagre." Did it not refer to the visit here of the British Parliamentary Association? And that, said the Premier, was a matter of great Imperial importance, for such a visit and the establishment of a branch of the association strengthened the ties of Empire, increased patriotic fervor. He referred, too, to the tour of Lord Lovat, and noted that when that great Imperialist got home his first-hand knowledge obtained here was of great value in working out the problem of better migration methods toward this country.

Next he fired a shot at Mr. Lethbridge for his remarks on the agricultural situation, declaring that the Progressive Leader had never "recovered from an inferiority complex." Why should Mr. Lethbridge "bemoan" the agricultural situation in Middlesex, for wasn't that one of the wealthiest communities in the Province?

Mr. Lethbridge spiked this attack by pointing out that he had been speaking of South Bruce.

"Well," said Mr. Ferguson, "we'll study the methods in Middlesex and apply them to South Bruce."

"Will you say," Mr. Lethbridge inquired, "that the report of Professor Leitch was not correct?"

"Yes," retorted the Premier. "I never agreed with it. It is unsound, though full of wonderful theoretical predictions. And I have not much patience with people who spread that sort of propaganda derived from misleading and superficial reports from alleged experts."

Mr. Ferguson referred to remarks about the packing companies. Mr. Lethbridge should know, he said, that "what forced the amalgamation of those companies was that they were nearly all bankrupt."

"But they've done well since," said the Progressive Leader.

Roads Expenditures.

He had a word, said he, for Mr. Lethbridge's "complaint" on road expenditures. Last year the Government had given \$6,000,000 to counties and townships for roads that generally tended to greater comfort and other advantages in the Province. Yet it was charged with being extravagant.

As for the requests for reduction in auto licenses, he declared: "I agree that when the day comes when it can be done, it should be done. But those who get the advantage of the highways should pay for it, and until we reach that point we can't reduce the auto licenses." But, he emphasized, let it be remembered that Ontario has the lowest license fee in Canada, and it is also lower than the average in the United States.

Mr. Ferguson then turned from Mr. Lethbridge to start his bombardment of Mr. Sinclair. He had, he observed, characterized Mr. Sinclair's speeches in the past in a way which the Liberal chieftain did not relish. "In fact," he recalled, "last year I said it was permeated with pernicious anaemia. Now, if I was to undertake to characterize his speech this year, I'd say he was troubled with incipient political paresis. And it's said that that is largely an old man's disease."

Mr. Sinclair, he went on, when the boisterous reception of this sally had died away, had called this the "vaedictory" session. Of course, said the Premier, the Liberal chieftain had set himself up as a prophet many times. "In fact," he added "he prophesied at the last election that the wicked Tory organization would be wiped out, and that the white banner of purity would be carried aloft by himself, in control of affairs."

"But," Mr. Ferguson smiled, "the white plume fell."

Again the Government members thumped out acclaim of this witticism.

The Boys He Left Behind.

Mr. Ferguson smiled on them benevolently. "You know," he told the Opposition, "when I went to England

last summer the boys took advantage of my absence and said, 'Call on some by-elections and see how we get along.' Well, they got along all right; so there are plenty of men to direct the Government whether I'm here or not. In four by-elections, you know, one was won by acclamation and the others almost as easy. I'm proud of the boys I left behind."

He had a reply for Mr. Sinclair's statement that evidence that this was "get-away session was that the Conservative handbook is already printed. "The Conservative handbook is being prepared every day," said Mr. Ferguson. "It's published every day, and my honorable friend's assisting it every time he gets on his feet. That's the sort of handbook the people like."

"Now," he continued, and smiled at Mr. Sinclair, "don't you think right down in your heart, frankly and candidly, that you have a pretty good Government?"

The Government members again chorused laughter and applause. "Well," said Mr. Ferguson, "that seems to be accepted."

"Do you want an answer?" Mr. Sinclair inquired.

"Yes," said the Premier. "I may say," Mr. Sinclair retorted, "that I didn't know we had any right to think."

"Unless my honorable friend thinks more clearly than in the past," Mr. Ferguson shot back, "he should be deprived of that right."

More Intensive Administration.

Mr. Sinclair, he went on, had complained that the Speech from the Throne had nothing in it. "This Government," he explained, "is trying to get away from a multiplicity of legislation. We believe that administration should have greater attention, and with constantly greater attention we'll lessen the demand for legislation from year to year." He was proud of the fact that the Speech contained only one or two outstanding legislative proposals.

In the past, said he, the many speeches which Mr. Sinclair had "inflicted" on the House had been marked by "lack of constructive criticism." The Government had told him this, and so, said Mr. Ferguson, this year he had come back "filled with suggestions," ideas that would "revolutionize the Province."

"Now," the Premier reviewed, "what are they? First, he wants us to chase up department officials and get reports earlier. The second is he wants us to get returns in faster. Then he wants a memorandum on bills to be considered. And last, and the fatal one, he suggests that we should follow Ottawa in the administration of our finances. God forbid—"

Another roar of applause from Mr. Ferguson's followers silenced him for a moment. He paused, smiling, and then continued—"that we fall into such a colossal and fatal error."

"You see," he added, "the amount of my honorable friend's suggestions. The mountain labors and brings forth a mouse. Those are the four suggestions. That may be the maximum of duty of the Leader of the Liberal Party, but it is not what I see the purpose of leadership to be."

Mr. Ferguson referred at this juncture to Mr. Sinclair's charges that he had dragged "political interference" into the administration of the Liquor Control Act when, last fall, he had rescinded the banquet wine permit issued by Sir Henry Drayton, Liquor Board Chairman, to the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston, who had been visiting Toronto, and who desired, after a custom of 150 years, to pledge the King's toast in port.

Cut Restrictive Principle.

"On the face of the visitors' request," explained the Prime Minister, "it did not appear to the board to be such an undertaking to issue a permit, but when they talked it over the Government realized that such issuance would

cut down to the core of the restrictive principle of the law."

"Why was authority to issue such a permit ever put in the act at all?" asked Edmond Proulx, Liberal, Prescott.

There might be occasions, said the Prime Minister, when the need for it would occur. For instance, there were religious sects in the Province which, on certain festivals, might ask for it. As yet, however, they had made no request.

"My honorable friend from South Ontario," said the Prime Minister, "can call it interference, political interference, or what he likes, but it was evidence that this Government intends to see that the act is enforced. Whenever I see a Commission or Commissioner undertaking to do something that is not in the best interests of the people of the Province I shall always be prepared to make representations protesting their action."

Sarcastic With Mr. Sinclair.

In his most caustic vein, the Prime Minister dubbed Mr. Sinclair as a man who—in their flare-up over the same question on Tuesday last—had not had the courage "to stand up and say he either approved of granting the wine permit to the distinguished visitors from the States or disapproved."

"No," he continued; "my honorable friend knew he dared not do it. So he slid away from the question. Do you recall his answer when I asked him if he had been in my position would he have done as I had done or would he have granted the permit? What he said was that if he had given his word that he would not interfere with the act he would have kept his word. Mr. Speaker, was that a straightforward answer to my question, or did it indicate any desire to be frank with the Legislature?"