

Friday-February-8th.

PRICE URGES QUERIES ABOUT JOCKEY CLUB OR P. C. BRIEN CASE

Attorney-General's Challenge Follows Attack by Lethbridge

Attorney-General Price, in the Legislature yesterday, challenged the Opposition groups—"come one, come all"—to ask all the questions and move as many resolutions as they liked with regard to the Windsor Jockey Club and the Provincial Officer Brien cases which so excited press comment last summer.

"The department has investigated these matters," the Attorney-General told the House. "If any one wants to ask a question about them or to move a resolution, I'll be here every day, ready to reply to anything that is asked of me. And when I'm through with the questions I'm confident that the public at large will feel that the merits of the cases are all in favor of the department."

Recalled by Lethbridge.

It was John G. Lethbridge, Progressive Leader, speaking in the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, who stirred in the Attorney-General the challenge he afterward laid down. Mr. Lethbridge recalled the charge made through the Border Cities Star by Frank W. Wilson (Conservative, East Windsor) that beer had been sold on the premises of the Windsor Jockey Club during the race meet and that no investigation would be made because of the fact that members of the Provincial Government were present. He next referred to the dismissal of Provincial Officer Brien of Kitchener for too impartial exercise, as the officer claimed, of his duties under the Liquor Control Act.

"Here, again," declared Mr. Lethbridge, "an M.P.P. is said to have been implicated. No investigation has been held by an impartial Commission so far, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Brien challenged the department for an investigation into the L.C.A. enforcement in his district. Mayor Ratz of Kitchener is credited with the statement that the serious charges of Mr. Brien warranted an investigation to clear the air, as he said the law should be obeyed and impartially enforced. Mayor Ratz is further quoted as saying that Mr. Brien was conscientious and efficient in the performance of his duties, and that he deplored the action of the department in discharging him.

"Serious Enough for Probe."

"The local paper also speaks of Mr. Brien as a conscientious man, and that as public opinion in the locality is strongly in favor of L.C.A. enforcement, the charges are serious enough to warrant an investigation on the part of the Provincial authorities. Further pressure was brought to bear on the Government through a resolution passed by the Waterloo County Prohibition Union, urging upon the Government that a Royal Commission be appointed to investigate the charges of Mr. Brien. Copies of these resolutions were sent to the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General. Yet in the face of all these facts no action has been taken by the Government to investigate. It's high time something was done."

"Would my honorable friend," interrupted Karl Homuth, Conservative, South Waterloo, "expect the Waterloo Prohibition Union to bring in anything but a resolution like that?"

"I believe," answered Mr. Lethbridge, "that the Prohibition Union wrote exactly what they believed to be the truth."

"Take that will you?" cried the Opposition to Mr. Homuth.

Attorney-General Price then stepped into the picture.

PREMIER EXPLAINS INDEPENDENT BOARD TO PROBE INSURANCE

Has Wider Powers Than Superintendent, Says Ferguson

Reasons why an independent Royal Commission, rather than the Government's Superintendent of Insurance, R. Leighton Foster, should inquire into the increases in automobile rates were advanced in the Ontario Legislature by Premier Ferguson yesterday afternoon.

The Premier announced that there would be a general investigation into the situation and into insurance practices elsewhere, so that the Government, if it was necessary, might alter its method of handling insurance affairs.

His explanation of the appointment of Mr. Justice Hodgins to such a Commission was occasioned by inquiry from Liberal Leader Sinclair. Mr. Sinclair thought that the Government should explain why Mr. Foster, who was empowered by statute to "grapple with" such a situation, was not conducting the probe.

"One reason," said Mr. Ferguson, "is that the Commission can cover a wider scope than is now permitted the Superintendent of Insurance in the character of his inquiry. The Commission will not only make inquiry within the Statute, but it is to make an inquiry which will enable us to learn of practices elsewhere, so that if necessary, we may alter our methods of handling insurance matters. It is advantageous to have the widest possible inquiry without any question being raised as to the authority of the Superintendent. There was some thought of making the Superintendent a Commission, widening his power, but objection to that was raised by many parties interested in insurance. Our object is to avoid any antagonism."

Insurance companies, he added, had promised to show just how their operations were concerned and to lend assistance in gathering information.

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Rushing New Bill

The amendment to the Municipal Act which makes possible the Controllership by-election in Toronto on Feb. 23 was given third reading in the Ontario Legislature yesterday afternoon, and is to receive Royal assent today. Mr. Ferguson, proposing the third reading, emphasized the necessity of rushing this emergency measure through. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor would come to the House on Friday, said he, to complete the authorization on the bill.