

BILL WOULD CANCEL PASSENGER'S RIGHT TO SUE HOST-DRIVER

Quarter of All Claims of Such Nature, Says Insurance Superintendent

MARRIAGE ACT MEASURE

The rights of a passenger to sue his host, the driver, in case of an accident occurring during the gratuitous automobile ride, were discussed at length at a meeting of the Legal Bills Committee in Queen's Park yesterday. Particular attention was paid to the plight of the insurance companies who, according to testimony, have been forced to cover many drivers' liability policies, often involving cases where collusion was possible. The committee also considered the amendment to the Marriage Act empowering the pastors of the People's Church and the Open Door Evangelistic Association to solemnize marriages. Both bills were finally laid over for future discussion.

Checks Alleged Collusion.

The amendment involving the guest passengers was introduced by its sponsor, C. A. Robertson, Liberal Whp. The gist of these qualifying clauses to the Highway Traffic Act provides, according to explanations made during the meeting, that the passenger injured during a gratuitous ride loses the common-law right to sue the driver for negligence, the provision being particularly directed against the alleged collusion.

H. W. Macdonald, representing the Ontario members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and Leighton Foster, Superintendent of Insurance, presented the views of their respective organizations. Mr. Macdonald pointed out that manufacturing concerns encourage agents to invite prospective customers to ride in their automobiles and favor a method of providing compensation in case of accident. Mr. Macdonald also declared: "We feel it would not be sound to cancel altogether the common-law right."

Mr. Foster stated that premiums covering this liability had been raised recently from 50 cents to \$2, and that insurance cost accounting showed that a rate nearer treble than double the last-named sum would be necessary to cover the actual cost of the insurance. "The public will benefit to the extent of several hundred thousands annually," he commented, in regard to the proposed law, introducing figures showing that about a quarter of all such claims were of such nature.

"Not Done" in England.

In answer to a question by W. A. Baird (Conservative, High Park), Mr. Foster diagnosed the problem with the statement: "I think the public have become claim-conscious," remarking later that in England the practice of bringing such suits "is simply not done." in answer to a query about "hitch-hikers' insurance," he said that a passenger could be covered by a personal automobile accident policy.

The attendant difficulties involved in meritorious cases, suggestions for anti-collusion measures, and the possibility of remedies which would not affect the common-law right were mentioned, a limit of maximum liability receiving special attention. It was finally decided to lay the matter over to another sitting when more information would be available.

Ecclesiastical law, Supreme Court decisions, and the Provincial Statutes were involved in the discussion of the amendment to the Marriage Act, sponsored by Argue Martin (Conservative, Hamilton). Hon. Charles McCrea, Chairman of the committee, mentioned the desirability of preserving "solemnity and seemliness" by keeping the solemnization of matrimony within bounds, and H. L. Cummings pointed out the advantages of reserving the right to churches of established permanence. E. Fred Singer (Conservative, St. Andrew's) repeated his appeal for a civil marriage.

It was finally agreed that the matter before the committee was affected by the status of the pastor of the People's Church in the Presbyterian denomination to which he formerly belonged and the bill was laid over until that information could be received.

BILL STOPS PAWN SHOPS TAKING MILITARY MEDALS

\$20 Fine Provided in Measure Introduced in Legislature by Attorney-General—Fixed Prices for Cleaning Firms

To reinforce their fake appeals for public sympathy and cash, petty racketeers have been plastering their breasts with the war medals which old soldiers have had to pawn. For this reason, among others, Attorney-General Price yesterday introduced in the Legislature a bill prohibiting pawnbrokers from advancing money on naval or military medals, badges, decorations and orders. The measure provides a fine of \$20 for infractions of the law.

Another measure of wide public interest came from William Morrison,

East Hamilton Conservative, who seeks to set uniform charges for cleaning and pressing of clothes. Price-cutting wars within the trade have led to a demand from cleaning firms for such legislation, which would permit municipal Councils to fix maximum and minimum charges.

First reading was given to Dr. H. J. Davis's bill establishing Remembrance Day as a public holiday in Ontario; and Colonel Price's amendments making the Ontario Trustees Act conform with English practice and permitting joint tenancies between corporations and individuals.