

March 30

Much Fiddling 'Round Without Much Done, Is Legislator's Opinion

Newest M.P.P. Is Reminded of County Council—Review of "Lame Duck" Session Is Test for Memory, Apart From Beer

"Well," said the newest member, "there's a lot of fiddling 'round without getting much done, but I'd been used to that on the County Council."

Thus did D. M. Campbell, Liberal, from East Kent, sum up his first Legislature session. Private members' opinion on both sides of the House did not differ greatly from that of the newcomer.

158 Bills Reached Table.

The fifth, or lame-duck, session of the Province's Eighteenth Legislature closed yesterday, after passing the beer bill and certain other legislation that nobody could recall on the spur of the moment. Between the wintry afternoon in late January, when it opened, and the wintry afternoon in late March when it ended, an enormous number of speeches had been made, a hundred-odd desks had been periodically pounded, and 158 bills had reached the table of the House. They started with the Act Respecting the Mount Mackay and Kakabeka Falls Railway, and they ended with the Act Respecting the Handling of Gasoline. Sandwiched between them in the fat bill-book were measures affecting similar important phases of the Province's business.

The Government proposed to the final session that routine amendments be made to departmental statutes, and that beer be sold by the glass. The House concurred. The Opposition asked questions, and, on the latter issue, divided.

Aside from beer, Government legislation included:

Health—Grouping of districts under a single medical officer; wider control over dairies; additional information in maternal deaths.

Labor—Tightening of the Minimum Wage Act to provide jail sentences for repeated infraction and a wage law for men competing with women in any industry.

Highways—Removal of injustice in insurance provisions; provision for truck-drivers' minimum wage; action against "bootleg" gasoline stations.

Agriculture—Enabling legislation in conformity with the new Dominion marketing statute; control of milk production and distribution by commission; loans for seed grain; loans to co-operatives.

Technical Law Changes.

Law—Technical changes in a number of statutes.

Fish and game—Moose closure south of French River, enabling legislation for marketing of game birds; hunters' license buttons.

Northern development—Completion of the east and west sections of the trans-Canada highway, with increased pay for workers.

Land and forests—Investigation of lumber camp conditions.

Education—Minor amendments.

Treasury—Minor amendments.

Hydro—Permission to Commission to do its own borrowing.

Actually, Government legislation was of such a character that it called for no great opposition. What there was of contest was left mainly in the hands of Hon. Harry Nixon, Progressive Leader. Liberal House Leader McQuibban confined his efforts chiefly to his pet subjects of the Hydro and Liquor Board proceeds.

Committee work was important. The Agriculture Committee laid the groundwork for Ottawa investigations of the live stock and tobacco industries. The Labor Committee, dormant for a decade, started an important inquiry into construction industry abuses; the Legal Bills Committee probed Liberal charges regarding Magistrate McCaughrin of Orillia, and the Public Accounts Committee studied D. Paul Munro's allegations regarding highway payrolls in Elgin County.

But beer was the big issue, whether or not it will figure largely in the coming campaign. The Opposition split widely, with Liberal and Progressive chieftains on opposite sides. The vote, widely touted in the Government press, probably will have little actual effect in the campaign, since the election will be fought between Premier Henry and Mitchell F. Hepburn, M.P., both committed to a loosening of the Liquor Control Act.