

# POLICE BILL OPPOSED BY TORIES

## Roebuck Co-ordination Measure Introduced

That the appointment of a Director of Social Police Services, vested with absolute power over all police forces in Ontario in times of emergency, would constitute an invasion of the field of municipal autonomy, was a salient point in an attack launched in the Ontario Legislature yesterday by members of the Opposition against Attorney-General Arthur W. Roebuck's police bill.

In presenting the measure for its second reading, the Attorney-General declared emphatically that the bill must not be construed in any way as an attempt on the part of the Government to interfere with the management or control of municipal police forces in Ontario.

Opposition forces, however, interpreted the bill as a direct move on the part of the Attorney-General to gain full control over all law enforcement bodies throughout the Province.

Any move to co-ordinate police activity in Ontario should, according to Wilfrid Heighington, Conservative, St. David's, who led the attack, be made along "national lines"—possibly by co-operation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

W. A. Baird, Conservative, High Park, was speaking at the 6 o'clock adjournment. He summed up his opposition to the measure in the following words: "Because of the extreme socialistic tendencies on the part of the present Attorney-General, we feel that this bill should be opposed strongly."

The action of the Opposition in talking the bill out means that the measure now must take its place at the bottom of the pile of Government bills.

"In these modern times," the Attorney-General declared, "the gangster is operating in municipalities and a war is being waged between police and a violent underworld. The greatest co-operation is necessary for the fight is with well-financed brigands."

The bill, the Attorney-General stressed, is one which would be operative only in times of emergency. In such times, he said, such a director as he proposed should have complete control over all forces.

Recently the Attorney-General said there was demonstrated a pressing need for such a director. He did not mention the instance, but it is freely admitted to have been the Labatt kidnapping case.

"Municipalities," he declared, "were willing to co-operate, but none at that time knew to whom they could turn for absolute authority and direction. It was really essential that some one should have been in power."

"I care not who that person is," the Attorney-General went on. "Such a director must not ask for co-operation in an emergency, but give the order, so that all roads are closed, all avenues of escape blocked, and special lines of communication established."

Hon. Leopold Macaulay was concerned about the naming of a director.

"Why couldn't you have named your director in the bill? Couldn't you have named the Chief Commissioner of Provincial Police?" he asked.

"Perhaps it could be done that way—of course it could, but in the estimation of the Government it wouldn't be wise," the Attorney-General said.

"Were the Chief Commissioner to be named, it would place him in a preferred position, and perhaps arouse jealousy among other police forces. That is a situation we wish to avoid."

### Invades Antonomy.

Wilfrid Heighington maintained that the measure invaded the field of municipal autonomy. It was the same member who stated that any co-ordination should be along national lines. He cited the fact that several Provinces have discarded their Provincial police and made a working financial arrangement with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

At considerable length, Mr. Heighington read despatches concerning labor troubles in Northern Ontario which in some instances criticized the Attorney-General for withholding police activity in connection with these strikes.

"When we are asked to grant such power to the Attorney-General," declared Mr. Heighington, "we should take time to consider how far-reaching are recent developments in the Provincial Police force, and if they entitle the Attorney-General to such power." He insinuated that the Attorney-General had not acted adequately in respect to the Northern strikes, and deprecated the dismissal of a number of highway traffic officers.

"Has there been an increase in accidents on the highways since these officers have been cut off?" asked the Premier.

"I haven't the figures," replied Mr. Heighington.

"He hasn't the knowledge and I suggest he stop talking and let someone talk who knows something about it," put in the Provincial Secretary.

### Croll Backs Bill.

The proposed police bill was strongly backed by Hon. David Croll, Minister of Public Welfare.

The first attempt on the part of the Attorney-General to interfere in police matters of municipalities, declared W. A. Baird, was in the dismissal of the former Toronto Police Commission members.

"We can see through this bill," said Mr. Baird; "we are not quite so dumb as you think, although we do sit on the Opposition side of the House."

"If this was the first effort on the part of the Attorney-General to gain control of police forces we might look at the bill in a different light," declared Mr. Baird, "but we had their action in connection with the Toronto Police Commission. This is another attempt on the part of the Attorney-General to gain power over outside police forces."

Mr. Baird recalled the city's attitude and that of the Attorney-General in connection with the "hunger march" on Queen's Park.

"They marched from all sections of the Province," he said.

"Not from the North," objected a member from a Northern riding.

"The present Attorney-General," Mr. Baird said, "has not the broad understanding of his predecessor on matters of this kind. The radical elements know that the present Attorney-General is more sympathetic to them than was his predecessor."

He then charged that Magistrates in Ontario know that the Attorney-General does not desire them to pass as strict penalties on the radical element when they run foul of the law.

"Because of the extreme socialistic tendency on the part of the present Attorney-General, we feel that this bill should be opposed," Mr. Baird concluded.