

Court Bills Cause Legislature Lull

Colonel Price Objects to Centralizing Power in Executive Council

Ontario's "thunder, lightning and water power" Legislature found a haven yesterday in the shape of "lawyers' bills" and slipped into it.

While Attorney-General Arthur Roebuck and former Attorney-General W. H. Price held "the floor," the legislators listened to a discussion of legal legislation and permitted it to pass through second reading.

What little controversy there was developed around the Division Court Act amendments.

"It centralizes power in the Executive Council which was formerly in the hands of the representatives of the people in the counties," Colonel Price complained.

The Attorney-General pointed to a hope of reducing an excessive number of courts, and declared that the present control by boards under the act is "cumbersome." The bill was designed to place power in the hands of the department and Executive Council, which would permit desirable progress.

Division Court fees aroused Wilfrid Heighington's objections.

"The Division Court," he said, "had been called the poor man's court. It is—you are a poor man when you get out of it."

A County Court Act amendment simplifying appeal was passed with the note that it had Osgoode Hall approval. Second reading was also given to the Crown Witness Act amendment affecting payment of the Government portion of witnesses' fees.

Police Head MAY BE MINOR Official

Tories Irate as Roebuck Bill Discussed

APPPOINTMENT of a member of an existing police force in Ontario—but not the active head—as Director of Special Police Services, as recommended in the police bill now before the Ontario Legislature, is a possibility.

Nesbitt Disapproves.

Attorney-General Arthur W. Roebuck's intimation of this possibility drew a storm of disapproval from Russell Nesbitt, Conservative, Brantford, who had directed a question to the Attorney-General in this regard during discussion of the bill in the House.

"The suggestion of the Attorney-General," declared Mr. Nesbitt, "shows just how foolish this police bill is. If a member of the Hamilton police force were chosen for the position of director it would arouse strong jealousy in Toronto."

The bill introduced for second reading by the Attorney-General advocates the appointment of such a director, with full power over all police forces in the Province in times of an emergency, and would grant such a director the power of a Commissioner to probe all police matters in the Province.

Termed Outrageous.

"This bill," opined Mr. Nesbitt, "would destroy the efficiency of the police forces in the larger cities. In my frank opinion it is one of the most vicious and outrageous ever brought before this honorable House."

"Such a director," he added, "would

be able to override the policies of Police Commissions in the various municipalities. The bill might be all right for rural centres, but not for large cities.

"There is no doubt that such a director would be responsible to the Government making the appointment," Mr. Nesbitt said. "In the past the affairs of police in Ontario have been kept out of politics. The rules distinctly say they must be."

"Is there any distinction between the rules and the rule in that regard?" asked the Attorney-General.

"The proposal of the Attorney-General," concluded the Conservative member, "would lead to nothing but confusion and dual control."

Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Conservative for South York, referred to the section of the bill conferring the rights of a Commissioner on the director.

Delay Asked.

"This," he declared, "is a monstrous provision." He maintained it would defeat the British custom of appointing an independent Commissioner for judicial investigation.

"It is my opinion," he continued, "that the Attorney-General is doing a disservice to criminal jurisdiction in introducing this bill. We're not going to allow the Attorney-General to put it over on the pretext that crime is increasing and organized. The Attorney-General should let the measure stand for a year or two."

Discussion ended with the adjournment of the House and the bill has yet to receive its second reading.

Power Decision Is to Be Made In Next Few Days

Premier Says Legislature Can Cancel Con- tracts

STATEMENT TO HENRY

The Queen's Park attitude toward the future of the power contracts is to be determined shortly, Prime Minister Mitchell F. Hepburn indicated yesterday.

"The future course of action will be determined in the next few days," the Premier told Hon. George S. Henry and the Legislature yesterday.

The Conservative Leader had asked the Government's intentions with reference to a story in The Globe in which the Premier pointed out that the contracts could be cancelled through legislative action.

"There is no question about the power of the Legislature to take action to cancel the contracts," Premier Hepburn explained to Mr. Henry. The Government policy had not been settled, but would be determined in the next few days.

"We are giving the facts to the people."

Hon. T. B. McQuesten took occasion to deny newspaper stories reading "no thought of repudiation" into his recent speech.

The Minister said that such meaning had not been his intention. When Hon. George S. Henry asked what his intentions were, Mr. McQuesten replied that he was giving no expression of any intention.