

Dionne Bill Being Aimed At Chisellers

Premier Declares Intention of Breaking "Those Contracts"

(See also Page Three.)

THEIR only thought is to make money, and our only concern is that those five babies shall be reared as normal, healthy girls. This bill is going through, and we're going to break those contracts."

Safeguard Children.

This was the firm declaration yesterday of Premier Mitchell F. Hepburn when the measure, calling for a permanent guardianship for the Dionne quintuplets, came up for second reading in the Ontario Legislature.

Concerning the "contracts" the Premier had reference to attempts to have the babies taken out of the country for exhibition purposes.

"One of those promoters," the Premier declared "was in my office and showed me a contract whereby he would receive 40 per cent. of the entire proceeds from exhibition of the babies. The Minister of Public Welfare is right when he says that those babies will not be sandwiched in between a sword-swallower and a bearded lady in some Chicago show."

Price Critical of Bill.

There appears to be doubt as to the advisability of the bill in its present form by some members of the Opposition and this feeling expression yesterday through Colonel W. H. Price (Conservative, Parkdale.)

"We must consider this bill very carefully for it is a most drastic piece of legislation," declared Mr. Price. "I am not sure that this is the proper bill, it may be too drastic."

The bill was given its second reading after its sponsor, Hon. David Croll, Minister of Public Welfare, explained its contents and declared that the measure was absolutely devoid of "political flavor." He complimented the previous Government for early aid to the quintuplets, and the present Attorney-General for his action which

resulted in the appointment of guardians and prohibiting exploitation of the infants.

The Minister referred to press reports in which the parents, particularly the mother, are reported to have complained that the bill will split the family.

"I am sure," he said, "that the parents did not make the statements they are quoted as having made. It is some one up there behind the scenes. When the bill was being drafted it was suggested that Mrs. Dionne be named as a guardian, but the lawyer pointed out it might involve journeys which Mrs. Dionne might not be prepared to take and it was thought that naming the father would be sufficient."

"We have all adopted those children," the Minister went on. "The sole purpose of the bill is to stop exploitation; to stop the quick talkers and chisellers from their attempts to gain control of the children. They are unusual children and we should do everything possible, so that they will lead normal lives, in their own home, with their own family."

The bill, Mr. Croll stated, makes provision for ample allowance for the parents and the five other children from a financial standpoint. Questioned by the Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Mr. Croll declined to reveal the amount now held in trust for the children.

In conclusion the Minister said: "We are trying to treat the children as human beings and not as freaks. We want them to be home under the care of their mother and father, rather than exhibited between a sword-swallower and a bearded woman on a Chicago midway."

"Has any provision been made to reimburse the Province from earnings of the quintuplets?" asked William Duckworth (Conservative, High Park).

"No," replied Mr. Croll. "We regard what the Province has done as a whole-hearted contribution from all the people of the Province."

In the opinion of Colonel Price it would require "tremendous justification" to take the babies out of the control of their parents for eighteen years. He referred to the days when he introduced the Millar bill, and he was charged with an attempt to escheat this estate. The money, according to the Millar bill, will go to the Toronto mother giving birth to the most children in a ten-year period.

"I thought at the time," the former Attorney-General declared, "that this was bordering on the indecent. However, the bill was killed. I was called 'The Escheater,' and the race was on and is still on. As a matter of fact, at that time I urged that the money (\$500,000) be turned over to the University of Toronto." He explained it was his idea to invest the money and provide educational grants.

Premier Hepburn expressed the view that, had not Attorney-General Roebuck stepped in to protect the children, they would have been dead today. That is the belief of Dr. Daffoe."