

March 18

Legislature Session Is "Hottest" in Years

Veterans Look Back to 1923 to Find Its Equal for Parliamentary Fire- works

"It's a lively session at Queen's Park."

Even the veterans will admit it—the veterans who grumble that the Parliamentary clock stopped with Sir James Whitney in 1914, or with Hon. G. Howard Ferguson in 1930.

In the three weeks and four days, during which the first session of the nineteenth Legislature has been sitting, enough questions of privilege and points of order have sizzled across the time-honored "floor" to break all current records.

According to veteran observers, the Queen's Park annals must be turned back to 1923 to find a "hotter" session. The barometer of the galleries—where men and women have waited for two hours before session time in the last few weeks—also has not hit a similar high in twelve years.

Rules of Procedure.

The late Sir Erskine May is better known to the maiden members of the current Legislature than to some of their predecessors, who occupied their seats for a whole Parliament. Sir Erskine, one-time Clerk of the Parliament at Westminster, is the author of "Parliamentary Practice," the standard book on rules and procedure.

As such his name has been con-

tinually invoked in the present House, until Hon. George S. Henry made a recent two-sentence speech about him. The new Speaker has been called on for dozens of rulings and a recently delivered dictum occupied three pages.

Questions are another fighting word. Used in times past to shake many a member's speech, they were limited by Hon. Arthur Roebuck during his nine-hour Hydro contract indictment. The Opposition has followed suit—with many a display of Parliamentary fireworks.

Reason for the "liveliest" session is obvious. On the Opposition benches are the picked men of a former Ministry and Legislature, and the Hepburn Government has taken them on at repartee and debate.

Ottawa Experience.

The Premier brings Ottawa experience to the House, and is the first Prime Minister to do so for many years. On one side he has the ablest exponent of cross-fire in several Ontario Legislatures, Hon. Harry C. Nixon, and his Attorney-General, Minister of Highways and Minister of Agriculture have already proven their speech-making ability in the House.

Former Prime Minister Hon. George S. Henry is still chief Conservative thunderer. His desk-mate, former Attorney-General W. H. Price, precipitates in even more Parliamentary battles, and next to him is Hon. Leopold Macaulay. Of the new members, several veterans of the Toronto Council are most eager for the fray.

The crowded galleries and the records prove that so far it has been a good fight. The veterans have stopped saying: "You should have heard Sir James."