

April 4

Roebuck Urges Intervention In Labor Woes

**Nesbitt Claims Proposed
Change Lacks Sufficient
"Teeth"**

BILL ATTACKS "WOLF"

Attorney-General Arthur Roebuck opened the "industrial standards" debate in yesterday's Legislature and was countered by a Conservative statement that if labor laws were to be passed they should have more teeth. When the House adjourned the bill still faced the second reading hurdle.

"A simple wooden lathe painted like iron," Russell Nesbitt, Conservative spokesman and member for Toronto-Bracondale, termed the legislation. "We expected that the Minister of Labor in this bill would bring forth a mountain. I say he has produced a molehill," and Mr. Nesbitt charged that he could see behind this "the political astuteness of the Prime Minister."

"Wolf" Scored.

To galleries occupied almost entirely by men, the Attorney-General declared that achievement was unattainable if the "wolf," the "pirate," and the "chiseller" continued to dominate the situation.

"This bill," he said, "proposes to permit the great majority to meet and agree, and when they have agreed, to then impose it on the wolf who stands aside and ruins it."

The Attorney-General cited 84-hour weeks and \$7 weekly pay checks as he submitted that all was not well socially in the Province. Ninety-four great strikes and lockouts had occurred in Ontario in the past year, and the Attorney-General figured the loss in wages at approximately \$500,000 and the loss to industry—employers and employees alike—at \$1,000,000.

It was better, he argued, to intervene in labor troubles in the period preceding open warfare. Under the projected act the Department of Labor might call a meeting on petition of either side and would fill the chairmanship.

There was no compulsion on the Department, employers or employees. "but if both sides with a proper and sufficient majority agree on a schedule of wages and hours—if the representation on both sides is sufficient to guarantee the Department that public opinion will support the agreement—then the Minister may recommend to the Executive Council that an order be passed making that schedule the law of the land and imposing that schedule on those who stand out from the meeting."

Aimed at Undercutters.

The Attorney-General pressed the point that the legislation was aimed at the minority who undercut their competitors with vicious labor practices. Most employers would like to give higher wages, but at any meeting there was always the skeleton. "The mummy at the feast was the chiseller, the man who stood out."

For his political philosophy Mr. Roebuck again repeated, he had little belief in governmental interference with trade matters. "I wish Legislatures would realize," he said, "that no Parliament can successfully attempt to regulate business." And in this respect regulation must be left to those within the industry.

But low wages and long hours did not necessarily mean low production costs—"a body of fairly well satisfied working people means more to a manufacturer than a dollar or so a day in the man's envelope."