

# LABOR CODE "BENEFICIAL," SAYS CROLL

## Industrial Standards Act Defended on Basis of Improved Conditions

ONTARIO'S Industrial Standards Act is "not perfect," but it is, beyond doubt, "beneficial," Welfare-Labor Minister David Croll, the act's administrator, told the Legislature yesterday.

### Replies to Attack.

The statement was the first hint from Mr. Croll of his attitude toward the Roebuck industrial law, which was put in Mr. Croll's jurisdiction when the Labor portfolio changed hands last spring. The Minister briefly, but whole-heartedly defended the industrial standards yesterday. His defense was made in answer to Russell Nesbitt, Toronto Conservative M.P.P., who read to the Legislature a group of newspaper and magazine attacks on the value of the "codes."

The Welfare-Labor Minister took exception to some of these attacks. Toronto Saturday Night articles on the industrial standards, he said, "were worse than biased; they were misleading." He was surprised P. K. Sandwell, "an enlightened editor," had not seen the articles before they appeared.

The building industry had improved in 1935 and building industry figures would show that the act had not restricted building. Mr. Croll said in answer to the most frequently repeated criticism of the industrial standards.

Critics, he admitted, had taken exception to the high rate of building wages which had been established. But what was a high rate for a full year's work, Mr. Croll pointed out, was not so high when the building trades were only getting forty and fifty days of work a year.

Toronto experience had shown, he said, that the "codes" had not changed, or only slightly increased, the wage scale on big construction jobs. The standards had raised the wages on the small jobs—"sweatshop conditions"—and that had been Attorney-General Roebuck's purpose.

Brantford, London, Windsor and Hamilton—all under the industrial standards law—had shown building increases in the past month or so, "showing the Industrial Standards Act has had the opposite effect from that suggested," he said.

The Minister pretty well knifed any

suggestions of stricter Government control of wages when he dealt with a brief asking the Government to set lower building trade rates of pay.

"I don't know that we've reached the point, or will ever reach the point, where the Government can step in and tell builders how much they should pay," Mr. Croll said. "At least we're not prepared to do it."

### Voices Criticism.

Mr. Nesbitt's resolution declared "the present unemployment conditions in Ontario, particularly in the building and construction industries, should be given early consideration." He voiced criticism of the Industrial Standards Act.

"Labor should be given an opportunity of meeting the Labor Committee of this House and presenting their views," he said. "At the same time, employers of labor should be accorded the same privileges because, in

my humble opinion, discussion and co-operation between employer and employee, and not compulsory laws, is necessary to industrial peace.

"The act has worked out as a deterrent, rather than a stimulus to industry," he went on. "The act, of course, applies only in certain arbitrary zones in Ontario, and the building industry, one of the major industries in the Province, has been actually stifled in the zones where the act is in operation."

Defects of the act, he said, were that it contained no appropriation for enforcement, and the onus of enforcement was placed on organized labor, which never was vested with sufficient authority to enforce it.

## T. & N.O. COUNSEL PAID \$400 A MONTH

The T. & N. O. Railway pays Arthur Slight a retaining fee of \$400 a month, Premier Hepburn revealed in the Legislature yesterday. The Premier's statement was made in answer to a query about the Toronto lawyer's fees for T. & N. O. services. The question was put on the order paper by Opposition members.

## BOARD COLLECTS \$33,000 BACK PAY

Arrears in wages amounting to more than \$33,000 were collected by the Minimum Wage Board in the last fourteen months, Welfare-Labor Minister David Croll told the Legislature yesterday. The Minister's statement, in answer to Opposition queries, revealed that in the same period fifteen convictions were registered under the act and \$685 was paid in fines.

## PARK-O-METER PLAN IS BEFORE HOUSE

Park-o-meters, the proposed slot-machine control of parking spaces, would get Provincial authority for municipal sanction of their activities under a Municipal Act amendment which got first reading in yesterday's Legislature. The bill, which was introduced by a private member, gives City Councils power to pass by-laws on "park-o-meter" establishment.

## BILLS WILL ALTER MUNICIPAL ACT

A series of Municipal Act amendments which would revamp Ontario municipal elections were started through the legislative machinery at Queen's Park yesterday by private members.

The proposed bills provide for new elections in case of the death of a candidate between nomination and polling day; require the resignation of any City Council member who is running for Mayor; and widen the voting rights of joint tenants.

## TAX EXEMPTIONS CURB PROPOSED

Last year's attempt to curtail the tax exemption privileges enjoyed by schools and similar institutions is being revived in a modified form at Queen's Park.

Morgan Baker, North York Liberal M.P.P., introduced legislation yesterday which is similar to the act side-tracked last year. The new bill provides that no private schools will be permitted to hold more than twenty acres of land free of taxation. The North York member argues that institution land is being rented out to farmers who compete with taxpaying farmers in the same community. Two or three large private schools are located in his riding.

## RELIEF WORKERS REDUCED 90,000

### Croll Charges 96,000 Employed in 1934

Some 96,000 persons were working for the Government on relief work at midsummer, 1934, just after the June election, the Ontario Legislature was informed yesterday. A Government statement said that at the present time 4,695 men were on these rolls and all of them were working in the North.

This total, Hon. David Croll said, does not include the relief workers on municipal relief work projects. The Minister said the Government was partly financing these projects in 197 municipalities, but did not have a census of the number of men employed.