

Province Prepares To Trim Its Outlay And Boost Income

Policy of Retrenchment in Spending, Elimination of Duplicatory Services, Some Amalgamation of Interlocking Offices Believed in Offing; Rise in Liquor Prices Reported Considered

COCKED HAT DELAYS OPENING OF HOUSE

(Text of the Speech from the Throne (On Page 28. Pictures on Pages 4 and 17.)

(By DOUGLAS R. OLIVER.)

(Staff Writer, The Globe and Mail.)

It's a lean year ahead for the Hepburn Government, and the Hepburn Government—so it is learned at Queen's Park—is going to get just as tough about spending money as the public wants.

With a balanced budget for the current fiscal year still difficult of attainment—with a gross debt increase of some \$35,000,000 to be recorded—the government proposes, it is understood, to embark immediately upon a policy of retrenchment in administrative expenditures; of elimination of duplication in services; of amalgamation where possible of present interlocking offices; and of turning the deaf ear and the cold shoulder to the ever-increasing army of civil service job-seekers.

There was nothing in the formal opening yesterday of the third session of the twentieth Ontario Assembly that indicated this new trend of government thought and action. That indication is likely to come with the budget presentation some three weeks from now, when the Prime Minister, in his added capacity of Provincial Treasurer, will probably announce a two-cent jump in the present six-cent gasoline tax, and may even forecast the possibility of a general rise in liquor prices.

Booze and gasoline are not supposed to mix under ordinary circumstances, but where slipping departmental revenues of the present have to be bolstered, any harassed government might attempt such a trial mixture. In any event, some remedy in the way of new revenue is required to meet the entirely unanticipated call on the public purse arising

particularly out of a demanded highways expansion, and the abnormal crowding of mental hospitals and penal institutions.

Nor was there anything about yesterday's inaugural ceremonies—a bare fifty minutes in their execution—that would picture the year ahead, for government and legislators alike, as anything but the customary cut-and-dried. Smiling Jim Clark of Windsor-Sandwich, bachelor and erstwhile machine-gunning major, was elected Speaker of the House. Col. George A. Drew, new Conservative chieftain, took his allotted seat with a debonair dignity that set all the feminine hearts, in galleries and corridors, to pitty-patting. Premier Hepburn got up out of a sick bed to lead the procedure with a sureness and a vigor utterly belying the state of health which, many of his close

friends still fear may wrest him from the House even before it terminates its deliberations around April 20.

All Is the Same.

There were the same old faces in the public galleries that have been seen there for many sessions. There were the same patronage-seekers haunting the Queen's Park corridors and staircases, both before and after the opening. There were the same post-sitting impromptu receptions in many nooks and corners of the spacious buildings. There was the same old talk of co-operation between Government and Opposition to expedite the business of a great province—even as Government and Opposition were preparing for presentation and inevitable bitter debate, majority and minority reports on the humped-back, broken-down Hydro investigation of last summer. The color was the same; the procedure was the same; the interminable drone of voices was the same. Under the guidance of Clerk Alex. C. Lewis, the inaugural moved swiftly to its normal ending.

There was only one hitch—and that kept the opening delayed for 3 minutes and 43 seconds by the big Speaker's Gallery clock. The Lieutenant-Governor forgot his cocked hat. Yes, sir—he clean forgot it. His beribboned retinue of militia officers had got right down to the Chamber entrance—spurs gleaming, trimly panted legs cutting a smart "lafe! lafe! lafe!" for all the watching civil servants to see—when Hon. Albert Matthews felt gingerly for his ornate headpiece. It wasn't there. No, sir, it was completely missing. The proud-stepping parade ground to a halt on the polished flooring. No time for an about-turn. Some one had to think fast. The thinker, it is understood, was Captain Armstrong, dashing aide. Back downstairs, to the Governor's quarters, in a rush that startled all onlookers, the captain went. He found the cocked hat; he brought it back; the situation had been saved. Moments later, the parade, with composure recaptured, moved into the Chamber, the opening got formally and finally under way to the accompaniment of a radio broadcast which (so they say) had most of its mikes everywhere but in the right place; and Hon. Mr. Matthews sat down to read the longest Speech from the Throne ever prepared for an Ontario Legislature's consideration.

Messrs. Hepburn, Drew and

Clark, as to be expected, were the chief limelighters. Every one wanted to see how Mr. Hepburn looked; if his recent Australian tour had brought the recovery that would keep him at the wheel of the Ship of State indefinitely. Every one wanted to see how Colonel Drew, stranger to House rigmarole, would behave—what he would do if the Liberal sharpshooters were to launch their reported policy of knocking the feet out from under him before he can find his way around. Every one wanted to view the genial Clark—to determine if he was the rough-and-tumble orator that he has often been cracked up to be—to learn whether he had any new rules for House habiliment besides his ordering of the pages into long pants for the first time in history.

Well, they all performed. Mr. Hepburn took his customary crack at former Premier Henry, predicting that if the Tories in their next five years in Opposition lived up to their last five years' record of having three different House leaders and three different provincial leaders, Mr. Henry might find himself sitting "well under the gallery." And in congratulating Speaker Clark on his election, the Premier pointedly remarked:

"We want to conduct the assembly with dignity. However, after reading all the nasty things being said about politicians at the present time, I don't envy you your job in keeping order, as this House is populated largely by politicians."

Promises Impartiality.

The new Speaker promised to conduct the affairs of the House in as impartial a manner as his abilities permitted. "If," he said, "every member here endeavors to live up to the rules and usage of this House as faithfully as I endeavor to act impartially, the business of the House will move forward with dignity and despatch, and without rancor or bitterness."

Colonel Drew said nothing. He missed a cue (the Liberals claimed afterward) when he failed to rise and join with Premier Hepburn in his tribute to the Speaker. Colonel Drew, the Liberals say, is slow on the uptake. Tory opinion was that their new leader had acted wisely; that, having seconded the Premier's election, he was not duty-bound to associate himself in the Premier's tribute. The Tories didn't worry about that situation. But they did worry—to the point of some getting wrathful—over the Premier's thrust at George S. Henry. Some wondered why Colonel Drew hadn't locked horns with the Premier on that point, utterly unmindful of reports that if their new leader had carried out his original seating plans Mr. Henry would not be gracing a near-end seat in the front line of Opposition benches, but would be back in the second or third row among the lesser lights.

So much for the rancor and bitterness of which the Legislature, this session, is to be free, under the Speakership of Major James H. Clark.

The youngest member of the Assembly, Louis Hagey (Cons., Brantford), and William J. Stewart (Cons., Parkdale) also made their bows (for the first time) to the Queen's Park House. Victors in recent by-elections (like Colonel Drew in East Simcoe), they made the time-honored ceremonial march down the costly plush carpet, were formally introduced, and told by the Clerk to take their seats. Mr. Hagey was photographed nigh unto exhaustion, and Mr. Stewart was almost robbed of his C.B.E. In the original printing of the Speech from the Throne, they had it "O.B.E.," but the error was caught in time. These little idiosyncrasies in Legislature conduct all new members get used to in time.