

MARCH 30

'Legal Bloomer' Killed By Legislature Ridicule

The peculiar anomaly of a bill which would validate municipal by-laws even though they conflicted with existing provincial legislation provided a lively cross-fire of criticism from both sides of the House yesterday before Allan Lamport (Lib., St. David) withdrew his proposed amendment to the Highway Traffic Act shortly after it had been presented for second reading.

The measure, one of four private bills on the order paper, was given a chilly reception from the moment that it was placed before the House. Disowned by the Minister of Highways and criticized from the treasury benches, it was openly ridiculed by opposition members before it was eventually side-tracked and withdrawn.

Mr. Lamport presented the bill with the argument that local conditions in various municipalities often necessitated traffic by-laws which appeared to be inconsistent

with provincial laws. His amendment, he said, advocated that such by-laws be rendered valid, provided they were given approval by the Department of Highways.

His suggestion was greeted with a chorus of derision and Hon. T. B. McQuesten announced that he could not approve such a measure in any form.

Conant Is Critical.

"It is seeking to validate by-laws which have already been declared invalid, by simply getting the approval of the department," he said. "So, if the department, by mistake or as the result of guile, approves a measure, it would become law even if it flatly contradicted every clause in the Highway Traffic Act."

"That bill is a legal bloomer if it stands," commented Attorney-General Gordon Conant. "On the one hand, it states that all inconsistent by-laws have been repealed, and on the other, it says that, notwithstanding this, the consent of the department, no matter how obtained, should give such by-laws validity."

"The bill is so outrageous in principle that I don't see how the House can pass it," A. W. Roebuck (Lib., Bellwoods) contributed. "It should be killed right now."

Mr. Lamport withdrew the bill.

Second Bill Billed.

The young member for Toronto-St. David had a little better luck with another measure, advocating amendment of the Assessment Act, but although he succeeded in having it passed on to committee stage, progress was made only at the expense of another persistent barrage of criticism.

Mr. Lamport's amendment was aimed at eliminating the present practice of making out separate tax bills for every office in an office building and rendering of a single bill to the landlord. A qualifying clause stipulated that, where tenants or lessees paid taxes in addition to rent, they would receive individual bills as at present. The bill would affect only cities with a population of 50,000 or more.