

LEAVE VERDICT TO CITY VOTERS ABOUT PENSIONS

Queen's Park Will Not Decide on Validity of Yearly Allowances

Validation of retiring allowances amounting to approximately \$240,000 each year for more than 300 former Toronto employees will be left to the decision of the electors next Jan. 1 by a ruling made yesterday by the Legislature Private Bills Committee.

Their action occurred in discussion of a Toronto bill which asked the Legislature to validate the payment of these pensions. By the motion, moved by Lands and Forests Minister N. O. Hipel, the city may continue to pay the pensions until Jan. 2, 1943, and thereafter only if the electors approve. The motion covers pensioners of both the city and the Toronto Hydro Commission.

Hon. T. B. McQuesten, Minister of Municipal Affairs, revealed that complaints have been laid with the department about the pensions payments. "People who are getting 30 cents an hour are asking why they should be called on to support those who are getting 60 cents an hour from the city. I object," he said, "to these enormous charges being saddled onto the ratepayers without their consent."

The committee was advised that the majority of the pensioners had worked twenty years for the city and that some had seen thirty-five years of employment before they were retired, on the foundation of a medical certificate that they were incapable of further work. W. J. Stewart, Con., Toronto-Parkdale, former mayor, stressed that the allowances were ordered on the understanding that the action was legal and that a responsibility of maintaining employees rested on the city. Most of them now, are over 70.

As interpreted by Mr. Stewart, with Mr. McQuesten assenting, a negative vote on the question would be a ruling that no more pensions may be granted by the city except under a duly authorized contributory pension scheme. G. C. Elgie, Con., Toronto-Woodbine, protested strongly that the city had made an agreement with the pensioners and were bound by that agreement.

City Will Protest.

Anxious to avoid the proposed city plebiscite, an immediate protest to Premier Hepburn is to be registered by a sub-committee of the Civic Pensions Committee headed by Alderman Nathan Phillips.

Mayor Fred Conboy agreed with the committee last night that a plebiscite should not be held on the retiring allowance question. The situation has arisen because of the former City Hall policy, started in 1910, of granting a \$12 weekly allowance to its male employees, and a \$9 weekly allowance to female employees, on their retirement. When the validity of these payments was questioned in 1940 there were 392 employees receiving the allowances at a total annual cost to the taxpayers of \$245,000.

Payment of the allowances was ruled illegal in 1940, but the Province granted the city's request to continue until June, 1942, payment of allowances to former civic employees who had been in receipt of them prior to May 5, 1940. The Private Bills Committee yesterday extended this date to Jan. 2, 1943, but warned they could not be continued after that time unless Toronto money by-law voters gave consent in a city-wide plebiscite.

The decision to protest to Queen's Park against its latest ruling was reached yesterday by the Civic Pensions Committee on motion of Alderman Donald Fleming. It was contended that Hon. Eric Cross, former Minister of Municipal Affairs, had promised the city that the Province would permanently validate the allowances already granted provided a contributory pensions scheme was inaugurated to take care of all civic employees who retire in the future. Committee members felt that such a pensions plan would be inaugurated this year.

Ontario Seeks Higher Ceiling Instead of Embargo on Beef

Supported by the declared opposition of the Agriculture Committee of the Ontario Legislature to any proposal of placing an embargo upon the export of Canadian beef to United States, Ross McEwing, Liberal, Wellington North; L. E. O'Neill, head of the live stock branch, Department of Agriculture, and H. H. Hannam, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, left last night for Ottawa to place their briefs before the Federal Government.

While Mr. Hannam will speak on behalf of the federation, his views,

it is stated, are allied with those of the agriculture committee and he will support Mr. McEwing's presentation. The North Wellington member made the motion before committee opposing the embargo proposal and suggested, as solution to the present beef crisis, that the ceiling on retail prices be increased to cover the higher cost of producing stable-fed beef.

Under present quota arrangements, farmers find it more profitable to pay the United States tariff on beef and sell in the across-the-border markets than to sell locally under the price ceiling.

Provide Arrest for Failure To Treat Social Diseases

Health Minister Harold Kirby informed the Ontario Legislature last night that an amendment to the Venereal Diseases Act, under discussion by committee of the whole House, would permit the arrest of a patient who refuses to take necessary treatment.

Following arrest the patient would be placed in an institution and held until cure had been effected. The bill passed through committee without amendment.

Conservative Leader George A. Drew said the Health Minister had

a great responsibility to see that a person found infected with social disease should not be allowed to pass from his doctor's hands until he had been properly cured.

The amendment also provides that any one who intimates a person has been dealt with under the act shall incur a penalty of \$200, and in default of payment go to jail for a period of not more than six months.

Persons other than physicians are prohibited from attending or prescribing treatment or supplying drugs to persons suffering from venereal disease for the purpose of obtaining a cure.