

APRIL 6

Kindergarten Age-Cut Voted by Legislature

Lowering to Three Years Favored; Act Amended Permitting Minister to Act on Teacher Dismissals

Changes in Ontario's school law which passed second reading in the Legislature yesterday reduced the age at which children can be admitted to kindergarten from four to three years, in face of objection from the Opposition, and amended the Board of Reference Act so that the Minister of Education may inquire into dismissal of a teacher and may direct continuance of his contract for a year and may direct a judge of a county or district court to act as a Board of Reference.

Where a Board of Reference recommends continuance of the teacher's contract, the Minister may order it continued under penalty to the school board for non-compliance of stoppage of Provincial Government payments to the board.

"We propose to put teeth in the act," explained Hon. Dr. Duncan McArthur, Minister of Education, "so if there is a recommendation from the Board of Reference it can be put into operation."

Objection by Mr. Henry.

"Isn't there any responsibility for the parents at all or is the State going to take charge of the children when they're born?" was the objection to the three-year age for kindergarten pupils expressed by George S. Henry (Prog. Con., York East). Hon. Dr. McArthur replied that the schools of England had gone much further along this line.

H. E. Welsh (Prog. Con., Hastings East), said he felt, in connection with the Board of Reference law amendment, that "that affair at Runnymede has done the teaching profession some harm. I wonder what the pupils in the school think."

Bills to continue cheese, hog and sugar beet subsidies passed committee stage, and while Col. T. L. Kennedy (Prog. Con., Peel) praised bonuses and urged a subsidy on eggs, Premier Conant observed that "the bonus system is fundamentally

unsound. Bonus on beef, eggs, potatoes—where is it going to stop?"

Paid as an Equalizer.

F. R. Oliver (Lib., Grey South) declared bonuses were up to the Dominion Government, but insisted: "Bonuses are paid as an equalizer, and I'm not so sure we won't have to continue bonuses after the war and perhaps widen their application."

The bill to appoint a committee of not more than 25 to consider social security and rehabilitation of members of the armed forces and civilians also passed committee stage, as well as the bill to provide a 55-cent subsidy for sugar beets. Agriculture Minister P. M. Dewan stating that Canada supplied 20 per cent of her own sugar needs through this crop, thus saving shipping. The provision of State scholarships also was approved in committee.

Move to Consolidate Rural Hydro Districts

The basis for expanding rural Hydro service and for the consolidation of all rural power districts into one with greater uniformity of power rates in these areas, is contained in an amendment to the Power Commission Act, Vice-Chairman W. L. Houck said in the Legislature yesterday. His bill was given second reading over the objection of the Opposition which sought to have the bill held over until certain points had been clarified.

The Opposition took exception to a section of the amendment dealing with investment of Hydro funds. It was claimed, that under the new provision, the Hydro Commission could invest its funds in any type of bond or security, thus departing from a practice as old as Hydro itself. It was explained that the section dealing with funds investment was aimed at permitting Hydro to invest in Dominion of Canada Victory bonds. It is likely the section will be amended in committee stage to make it more specific.

Mr. Houck predicted that the changes in the act would also lay the basis for a big postwar rural Hydro program. In 1941 81 rural power districts operated with a surplus of \$408,000 and 103 operated with a deficit of \$194,000.

Section 8 of the bill provides for the amalgamation of rural power district funds upon the amalgamation of rural power districts, and Section 9 sets out that where rural power districts are amalgamated, it

may be desirable to retain an existing difference in rates between what were formerly complete rural power districts and are now sections of a larger district. This section authorizes such a practice.