

BARGAINING BILL SENT TO HOUSE BY COMMITTEE

Enactment to Follow Routine Formalities; Speaker Explains Court

Only routine formalities—third reading and official consent of the Lieutenant-Governor—stand in the way of enactment into law of Ontario's Collective Bargaining Bill. Guided by its chief sponsor, Labor Minister Peter Heenan, the much-debated bill passed through committee stage in the Legislature yesterday afternoon, the House's last act before week-end adjournment which will be followed by prorogation next week.

Before final approval the House agreed to several amendments, one in Section 5 to exempt the learned and scientific professions and another to clarify Clause 12, guaranteeing the rights of service personnel, to apply with full effect after demobilization.

Speaker Defends Court.

To defend the much-criticized and probably most fundamental aim of the bill, establishment of a one-judge Labor Court instead of a suggested Labor Relations Board of three, Speaker James H. Clark (Lib., Windsor-Sandwich) took the unusual action of availing himself of the privilege of debate in the House he directs. He revealed where the idea of the one-man court came from.

"W. H. Furlong, K.C., committee counsel, and I discussed it. I took it up with the committee and the committee thought it was an excellent idea," said the Speaker.

Mr. Clark said the Supreme Court was sympathetic to the idea. Mr. Furlong had seen the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who had received him "with the utmost kindness and thought the Supreme Court should take cognizance of it." The court, he said, would take labor affairs out of politics.

Also, Mr. Clark said, since Ontario had had six different Ministers of Labor since 1934, the one-judge court would establish permanence, unaffected by changes of Government or "whether a Minister resigned or was fired."

"I certainly do not question the capacity, integrity or ability of the Supreme Court judges," replied Opposition Leader George Drew, "as long as they are dealing with legal matters in their judicial capacity."

"Judges, right up to the Chief Justice of Canada, when not dealing with judicial matters, have done things which endanger respect for the Bench which they are serving," Col. Drew declared.

Hydro Employees.

L. M. Frost (Prog. Con., Victoria) wanted Hydro employees brought under the act, and H. N. Carr (Lib., Northumberland) asked that the learned professions be included. Hydro Vice-Chairman W. L. Houck (Lib., Niagara Falls) objected to including Hydro employees since Hydro was a publicly owned, non-profit-sharing body. To inquiry by H. E. Welsh (Prog. Con., Hastings East) as to status of hospital employees, Mr. Heenan said they could be included if they wished.

Col. Drew made it plain that he felt the bill was "loosely drawn and uncertain in its meaning and is going to cause endless difficulty as well as the friction it seeks to avoid."