

March 14

Racial Bill Amended To Protect Liberties

Amended to protect the right of free expression on any subject, by speech or in writing, the Government's anti-discrimination bill went through committee stage in the Legislature yesterday and now awaits the formality of third reading. The act will be proclaimed 60 days after Royal assent is given.

T. A. Murphy (P.C., Toronto-Beaches), who opposed the bill at second reading, moved that a subsection of the bill be amended to delete the reference to radio broadcasting stations or any other medium. The motion was lost.

Mr. Murphy's statement that the Province had no control over radio was countered by Attorney-General Leslie Blackwell, who said the Federal jurisdiction over radio had to do with regulation of operations. It was quite within the jurisdiction of the Legislature to prohibit the owner of a radio station from permitting announcements of a certain nature. The reference to radio in the bill did not refer to an expression of opinion, but to a spot announcement or advertisement, Mr. Blackwell said.

Sound in Principle.

If the bill was sound in principle in regard to its first section and in the provisions contained in it, then it was sound and sensible to carry it to its logical conclusion and include "any other mediums," the Attorney-General declared.

The Government's amendment was moved by the Attorney-General. It reads: "This act shall not be deemed to interfere with the free expression of opinions upon any subject by speech or in writing and shall not confer any protection to or benefit upon enemy aliens."

J. B. Salsberg (Lab. Progressive, Toronto-St. Andrew) asked the Attorney-General if it was possible that the Government's amendment might render negative some of the positive prohibitions contained in the bill.

Matter of Interpretation.

"The act with the amending section means precisely the same as without it," replied Mr. Blackwell. "The reason for the amendment is merely to interpret what I believe the act already means. Although this act was drafted with the greatest care, by reason of the views expressed it was felt that it would be desirable to insert a section that, in my opinion, adds or subtracts precisely nothing from the act."

Answering a question from Liberal Leader H. C. Nixon, the Attorney-General said that in order to eliminate vexatious proceedings the consent of the Attorney-General was required before court action could be taken. The provision in the bill specifying that penalties imposed go into the Provincial Treasury would also discourage vexatious proceedings, Mr. Blackwell pointed out.

Vivian Answers Pension Queries

In Ontario on Nov. 1 last 56,886 persons were receiving old age pensions, Health Minister Vivian stated in the Legislature yesterday in a return replying to a question by C. A. Strange (C.C.F., Brantford). Of that number 49,096 received increased pensions, 3,081 ceased to receive them and 2,487 began receiving pensions.

To a question by Harry Steel (C.C.F., Lambton West), the Minister said that since Aug. 17 last, 1,228 persons have ceased to receive mothers' allowances. On that date 7,758 persons were on the roll and since then 510 have received increases, 1,070 reductions and 791 have been added to the roll.

Victoria Regent Bill Gets Reading

A bill to establish a board of regents of 43 members to administer Victoria University, Toronto, received first reading in the Legislature yesterday. The General Council of the United Church of Canada will name 22 of the members. The chancellor, president and dean of Victoria and the dean of Emmanuel College will be ex-officio members. Five members will be chosen by the graduates and five by the alumni every four years, and the remaining seven will be elected by the aforementioned board members.

A bill continuing for another year the cheese and hog subsidies received first reading. The bill confirming the Tax Sales Act passed the committee stage. The bill to set up county agricultural committees received second reading, and the Government's amendment to the Act regarding taking of affidavits was given third reading. It permits all commissioned officers in the services to take affidavits of servicemen.

Asks Probe Into Wages

J. B. Salsberg (L.P., Toronto-St. Andrew) tabled a resolution in the Legislature yesterday calling on the standing committee on labor to conduct a public inquiry into minimum wage rates now being paid male and female labor, adolescents and apprentices in Ontario and to submit proposals for a new minimum wage scale "in harmony with the possibilities for a higher Canadian standard of life and in accordance with the needs for an expanding home market."