

February 16

Ask Direct Vote for Soldiers In First Bill Before Session

The first legislation introduced at the opening of the Ontario Legislature yesterday was Attorney-General Leslie Blackwell's bill to give the direct vote to active service members in and out of the Province. It replaces existing legislation which provided a proxy vote.

The Blackwell bill sets up voting territories in Canada, Britain and other countries where Ontario active service members are serving. In the main the bill follows the Federal act passed at the last session of the Dominion Parliament.

Every active service member is

entitled to mark a ballot for a candidate in the electoral district where the active service member resided for 30 days prior to entering the armed forces. The bill also provides for the appointment of special returning officers to supervise the voting and count the ballots.

New High Mark In Hydro Power

An all-time high of more than 12 billion kilowatt hours of electrical energy was generated or purchased by the Ontario Hydro Commission last year, it was stated in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Legislature yesterday.

"All the demands for war activities in Ontario have been met, and essential domestic and municipal power requirements have suffered no shortage," it was stated.

There was an increase of 14 per cent in the average power sold to rural consumers, and the average price decreased by 11 per cent, it was disclosed. Further reduction in cost would encourage greater consumption by rural consumers, the Speech asserted. Four hundred miles were added to rural power lines, and service was extended to 10,000 new customers in 1944.