

April 3.

sale of liquor by the glass.

In considering the latter, he wished to present some important figures to the House, he said. But first, he added, the federation had also referred to the local option clauses of the existing laws, urging that separate votes be possible instead of a lump vote which authorized hotels, beer stores and liquor stores. Their wishes were incorporated in the new bill which permits a vote on any phase of licensing.

Cites Background

Prohibition, he said, had wiped out all good done by local option during 1905 to 1916. During that period, liquor outlets dropped from 2,366 to 1,219—then all were wiped out by prohibition and its eventual "evils." In 1926 the last vote involving a liquor question had returned the Ferguson Government, pledged to sale for home consumption. But since that time serious changes had occurred, apart from institution of the so-called hotel and its beverage room.

In 1936, Ontario consumed 1,194,184 gallons of spirits; in 1945, it used 2,646,078. Wine figures for both years were 1,275,988 and 2,187,888. Beer figures were 21,645,909 and 47,182,168. Yet 126 liquor stores, 103 warehouses and 1,180 hotels in 1936 had altered only to 132 stores, 128 warehouses and 1,216 hotels. In other words, a huge increase in consumption was being handled by almost the same number of outlets.

The Government was faced with this problem: With public demand obvious, new outlets must be created. Either that or laws would not be respected, because the Government believed that laws must be in accordance with majority sentiment or they would be ignored. The only new outlets permitted under existing laws were "more of the hotels which I have described as being established merely as beer outlets, making a farce of so-called control."

But in such a vast Province widely differing opinions existed, so every guard was provided, in the law which the Government felt necessary, to permit local opinion to rule on what was desired for that community: Beer sale only, beer and wine with meals under restrictions, liquor by the drink and so on. And the act also sought to overcome certain hypocritical conditions which were undermining respect for law.

Mr. Blackwell then cited two examples. At the Dominion-Provincial Conference he had attended a party given by the Dominion, held in the Chateau Laurier Hotel, with

liquor being served. Two nights later, the Provinces reciprocated the hospitality under the same conditions. As Attorney-General, he said: "I suppose I may be condemned for not having arrested the entire works and laying charges."

The second example was a reunion held one year after the last war and again this year by a university group, of which he is a member. On the first occasion, in OTA days, not more than one-third the gathering was present in the dining-room at any time; the rest were "upstairs in hotel bedrooms stowing it away." This year the liquor was served at the dinner and every person "stayed right there, had a few drinks and left perfectly able to go home, as compared with the other time when many of them had passed out cold."

Legal service of liquor under such conditions would end the hotel bedroom "bars" which, he said, every travelling person knows exists. It would also help to end the hypocrisy generally which the present laws preserved.

Recognition of the basic belief that people will respect laws which represent the majority desire, and will seek to co-operate in maintaining such laws, was the Government's motive for the bill, he said. Creation of a sense of responsibility was important, he said, but if that was not forthcoming, the Government would enforce the law and, if necessary, "with ruthlessness."

Amazement that the Opposition refused to "face an issue about which people have been talking for years," was Premier Drew's first remark when he rose. Seeking a cure of the causes of the "lamentable conditions which not one speaker denies," they had showed an utter willingness to commit themselves as in favor with or against the proposals in the bill.

"All the members opposite say is let it stand a year," he said. "And then what will they do? Who knows? No indication has been given here. And in the meantime the conditions about which every one speaks will continue to grow worse. I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition says I had never indicated any intention of taking steps to remedy this condition. Time and again he has heard me refer to the hypocritical device by which hotels are given a name to which they are entitled by no right, merely to permit sale of beer."

Told Beforehand

Both Liberal and C.C.F. leaders had said the legislation was being rushed through, the Premier continued, yet he challenged them to deny that the Attorney-General had told both that the bill would be called on Tuesday and not one word of opposition to the idea had been voiced. Nor had any group which visited the Government been devoted to the idea of prohibition. The Temperance Federation had directed its suggestions to questions of distribution; the Women's Institutes had dealt with abolition of women's beverage rooms.

The point was that every person on the delegations that visited the Government, no matter that many deplored use of alcohol entirely, recognized the fact that the majority wish was that beverage alcohol be made available. It was in recognition of that principle that the Government had drafted a bill that sought decent distribution, gave local authority the right to decide what local needs desired, and provided a law which could be recognized by observance and not by breach.

Already on Hand

Charges that foodstuffs would be reduced for needy countries was ill-founded, he continued. Britain today had a beer consumption that was exactly twice Ontario's per capita consumption. And from the "very countries to whom we are shipping food," Ontario was importing wines and spirits. In fact, the Premier said, the supply of liquor was already on hand, with millions of gallons manufactured and ageing.

The Opposition leader, he continued, had tabled a resolution which said: "We cannot see our way clear to support this bill at this time." Such a resolution, he said, had no meaning unless it meant that the bill would be supported at some other time. If so, when?

Why, then the evasion? Anyone who studied the bill, or heard the Attorney-General, knew that no changes were proposed, no additional outlets, except in five cities, without a vote of the local citizens. And that, he stressed, would be by three-fifths majority, a further evidence of the Government's belief that any law must have a good majority to ensure its acceptance and observation by the public.

Nor had any haste marked the bill's progress. More than the usual time had elapsed between its introduction and it being called for second reading. If its introduction were considered hasty, by some vague reasoning, then no Opposition member had asked that it be deferred or held up. Yet now, he said, they claimed it was "hasty."

Opposition members had asked why the bill was introduced now, said the Premier. In reply, he asked why not now? During wartime, when the Legislature last met, there were restrictions on beverage alcohol. For two years his Government had not possessed a majority and could not take the action it deemed correct. But now, at the first full session of the House after assuming office, his Government now took the action it deemed right, abiding by the principle that a Government must be prepared to introduce and uphold laws it deems correct.

Need for Law

He challenged the opposition to "cease fence straddling," and to take a stand on the issue. To evade by saying the bill provided no plan for temperance education was pointless, he claimed. The very