

April 5

Where, Oh Where, Has That Member Indemnity Bill Gone?

Disappearance of the Government bill to switch legislative indemnities into tax-free allowances was indicated yesterday in a motion presented to the Ontario Legislature by Premier George Drew for setting up a select committee to study legislators' pay.

The motion, approved without discussion or comment, was made without the Premier referring to the bill that stands on the order paper. The bill was introduced by Attorney-General Leslie Blackwell, received first reading, was then spoken to at considerable length by Mr. Blackwell when he declared the Government would fight any action of the income tax bureaucracy to collect under its provisions, and received second reading. Since then it has languished while other legislation, including the liquor bill, was introduced and given the full treatment to third reading.

The motion by the Premier places into the hands of the committee full power to study the entire question of legislators' remuneration or allowances or indemnities, or whatever they may decide to call the stipend, to call witnesses dur-

ing this study and take all and sundry action to provide a report for the next session.

T. K. Creighton (P.C., Ontario) is chairman, and members are Liberal Leader Farquhar Oliver, C.C.F. Leader W. J. Grummett, M. C. Davies (P.C., Windsor-Walkerville) and T. A. Murphy (P.C., Toronto Beaches).

Last night, when it appeared that the present session of the House would end today, Speaker W. J. Stewart, through whose office the \$2,000 indemnities are paid members of the Legislature, issued instructions to the Provincial accountants to deduct the regular income tax amounts from cheques to be disbursed today.

"I have ordered that the amounts be deducted, but that the sum be held, pending what recommendations the select committee makes to the House at the next session," said Mr. Stewart. "If the committee recommends that the income tax deductions should not have been made, the sum will then be released to the members. If they recommend otherwise, then the payment will be made to the income tax branch."

Revamping of Police Setup Provided in Bill

Under a new Police Act introduced in the Ontario Legislature yesterday by Attorney-General Leslie Blackwell, provision is made for a change in the personnel of police commissions in Ontario and Provincial Police are given the responsibility of policing rural Ontario.

Change in the set-up of police commissions is said to have resulted from the recent investigation into police affairs at Guelph, when Judge D. J. Cowan of Brantford criticized the Guelph Police Commission for lack of co-operation among its members.

Change in Set-up

Until now, the police commission of a municipality has been automatically composed of the head of the municipal council, the county judge and a magistrate. Under the new bill, the commission may be composed of the head of the municipal council, the county judge of any neighboring municipality and a magistrate or crown attorney.

The new bill also calls for a minimum number of meetings of the police commission during the year. In the Guelph inquiry, Judge Cowan criticized the police commission for failure to hold regular meetings and for the few meetings held.

The government has received a number of resolutions urging that the personnel of police commissions be increased to five. While the

bill does not grant this request, it makes possible wide selectivity in personnel.

No Clear Division

Attorney-General Blackwell, in introducing the bill, said that in the statutes at present there was no clear division between municipal and Provincial Police duties. Cities and towns will have now a fixed responsibility to enforce Dominion and Provincial, as well as local laws. Outside the cities and towns, so far as other municipalities go, where there is sufficient urban population and assessment to enable policing to be a local matter, those areas may be designated and can then either make arrangements with a neighboring city, operate their own police force or enter into agreement with the Province for policing by the Provincial Police.

Several clauses in the act, according to officials, have been long awaited by police associations throughout the Province, particularly those relating to superannuation and minimum wages.

"The bill," an official remarked, "is a genuine attempt by the attorney-general to achieve co-operation and uniformity among municipal police forces."