

THE PUBLIC HEALTH BILL PASSES THE LEGISLATURE

Hon. Dr. Roberts Will Administer the new Department Without Salary---An Interesting Discussion Over the Bill in Committee---The Opposition Criticized Some Features of the Measure---Medical men Lead in the Discussion.

The Legislature spent a good part of yesterday considering the Public Health bill and finally agreed to the same. The bill was discussed at length, and Hon. Dr. Roberts did not hesitate to accept amendments from both sides of the House, when satisfied that they would be likely to make the bill more workable. Hon. Mr. Veniot, Dr. Campbell, Mr. Michaud and Dr. McGrath took an important part in the discussion and suggestions which they threw out facilitated the passage of the bill. Hon. Dr. Roberts was warmly congratulated on the great success which attended his labors.

The House went into Committee of the whole and took up consideration of the Public Health Bill.

HON. MR. ROBERTS moved to amend the bill by providing that the department of public health should be under the charge of a member of the executive, who should serve without salary.

MR. BAXTER said that the amendment was not in accordance with the principles of constitutional government. The member of the executive who should be appointed in charge of the department might hold a portfolio or might not. If he did hold a portfolio, well and good; but if he did not, then they would have a minister in charge of a department who was not holding office without the sanction of his constituents. The amendment was practically an attempt to side-step a constitutional principle which had been in existence in this province for many years. It was not customary to put a minister, without portfolio, in charge of any department, and he did not think the government wished to place itself on

record as having no regard whatever for the principles of constitutional government.

HON. MR. ROBINSON said it seemed to be very hard to satisfy the hon. gentlemen opposite. Yesterday they objected to the minister being paid a salary as head of the department, and now that Dr. Roberts had offered to do the work for nothing, they were still dissatisfied. In any event, he did not think that the dictum of any member of the House should govern its proceedings. It had not been the custom for members of the executive, not holding portfolios, to seek re-election and it had been claimed that exemption was granted to the premier because he held no portfolio. While he holds no particular folio, it might be said that he was in charge of the whole government. If the argument of the hon. member for St. John meant anything at all, it meant that special legislation regarding the premier was in itself a violation of those constitutional principles about which he had said so much.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) said the objection of the members of the opposition was not so much to the salary to be paid to the minister, as to the increase in the number of members of the government. He did not regard the premier as being in charge of the government so much as he was general superintendent of what was going on. The bill, as it stood at present, would give a portfolio to a member of the government and do away with the necessity of his having to appeal to

the people. He preferred to see the department handed over to a minister already holding a portfolio, rather than add to the already "top-heavy-ness" of the executive.

MR. TILLEY appealed to the members of the government to cast aside politics and keep within the constitutional principles for which past generations of public men in this province had so earnestly striven.

HON. MR. POSTER said the British government was creating new portfolios every day, without the necessity of the holders going back for re-election, and if that government could do it without violating constitutional principles, the government of this province might surely do the same.

MR. SWEENEY wanted to ask the hon. leader of the opposition if he thought the premier could look after this department without re-election.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) said that he was no constitutional lawyer and could therefore offer no opinion.

MR. BAXTER submitted an amendment that any member of the legislature, not already holding a portfolio in the government, who accepted the office of minister, should have to seek re-election.

HON. MR. MURRAY said that he thought this was a kind of a submarine sort of method of getting to work. No one would ever think of looking for legislation affecting the executive council in a bill relating to Public Health.

Mr. Baxter's amendment was then put and lost, 22 to 18.

Hon. Dr. Roberts' original amendment was carried.

The House took recess. On the Committee resuming at 3 o'clock, consideration was given to Section 6, which sets forth that the minister's decisions shall be final, except in cases involving the expenditure of public money.

MR. TILLEY did not approve of the wording of the section, as he thought there should be the right to appeal to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

MR. BAXTER said that the action of other members of the executive were subject to review by the Governor-in-Council and he thought no exception should be made in regard to the Minister of Health.

HON. MR. ROBINSON proposed an amendment and the section was made to read: "The Minister shall decide all matters of doubt or dispute as to the working of the Act, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council."

HON. MR. ROBERTS, replying to Mr. Crockett on Section 7, said that the chief health officer of the depart-

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ment need not necessarily be a physician, but he would need to possess special knowledge on matters pertaining to public health and sanitation. It was necessary, however, that the chief medical officer should be a physician and the salaries of the two officials would be the same. The minister would have charge of the bureau and there would be three special officers appointed to carry out individual duties. The minister of public health would be presiding officer.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) pointed out that when the bill to create a Forestry Advisory Commission was before the House, it had been set forth that in the absence of the minister, only another minister holding a portfolio could act in his place. He thought the same rule must apply to the health department.

HON. MR. ROBERTS said that the bill did not propose that an official of the department should act as minister, but only that he should preside in the absence of the minister.

MR. BAXTER said that the House had been given careful consideration, but the different views in regard to some features of it, that had emanated from the one source, indicated that such was not the case. If the minister was to pass on all things it should be so stated in the bill. He noticed that the word executive was made to apply to people who were to serve only in an administrative capacity.

HON. MR. ROBERTS thought that if any man in the province was capable of interpreting legislation, it was the hon. member for St. John county. The bill set forth that the minister of health should preside and certain officials to be appointed would act with him in administering the department.

MR. CAMPBELL said that he had pointed out on previous occasions that the bill was top-heavy, and he had used the words advisedly. He thought there was no need for both a chief medical officer and a chief health officer and that a chief pathologist should be appointed instead of a chief of laboratories.

(Continued on page 6.)

PUBLIC AUCTION

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Men who are needed on farms must come from the cities and towns—there is no other source. The Provincial Departments of Agriculture co-operating with the Canada Food Board, can place thousands of men on good farms in this Province. They are needed at once.

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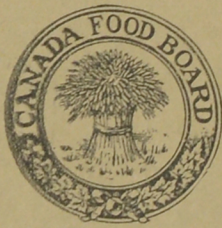
The vegetable garden offers an opportunity for service to men whose circumstances make it impossible for them to work on a farm, to women, to boys and girls—to city people generally.

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If there is a garden or vacant lot movement in your community, associate yourself with it. If no organization exists, do what you can to interest your neighbours in the War Garden campaign.

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