

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DOUGLAS, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1918.

Present: His Excellency the Governor (President), Deemster Callow, the Receiver-General, the Vicar-General, and the Arch-deacon. The Lord Bishop was off the Island, and Deemster Moore was presiding at a Court at Castletown.

INCOME TAX. RELIEF FOR FRIENDLY AND CO OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

The Governor: I should like to make a little statement with regard to a subject which comes home to most of us—that is, Income Tax. It will be in the recollection of the Council that during the passing of the Bill a question was raised as regards friendly societies, co-operative societies, and so forth, and it was promised that a Bill should be brought in to make that position quite clear. However, when tackling the whole question, it is found there are so many subjects on which it will be necessary to pass a Bill, or which it will be necessary to put into any Bill that is passed, and the time is so short, that I do not think it will be possible for the Legislature to deal with it in any way during this financial year. Therefore, I propose, as an administrative measure, not to charge Income Tax to those bodies during the current financial year. That can be dealt with later on. Meantime Income Tax will not be charged them.

The Receiver-General: Does that do away with the necessity for any amending Bill at present?

The Governor: That will do away with the necessity for an amending Bill at present. We shall be in a position, after the first year's working, to see where difficulties arise, and, as far as possible, next year, put right any difficulties which may occur. That is the way I propose to deal with it.

ABOLITION OF THE GREAT ENQUEST.

The Governor: The first business on the agenda to-day is the Great Enquest Aboli-

tion Bill, from the Keys. The question is that this Bill be now read a first time. ("Agreed!") I don't know whether the Council would like to go on with the Bill through all stages, or not.

Deemster Callow moved the suspension of the Standing Orders. ("Agreed.")

Deemster Callow: I move the second reading. My experience of a great many years now is that this Great Enquest is absolutely useless. It is a waste of time; it brings these men down to the Court from all parts of the Island, and there is no necessity for it whatever.

The second reading was agreed to, and the Council went into committee on the Bill.

The preamble and clause 1 were postponed.

Clause 2 provides that the Great Enquest and all proceedings before it shall cease and determine, and transfers its jurisdiction to a body of Commissioners constituted in the district, parish or town, in which the matter complained of is situate, or, at the option of the appellant, to the Commissioners of the next adjoining district.

The Vicar-General: Who are the Commissioners? What is this suggestion? It seems to me you want to abolish the whole thing. This is worse than before. I support what the Deemster says. They are absolutely useless. They do not act on judicial grounds; it is generally local prejudice that governs their decisions. If they have found completely wrongly, there is the greatest possible difficulty to appeal from them. I think the whole thing should be swept away. No such thing exists anywhere else.

Deemster Callow: We shall want a further clause to deal with the appointment of officers who have hitherto been appointed by the Great Enquest.

The Vicar-General: I think we had better adjourn this.

The Governor: The Great Enquest are

abolished, and their powers are transferred to bodies of Commissioners.

The Vicar-General: They are equally prejudiced bodies.

Deemster Callow: You can apply to the next parish.

The Vicar-General: I remember a case where the Great Enquest was called together to establish a right of way. They declared a right of way. To my certain knowledge there was no such thing. There were fences and baulks of timber put up by the owner of the land. There we were confronted with the fact that, by reason of the Great Enquest being prejudiced, a right of way was created and established. There it remains to this day as a roadway, against all experience and all propriety and justice. But I do not think you have a better atmosphere by transferring to a body of this sort.

The Receiver-General: I hardly think we shall carry the other Branch with us in doing away with it altogether.

The Vicar-General: We shall try.

The Governor: It is proposed that we should think it over, and take the clauses another day.

Deemster Callow: There will be a great number of appointments to provide for.

The Archdeacon: There is the appointment of pinner.

The further consideration of the Bill was held over.

DESTRUCTIVE INSECTS, &c.

The Bill for preventing the introduction and spreading of insects and pests destructive to crops, trees, and bushes, was read a first time.

The Governor: Shall we proceed further with this Bill?

The Receiver-General: Your Excellency knows whether there is urgency, or not.

The Governor: Certainly, at this time, there is no particular urgency.

The Receiver-General: If we get these orders here, I hope they will be better kept than the Weeds Bill. No one ever carries the law about noxious weeds into effect. The Island is no better, as a whole, since that Bill was passed than before.

The Vicar-General: What about the Juvenile Smokers' Act?

The Receiver-General: I think the police must be looking into the air. Every day I see boys under 16 smoking cigarettes.

The further consideration of the Bill was postponed.

MARRIAGE REGISTERS.

A Bill to amend the Civil Registration (Marrriages) A.t, 1910, was read a first time.

In view of the absence of the Bishop, it was decided to postpone the second reading.

ADULT SUFFRAGE.

The House of Keys Election Amendment Act was read a first time.

The Governor: That is a Bill I should have liked to take, but the Council is very short of its members to-day, and we are rather a small body to deal with such an important Bill as this.

The Receiver-General: Do you not think this is a question which chiefly affects the other Branch, which has passed it? My own feeling is that when they have seen fit to pass a Bill which affects them principally—as I think solely—we should pass it as a matter of course.

The Vicar-General: It affects the people of the Island. Have we no concern in that?

The Receiver-General: What I feel is that there would be a very awkward position if this Branch were to alter it.

The Vicar-General: That is possibly a fair argument. But if we have no concern with an Act of this kind, we have no concern with anything.

The Receiver-General: It concerns us, as it concerns the people of the Island; but when the representative Branch of the Legislature passes a Bill of this sort, I do not think it concerns us very much to alter it.

Deemster Callow: If the House of Keys were to pass a Bill endowing its members with £1,000 a year, would you pass it? I certainly think we have as much to do with it as anybody. We can agree to the second reading, and then leave it.

The Bill was read a second time, and the further consideration postponed.

TYNWALD COURT ADJOURNMENT.

The Tynwald Court Adjournment Bill was read a first time.

The Governor: That completes the business on the agenda which we can take to-day.

The Executive Council then sat.