

Toronto's Power Scheme.

Mr. Crawford moved the second reading of the City of Toronto bill, giving cities of over 100,000 power to purchase, transmit and distribute electrical energy for heat, light and power.

Premier Ross said this was certainly the most heroic departure from ordinary municipal procedure that had yet been proposed. It was proposed that the city should purchase a site at Niagara Falls on which to erect machinery and plant for the generation of electricity, and also establish a system of transmission from there to Toronto. The scheme was a gigantic one, which would involve the expenditure of \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000. It was a vaster enterprise than any of a similar kind ever undertaken before. Perhaps Toronto was capable of undertaking that enterprise, seeing the energy and capacity of her Aldermen. Yet it made one pause in assenting to legislation involving so much money. The scheme also meant the sale of energy to municipalities along the line. He noticed no consideration for vested rights or for rivals to this great enterprise. That could be taken up at a later stage. He would not say that the Government would take ground against municipal ownership either of electrical power or other utilities. He did not know yet how far he would commit himself to municipal ownership. The Province had advanced along the line of public ownership to the extent of planning a railway, while the Dominion already owned the Intercolonial. In Great Britain the competent management of public utilities had been successful. The present was a very large question, and might well be left for the careful consideration of the Municipal Committee.

A Large Proposition.

Mr. Pattullo (North Oxford), while a believer in public ownership, regarded this as the largest proposition of the kind we had yet had. The plan, if carried out, would affect all the municipalities of the Province, and would benefit Toronto at the expense of the rest by attracting industries here from other places. He thought an investigation by a commission would be a proper preliminary step.

Mr. Crawford contended that the proposition was not too big for Toronto. If the power would attract outside industries to Toronto, why would it not attract them to Niagara? The city did not want a monopoly, but only wished to secure the cheapest possible power.

Hon. Mr. Stratton thought the question should be left to the ratepayers to decide.

Mr. Carscallen was opposed to the bill. The bill was given its second reading.

The Estimates.

At the evening session a number of private bills were advanced a stage in committee, and attention was then paid to the estimates, and a large number of appropriations were passed, including \$100,000 toward the new building for the School of Practical Science. Considerable discussion took place in regard to the items for agriculture, but no items were challenged. The House adjourned at 11 o'clock.