

endeared himself to his constituency and to the members of the House. He desired to express the sincere sympathy of the House to the family of the late member.

Mr. Whitney concurred in everything that had fallen from the Premier's lips. He undertook to express the sympathy of the House on the loss of one who possessed such admirable qualities of mind and heart. They all joined as one man in offering to the family of Dr. Bridgland their earnest sympathy, and they hoped the shock of bereavement would be modified in the years, and that the recollection of his good qualities would overshadow everything else.

Dr. Willoughby, the Opposition whip, said he objected to an insinuation in *The Globe* that he had been unfair in refusing a pair to Dr. Bridgland. There had been no hard and fast rule, and he had been ready, when the illness of the late member warranted it, to grant him a pair.

The Speaker announced that a wreath of flowers had been ordered to be forwarded in the name of the Legislative Assembly.

#### Municipal Power Bill.

Premier Ross, in moving the second reading of the bill to provide for the construction of municipal power works, and the transmission, distribution and supply of electrical and other power and energy, said there had been some agitation in the press and on the platform on the propriety of the Government taking some steps to place within the reach of our manufacturers and industries the electrical energy stored at Niagara. Three franchises had already been granted there, each providing for a development from 100,000 to 125,000 horsepower. The direction of that discussion had indicated that the municipalities wanted for the future to utilize that for their own purposes. The Opposition view at one time favored development by the Government themselves. The Government felt they should not do so. Representing the Province as a whole they thought they could not in a one-sided way embark upon such an enterprise. They preferred, therefore, to present to the House a bill which would enable the municipalities, either singly or jointly, to embark upon that enterprise in their own behalf, decentralization being the policy of the Government rather than centralization. Authority might be given to one municipality or to two or more jointly to construct, maintain and operate all the necessary works and appliances for the development, transmission and distribution of electric or other energy, and put it within the reach of manufacturers and others who might require it for light, heat or machinery.

#### The First Step.

The first step was for the municipalities to appoint commissioners to ascertain the cost of construction, the working expenses, the cost of maintenance, productive capacity, the local demand for power, the cost to the consumer, the amount of power in use, and the proportionate contribution of each municipality. A by-law is then submitted to the ratepayers entitled to vote for the creation of a debt, the principle being that those who bear the financial responsibility shall be consulted from the first.

#### An Alternative Proposition.

Mr. Ross went on to say that he would submit an alternative which would enable a municipality to appoint its own commissioners for the ultimate working out of the bill in cases where a municipality has nothing to do but receive the power and divide it among its own ratepayers. The bill provided, as hon. gentlemen had noticed, that after the by-law has been adopted, the Chief Justice of Ontario appoints the commissioners, in whose hands the whole work is to be carried out. When the transmission line is passing close to a municipality, and such municipality has had no responsibility for the construction of the line, nor invested any money in the development plant, it may receive the

electricity and distribute it among its own ratepayers. Thus they hoped to enable a municipality to undertake the whole erection of the works from the foundation, or, after the works have been undertaken and power being distributed, to receive it by commissioners of its own and divide the power among its own ratepayers. The rest of the bill was very simple. The commissioners receive the debentures and deposit them with a trust fund. The manner of keeping the accounts is clearly indicated, and efforts made to see that the investments may be carefully guarded. There was also a provision that if three or four municipalities wish to form a combination and one should fail to carry the by-law, the by-law need not be re-submitted in the others unless the additional cost imposed is more than 10 per cent. of the original cost of the undertaking. It was also provided that if the work has been under way and it is found by the commissioners that the whole appropriation in the original debentures is insufficient, the commissioners may issue special bonds, being a charge upon the whole work, for the purpose of completing the work. That was necessary, because they might be short some \$50,000, or maybe \$100,000, while to have the work stand still would cause delay and create confusion.

#### Still Four Sites Available.

Those were the principles of the bill—very simple. He supposed the chief difficulty would be in working it out in the municipalities. There would need to be considerable local education. Once the works were completed, provided the commissioners were capable—and he had no doubt they would be, having regard to the manner of their appointment—he had no doubt that municipal management in that way would be tolerably satisfactory. The Park Commissioners had reported that there were still four sites available at Niagara, any one of which was perhaps as good as any already conceded. Three of them were south of the present limits of the park, and one within 430 feet of the crest of the falls. An estimate had also been made showing that a transmission line would cost \$3,600 per mile, and \$105 per mile per year for maintenance. So that the cost of transmission in recent years had been very much cheapened. Four or five years ago it cost \$7,000 or \$8,000 per mile. As the years go by electrical energy was being produced more cheaply. And when this bill passed the House, if municipalities chose to avail themselves of its privileges, then they would have electrical energy practically in their own control, and be able to derive from it whatever conditions might accrue. He submitted the bill in order that the principles might be discussed and at the committee stage they could discuss it in detail.

#### Mr. Whitney Asks for Report.

Mr. Whitney said it looked as if this scheme had been adopted by the Government in order that they might not have to adopt the one proposed by the Opposition side of the House. "That proposition," Mr. Whitney said, "was that the Government of this Province, among its manifold duties, should spare time enough to take up this question, examine it carefully and thoroughly, and arrive at a conclusion and devise a scheme by which this Government could show to the people that they were alive to the interests of the people, and that as time goes on the increased opportunities which were provided by discoveries of new forces of nature would be utilized by the Government of the day, in order that the people should reap the advantages which nature has inevitably intended they should reap." Instead of that they had this scheme, which he could hardly say had been outlined by the Premier. They could hardly say what use or advantage would accrue to the municipalities which in the future might wish to utilize the power at Niagara Falls.

#### Some Defects.

It seemed that one or more municipalities might, on such terms and conditions as might be mu-

tually agreed upon, secure the commencement, construction, maintenance and operation of all necessary work, machinery, appliances, etc. That was the proposition. In the first place, it struck one that, supposing a municipality in the County of Egin, one in Middlesex, one in Wellington, and others in other different directions from Niagara Falls, should all wish to avail themselves of the power of Niagara Falls, they could not know from the explanation given whether such municipalities would be enabled to join. However that might be, it brought to mind the suggestion that the best possible way would be one by which schemes of this kind would be carried out and controlled under the authority of the Government.

A great defect was that this scheme proposed to carry out the works in some cases against the will of the municipalities concerned. One evidence of the unworkableness of the scheme was offered by the fact that one municipality, which might have made up its mind not to go any further, would be compelled, against its will, to go on if two or more corporations had taken joint action.

Mr. Ross—Those who object drop out, and the other remaining municipalities, if the cost is not increased 10 per cent., go on.

Mr. Whitney, continuing, objected to the clause relieving the commission from liability for damages, caused by the breaking of any pole, wire or other appliance, or for failure to supply power, when the result of circumstances beyond the control of the commissioners. He also noticed, he said, what he believed to be other defects, but did not care to specify them, because he was not yet sufficiently conversant with the bill.

#### A Crude Measure.

The other day he had made the suggestion that the Premier should consult *The Globe* with respect to the concessions which had been given of water powers at Niagara Falls. Probably, however, he would want to glide out of the position he had taken on that matter.

Mr. Ross—I wish to say that I do not propose to glide out of anything that I have agreed to. He did not say that he had accepted or had said that he accepted, the policy of *The Globe*.

Mr. Whitney, continuing, said that he thought it a shame that the proposition made from his side of the House had not been considered. He thought it was too bad that a crude, ill-digested measure should be brought down to the House as a reply to the desire of the people of the Province to be able to utilize the powers which nature had given them from one end of it to the other. As the discussion progressed, perhaps he would have something more to say in regard to it. He would not be easily convinced, however, that the people of the Province would accept this proposition.

Mr. Ross said that though out of order, he perhaps might be allowed to explain why he did not go into a fuller discussion of the bill. His remarks seemed to have been very unsatisfactory. He had assumed that the hon. gentleman had read the bill and understood its proposals. He thought he understood the bill himself and that his hon. friend did not.

Mr. Whitney replied that he had criticized the impropriety of the leader of the Government, charged with the development of a serious and important measure, putting the House under the rather doubtful compliment of giving it a bill to consider and being himself either unable or unwilling to give a proper and reasonable explanation of it.

#### A Danger to Municipalities.

Mr. Henry Carscallen (East Hamilton)—I suppose this bill applies to water powers in all parts of the Province?

Mr. Ross—Yes.

Mr. Carscallen, continuing, said that the municipalities seeking to use the authority given would be those having water powers near to them, where they could be utilized. It would be borne in mind, however, that al-