

SIR JAMES EXPLAINS PLANS FOR HYDRO

Has Merely Postponed Establishment of Department.

DEBATE ON THE SPEECH.

Liberal Speakers Continue Aggressive Attitude.

Mr. J. C. Elliott Inquires as to Investigation of Combines—Corners the Premier When He Refers to the Elk Lake Message.

Sir James Whitney did not consume a great deal of time yesterday in winding up his contribution to the debate on the speech from the Throne, but he was on his feet long enough to declare the Government's determination to stand by its proposal to change the management of the Hydro-electric Commission—at some future date. It was Sir James Whitney's first statement in explanation of the Government's change of mind and the reasons he advanced were not those generally attributed to the Government. There was no reference to the change having been proposed as a means of conferring recognition upon Hon. Adam Beck.

Sir James resents the statement that the Government has abandoned the proposed change in the Hydro-electric.

"As far as my knowledge goes—and I have some knowledge of the matter—the Government has abandoned no policy," he declared, vigorously. "I refer to the project to change the Hydro-electric Commission into a department of Government. The facts are these: that owing to the bitter and determined opposition of the Dominion Government—as it was then constituted—toward the Hydro-electric scheme, we found it difficult to give the eastern and central portion of Ontario the benefits of cheap power conferred upon the people of the west. The private power companies, helped along by the authorities at Ottawa, were getting control of all the water powers in the east. The Government saw, then, that it would be a difficult matter to continue the work of the Hydro-electric Commission, and with the work of the Hydro-electric Commission in a position to come into the ordinary condition of Government work we decided to make the change. But in order to make sure I asked for the verdict of the people, and the people said, 'Do it.' The people said, 'You are right.' We knew we were right, but we were glad to have our position endorsed.

Merely a Delay.

"But before our general election, that for the Dominion took place, and the blight was removed from the Hydro-electric scheme. The people in the east will now get cheap power. With conditions now entirely different we considered the matter again. So, in the meantime, before we put into operation this policy which the people have endorsed, we decided that the Hydro-electric Commission with its plans and schemes for further extensions ready, with all the machin-