

GOVERNMENT DECLINES TO FURNISH DETAILS

Hydro and T. & N. O. Accounts a Sealed Book

OPPOSITION ASKS RETURN

Mr. Rowell Points Out That Detailed Expenditures of T. & N. O. Were Laid Before the House in Former Years—Just as Practicable Now.

An effort on the part of the members of the Opposition to secure a discussion of the detailed accounts of the Hydro-electric Power Commission was frustrated in the Legislature yesterday afternoon. On a motion by Mr. Sam. Clarke (West Northumberland) for a return of all details of Hydro-electric expenditures up to October 31, 1912, for the quantities and cost of constructing transmission lines, etc., Sir James Whitney declared that such information could not be prepared within twelve months.

Hon. I. B. Lucas, Acting Provincial Treasurer, claimed that the affairs of the Hydro-electric Power Commission were different from those of the ordinary departments of the Government. The Commission was actually spending the money of the municipalities, and could not be expected to account to the House.

Provincial Funds.

Mr. Rowell's view was that the Commission constructed, paid for and owned the transmission lines, that the money was advanced by the Province, and a return should properly be made to the House. If it was possible for the Minister of Public Works to give a detailed account of the expenditure on every building erected, it was equally possible for this to be done by the Hydro-electric Power Commission in respect to its work. "There are no such facts laid before us as will permit of an investigation of these accounts," declared Mr. Rowell.

Mr. Clarke's motion was rejected by a vote of 50 to 15. It is noticeable on these Friday afternoon divisions that the Government members are remaining within call and will not permit the majority to be cut down seriously on a snap vote.

In moving for the return Mr. Sam. Clarke thought the House had a perfect right to such a detailed statement, as it had to detailed statements regarding the other spending departments of the Government.

Mr. J. C. Elliott (West Middlesex) agreed with Mr. Clarke and showed the difficulty there was in the Public Accounts Committee of dealing intelligently with public expenditures without detailed statements available.

Mr. Rowell declared that the acting Treasurer was trying to draw a red herring across the track in talking about the Hydro-electric affairs not being in the same category as those of the other departments of the Government, including the Timiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway.

No Difference.

It was impossible, said Mr. Rowell, for the acting Treasurer to establish a difference between the Hydro-electric and the other spending departments of the Government. The members of the House were entitled to such information as was received from the various services. This must be so, because the Prime Minister had recently stated that the Government was behind the Hydro-electric enterprise, because two members of the Government sat upon the Hydro-electric Commission. He disagreed with