

ALLEGED CORRUPT PRACTICES BY GOVERNMENT LEADERS

Charged by Mr. Proudfoot With Receiving Money Illegally, Manipulating Granting of Coal Tenders and Acting Irregularly in Purchases.

Sensational Incident in the Legislature on the Eve of Prorogation—Matter Goes to the Committee on Privileges and Elections Following Emphatic Denials by Accused.

"I charge the said Hon. William J. Hanna and Sir James Pliny Whitney with illegally, corruptly, and improperly causing the issue of said fiat, and entering into the agreement to refer the said claim to the award of the said Thorne, and I ask for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the conduct of the said parties in connection with the Taylor, Scott & Co. claim, and the statements and transactions hereinbefore detailed.

"I further charge that the actions of the said Hon. Sir James Pliny Whitney and Hon. W. J. Hanna, whilst respectively being Premier and Provincial Secretary, in connection with the said contract and adjustment thereof, the granting of the fiat and the settlement of arbitration and payment of the amount awarded, together with the demand for and acceptance of the said sum of \$500 by the said W. J. Hanna in manner for the purposes above set forth, are and were unlawful, corrupt and improper acts on the part of the said the Hon. Sir James Pliny Whitney and the Hon. W. J. Hanna, and that the same are contrary to the law and practice of Parliament and of this Legislative Assembly, and are subversive of good government and the due and proper administration of the public affairs of this Province."

On the eve of adjournment for prorogation, Sir James Whitney, Prime Minister of Ontario, was presented by his followers with an automobile. Before the House adjourned at night he was charged, along with one of his colleagues, with corrupt and improper acts, "contrary to the law and practice of Parliament and of this Legislative Assembly," as stated above.

This is the outcome of the investigation by Mr. Wm. Proudfoot (Centre Huron) before the Public Accounts Committee of the settlement of the claim of Taylor, Scott & Company in respect of the Central Prison contract. Mr. Proudfoot made the charge on his responsibility as a member of the House, and asked for a Royal Commission to investigate the charges. The substance of Mr. Proudfoot's charge is that \$500 was accepted by Mr. Hanna as a campaign contribution, and that there was manipulation of certain tenders for supplies. On representations being made to the Prime Minister a fiat was granted, but on the understanding that it was not to be used for three months, the House then being in session.

Parallel in Gamey Charges.

It is not within the memory of the oldest member of the House that a scene similar to that of last night was enacted. The only parallel can be found in the Gamey charges, but these came like a bolt out of a clear sky, whereas yesterday there were ominous rumors all day that some-

thing was about to happen: in fact, at 6 o'clock Mr. Proudfoot rose in his place to read his formal statement, but he was interrupted by the Speaker and reminded that it was time to adjourn for lunch, and Sir James intimated that an opportunity would be given later to bring the matter up. There was an unusually large attendance of members after supper, with a scattered attendance in the public galleries. The order paper was practically cleared and an awkward pause followed a whispered conversation between Sir James Whitney and Hon. Mr. Hanna, the latter saying in audible tones "Go on, go on," and the Premier replying "I am going to move the adjournment of the House."

Mr. Proudfoot Makes Charges.

Mr. Proudfoot quietly arose, and, amid a painful silence, said that he was about to bring before the House a matter arising out of an investigation by the Public Accounts Committee of a payment to Taylor, Scott & Company of \$21,068.02. As Mr. Proudfoot proceeded members on both sides of the House strained their ears to catch every word. In the public galleries casual listeners leaned forward in the expectancy that a sensational scene was about to follow. There was a sudden lull to the busy hum of conversation among attendants and messengers, and for a few moments one could almost hear a pin drop. Mr. Proudfoot did not hesitate. He would have preferred

Mr. Proudfoot's Motion

Moved by Mr. Proudfoot, seconded by Mr. Bowman:

"That an humble address be presented to his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that he will be graciously pleased to issue a commission, directed by two Judges of the Supreme Court of Ontario, to inquire into and investigate the charges set forth in the statement this day made to this Honorable House by Mr. William Proudfoot, member for the Electoral District of Centre Huron, and all matters and things which, in the judgment of the Commissioners, relate thereto or affect the same; and the said commission shall confer upon the said Commissioners all the powers contained or given in or by the public inquiries act or in or by any act amending the same."

This was amended on a motion by Sir James Whitney to refer the matter to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, which meets for organization at noon to-day in the Public Accounts Committee room of the Legislature.