

Legislature Decides Light and Railway Properties Must be Bought Separately—Mayor Fears Opponents to T. E. L. Purchase Will Spoil All

By a vote of 22 to 9 the Private Bills Committee of the Legislature decided yesterday that the purchase of the Toronto Street Railway and the Toronto Electric Light must be brought about separately, if at all. Later in the day the measure came up in the Legislature and was passed.

The vote thus taken was really on the question of giving the city of Toronto permission to negotiate for the purchase of the street railway, because the majority of the committee were of the opinion that the city already has authority to purchase the electric light interests. The matter will now have to be submitted to the electorate in two sections, or by-laws.

Mayor Hocken explained that Sir William Mackenzie has stated that he would not sell one without the other, and if the people vote only for the railway, the whole scheme will drop through. "We have a chance to purchase these concerns which we will not have a year from now, and that is why we come to you at this hour," said he. "It is imperative that you allow us to submit one by-law only, as the exigencies of the situation call for it."

One Point for Legislature.

"So far as the bill is concerned, the only portion which affects the Legislature is: Will it hurt the other municipalities which have an agreement with the Hydro-electric Commission?" declared W. K. McNaught, M.P.P., father of the bill. "If it did hurt them, I would not be here to support it. If I thought it was a breach of faith I would be the last person in Ontario to ask you to pass on it."

"The Ontario Power Commission must approve of the contract, and therefore its interests are safeguarded. A previous bill was passed which did give the city power to purchase the Toronto Electric Light, but the conditions are different now. The owners will not sell one without the other; that's what brings us here."

"Should we vote on the combined propositions?" asked Mr. Ferguson, member for Grenville.

"Yes, the agreement must be combined. I have seen the agreement and purchase price, and everything is all right, and the idea of the bill is that the citizens should have the fullest acquaintance of the facts. I tell you that it is no stock jobbing. It is perfectly clear and aboveboard."

Hon. Thomas Crawford asked: "Would it not be better if you went to the parties and obtained an agreement, then come to us for confirmation? There has been no offer. You seem to be beating about the bush. I have read an interview with the manager of the concerns, and he says 'it is up to the city.' Where is the offer in that?"

Offer is Made.

Mr. McNaught—The offer has been made.

Mr. Crawford—Has a price been stated?

Mr. McNaught—I understand that the price has been quoted at so much per company.

Mr. T. W. McGarry, member for South Renfrew, asked why the Mayor wanted them bound together, and Mr. McNaught reiterated his statement that the sellers wouldn't divide them.

Mr. Ferguson—If the electors say 'no' to one of the propositions, will the proposition drop through?

Mr. McNaught—Yes.

Mayor Hocken—This is an excellent opportunity for Toronto to clear up her corporation difficulties at the present time, and if it is deferred for a year the city will lose it. We have had considerable trouble with the railway company and the Toronto Electric Light Company.

"What kind of trouble have you had with the Toronto Electric Light

Company?" asked the Hon. Adam Beck.

City Has the Skim Milk.

"We have had all kinds of trouble," was the reply, "and if the city can get the monopoly of light supply it would be cause for considerable satisfaction. At present we have only the skim milk of the business to be obtained in this city, but we prefer to control it all."

Mr. Crawford—The Ontario Government is always ready and willing to consider the city's business. You settle with Mackenzie & Mann and then come to us.

Mayor Hocken—Toronto must get the power to purchase as a preliminary. I have a statement from Sir William Mackenzie that he would sell, which is confirmed by a cable.

Mr. Crawford—I was in the City Council once, and unless you get a signed agreement first you will get left.

Will Obscure Advantages.

Mayor Hocken—I am firmly convinced that the advantages of this purchase will be obscured by the opponents of the proposition, who will fight the purchase of the T.E.L. This will spoil the chances of purchasing the railway.

Mr. Crawford—Can you expect a committee of this House to legislate in a manner that will affect your legal and moral position with the Hydro?

Mayor Hocken—The bill says that we must satisfy the Commission first. Toronto has made more sacrifices for the Hydro than any other municipality in the Province.

Chairman Lucas—We are aware of the clause which protects the Hydro.

Hydro Must Spend Millions.

At this point there was considerable discussion as to why the bills should not be divided. Mayor Hocken stated that Sir William Mackenzie had been approached through some influential financial men, on his (the Mayor's) initiative, because he saw the absolute need of Toronto controlling the transportation facilities of the city. "We must spend at least nine million dollars as soon as possible," said he, "and this does not eliminate the double fares. The Hydro will have to spend \$2,000,000 in the near future, and the purchase of the T.E.L. will save it. Let us send the whole thing to the people in one by-law and explain the advantages and disadvantages, and the people will decide. We are not going to force anything on them. The Toronto Electric Light Company will not allow us to lay wires underneath our own roadways."

Hon. Adam Beck—What do you want that \$2,000,000 for?

Have Only a Few Thousands.

Mayor Hocken—We have a very small amount of capital left, only a few thousand dollars, and if we are to increase the service we must have more.

The continued interruptions of the Mayor's speech by Hon. Adam Beck brought forth a call to order from Chairman I. B. Lucas.

Mr. G. H. Gooderham, M.P.P., declared that he was not wholly against the scheme, but thought the promoters were putting the cart before the horse. He was for the purchase of the Toronto Street Railway, but not the Toronto Electric Light. "I have been told that the T.S.R. and the T.E.L. were backing the Niagara Power Company's bonds in London, and if this is the sort of complications you are up against what will happen when the franchise falls into the hands of the city in 1921?"

Demand for Railway Service.

"If there is not good ground for our request, then we will withdraw it," interjected Controller McCarthy. "I assure you that we won't deal lightly with the Hydro. There is \$5,000,000 of our money in the city