

HANNA THROWS BLAME UPON INSPECTOR SNIDER

Took it to be His Duty to Intervene in Scott Act Elections in Huron, Peel and Welland—Provincial Secretary's Statement

The following is the text of Hon. W. J. Hanna's statement in the Legislature regarding the intrusion of Inspector Snider in the recent Scott act elections in Huron, Peel and Welland. It will be of especial interest to temperance Conservatives who were approached to vote against the Scott act in the interest of the Whitney Government:

"Then there came the three recent contests in Huron, Peel and Welland counties. Now, as those contests went on, the department, particularly the officers of the department, especially, I believe, Mr. Saunders himself has so stated, and certainly speaking for myself I can say that there was a constant line of inquiries and questions as to what is the law, what is the machinery for enforcement, what is the effect of the passing of the Canada temperance act in municipalities where local option is now in force. As those contests went on those inquiries continued, and, it is almost unnecessary to say, increased. Not only that, but as the contests went on there was a marked difference of opinion on the part of those on the public platform advocating one side or the other, and particularly as those parties were reported in the local press.

"Now at this stage Mr. Saunders prepared, I believe with considerable care, his work extending over a period of a couple of days anyway, if not more, a statement with which I do not think any man who knows the Ontario act will quarrel. It was a question with which he was in close touch not only in the department, but I believe as far back as the reference to the Privy Council in England in 1896. That statement was given to the press at the time—if I recall aright, one Friday evening—and published in the papers the following day.

"Now in connection with the preparation of that statement and the discussion that came up about it, that is the effect of it or the meaning, was Mr. Saunders right, all that was the subject of full discussion between Mr. Saunders and myself and between Mr. Snider and myself. At this stage, when that statement was given to the press, Mr. Snider, who has been a valued officer of the department, is a man in whose probity and honesty we have the utmost confidence, a man whom, I am sure, whatever he did would be done in the utmost good faith and would not be questioned by anyone, certainly by none who know him as I know him, and I have had good reason to know him for many years. On going over it on several occasions with Mr. Saunders he took it to be his duty, I won't say his jurisdiction, he thought it would be serving a proper purpose to place this statement in the hands of the officers of the law in the different constituencies where the question was up, and Mr. Snider did that. He did that without referring the details to me. I say that in fairness to what has been stated, he did that in the best of faith and in the exercise of his judgment, which is as nearly right as the judgment of any man, that it was only right, to the whole question after this statement had been given to the press, it should be in the hands of men who were daily being called upon to answer,

"Where are we at; what is the effect of the passing of the Canada temperance act?"

"Now, I have had occasion since then, in fact within the last ten days, to go over it in some detail with Mr. Snider and Mr. Saunders, and I can say to the House now without qualification or reserve that there was nothing on the part of either of these gentlemen that will call for comment or censure. I just mention that.

"Now then, having said this much, I need not go into what the effect of the passing of the Canada temperance act is or what the effect will be. Time will perhaps determine that. I can only say for the Government that in this matter as in all other matters we have no thought of shirking our responsibility, of evading our duty or winking or blinking where we have power to prevent it."

LIBERALS WILL PROBE THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

SALE OF TOWNSHIPS TO SYNDICATE WILL BE INQUIRED INTO.

The Liberal members of the Legislature Public Accounts Committee, as has already been presaged by remarks in the Budget debate, are going to probe the accounts of the past year as well as those of 1912. This was definitely shown yesterday when the committee organized with Mr. G. Howard Ferguson of Grenville as Chairman. The Opposition members put forward half a dozen motions. The sale of the townships of Kendry and Haggart to the Jackson syndicate for colonization purposes is one of the leading matters which it is sought to investigate, and the Opposition moved for the attendance before the committee of W. H. Rushworth, one of the members of the syndicate, and Mr. Aubrey White, Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests. The expenditure upon the Guelph Prison and the new asylum at Whitby, in addition to certain advances made to N. B. Colcock, former Government agent in London, will be inquired into. Regarding the motions referring to 1912 accounts, an assurance was given by the Liberals that they only wished to clear up matters already opened. The committee reserved the right to object of a subsequent period if the Opposition members were going further than what was now understood.