

SIR WILLIAM MACKENZIE

—Deals With Charges Made in the Legislature—

REPLIES TO SIR ADAM BECK

Sir William Mackenzie has written the following letter to Sir William Hearst, Premier of Ontario, copies of which he has handed to the press:

"Sir—I have been subjected to an outrageous attack by Sir Adam Beck on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and submit that, in all fairness, I am entitled to a reply. Surely a member of the Assembly is not entitled to use his position for attacks of this nature, dealing with many matters not concerning the Legislature, and thus cloaking his personal vindictiveness with its prestige! The circumstances are most unusual, otherwise I would not send you this open letter, which I also propose to give to the press.

"Sir Adam has referred to having been threatened with a libel suit. He did not tell the Assembly, however, the circumstances which, when related are, it seems to me, not at all to his credit.

"The words of Sir Adam to which we took formal exception were published in *The Globe*, and were spoken at a public meeting in Hamilton.

"We sent to *The Globe* and to Sir Adam Beck a notice that these words of the speech, 'the Canadian Northern has issued bonds double the cost of the construction of the road,' constituted a libel.

"Here is an extract from *The Globe's* reply: 'The staff reporter of *The Globe*, who was present at the meeting, assured me that he is prepared to go into the witness box and swear that the words were used by Sir Adam Beck.' Sir Adam himself, when seen by *The Globe*, said: 'If you have set me down as saying that, I might have said it. I don't know.' *The Globe's* letter was dated December 27th.

"Bearing in mind what Sir Adam said to *The Globe*, please read what Sir Adam wrote to our general counsel, the Hon. Mr. Phippen, the next day—namely, December 28th: 'I am in receipt of yours of the 26th instant, in which you complain of an article which appeared in *The Globe* containing what is alleged to be a statement made by me at a public meeting in Hamilton. I have not the paper before me, but I desire to say that I did not use the language as quoted in your letter as having been reported in *The Globe* respecting a meeting recently held in Hamilton.'

I leave it for you and the public to determine on which occasion Sir Adam told the truth. When he was speaking to *The Globe*, when he was writing the letter of denial avoiding suit, or when he was speaking before the Legislative Assembly, and in bombastic terms inviting an action for libel? This much is certain: on one of the three occasions, probably on two of them, Sir Adam did not tell the truth.

Sir Adam, in seeking to injure me and the affairs over which I preside, has made a direct attack upon the honor of your House when he said, as reported: "Every year in the Private Bills Committee you see their manipulations and machinations in connection with various bills." The Toronto & York Radial Railway Company is even at this writing before your Private Bills Committee, and has for the past number of years been before your different committees, and I presume reference is made to this company, of which I am President. I am assured by the Manager of the company, who has direct charge over legislation, and by the solicitors, that there has been no lobbying in connection with these appearances before the committees, the Manager going so far as to say that "not one member of this Legislature has been asked to support the bills, save and except by counsel in formal legal address before the committees assembled." I say the company's legislative methods are clean, free from taint of "manipulation and machinations." If I am right, Sir Adam's words are

despicable calumny, alike on the honor of the Assembly and the reputation of the company. Let there be a searching investigation into this matter, out of which the public may judge for themselves which of us speaks the truth; and let the man who speaks not the truth take the consequences.

Sir Adam's recent outburst appears, from press reports, to have been caused by some fancied attack upon the Hydro Radial plans by the Canadian Northern in Hamilton.

Let me briefly explain this situation. Immediately before the war, the Canadian Northern had purchased a right-of-way and ground for terminal yards in Hamilton. Since the war, the Canadian Northern has not been able to continue with the work for financial reasons. This winter Sir Adam submitted to Hamilton a radial by-law, which was rejected by the citizens. After the decisive rejection of the by-law by Hamilton and several of the interested municipalities, the Canadian Northern asked the Council of Hamilton to approve of its plans in the city, hoping to go on with the work this summer. Sir Adam objected to this approval, and apparently wants the right-of-way and terminal lands for the Hydro Radial, in spite of the citizens' rejection of the by-law. Under these circumstances, it would not ordinarily be expected that the Canadian Northern would extend a willing hand to Sir Adam. But we did. On March 5th I wrote to the Mayor of Hamilton, stating that: "Not only is the Canadian Northern Railway Company now willing, but it has on more than one occasion offered to co-operate in a friendly spirit with Sir Adam's enterprise."

There should be no conflict between the Canadian Northern and Hydro Radial. The one is a trans-continental railway having approximately ten thousand miles of line in Canada, and five thousand of its miles of railway are in the prairie Provinces of Western Canada; the other is a local electric railway planned for central Ontario. Our Western mileage, we were naturally anxious to connect up with such an important industrial centre as Hamilton; and further, to carry the railway through Hamilton to connection with the American coal-carrying roads at the Niagara frontier. My officials will bear me out when I say that instructions have been issued to utter not one word against the Hydro Radial scheme. I have my own ideas as to its usefulness to the country; but I am not expressing them at the present time, nor do I propose that Canadian Northern officials shall take part in the controversy. The citizens of the Province must decide this issue for themselves.

Sir Adam has more than once reflected upon my business judgment, and with strange inconsistency persistently covets one after another of the things I have tried to build up.

Sir Adam, while not making any direct charge of wrong-doing on my part in connection with the Canadian Northern Railway, has dealt liberally with innuendoes, all of which were evidently designed to discredit me in public opinion. Fortunately, my record with the Canadian Northern does not lie in his hands, and there is evidence to hand which belies his statements. It will be remembered that in 1914 the Canadian Northern, having built its railways to a higher standard than was required by its contracts with the Government, was compelled to apply to Parliament for further assistance. It is no secret that the Government was loath to comply with the request, and insisted upon a thorough investigation of the company's affairs. For many months traffic experts, auditors and other officials appointed by the Government, subjected the company and its affairs to stringent investigation, and after the reports had been received and digested, the Premier, Sir Robert Borden, stated from the floor of the House: "I am bound to say that the