

GOVT. PROBE INTO CHARGES

Commission to Investigate
Allegations Made by Dew-
art on Floor of House

SOME WARM EXCHANGES

Member for Southwest To-
ronto Attacks Provincial
License Inspector

Mr. H. H. Dewart, K.C., Liberal member for S.W. Toronto, threw a bomb into the Government ranks yesterday. He dealt at great length with the methods pursued in the enforcement of the Ontario Temperance Act by the License Board, and referred in particular to what is known as the Homer case. He inferred that Chief License Inspector Ayearst was a member of the Employers' Detective Agency, which had, in five years, been paid \$44,000 for work by the department, and charged that Mr. Ayearst had shared in moneys paid to private detectives while they were on the payroll of the Government and in the service of private agencies; also that he had deposited the moneys in a special account.

While the Government, early in the evening, declared that Mr. Dewart would have to formulate his charges to have a committee of the House appointed to investigate, just prior to adjournment at 11.20 the Prime Minister, Sir William Hearst, announced that a Judicial Commission would be appointed to probe any charges against Mr. Ayearst or any member of the License Board or any officer of the department.

Premier's Statement.

Sir William said, in making the announcement:

"In a speech delivered in this House this afternoon the honorable member for Southwest Toronto (seat A) made certain charges and insinuations involving the honor and integrity of officers of the Government in connection with the administration of the Ontario Temperance Act, in what is known as the Homer case, and in addition made the following charge specifically against Chief License Inspector Ayearst: 'If Mr. Ayearst is examined before a committee of the House he will have to admit that he has profited by the earnings of private detectives himself, and that while private detectives were in the pay and employ of a private detective agency doing other work they were retained and employed by him and in the pay of the department, while he, Mr. Ayearst, received a portion of the earnings of these men, which they received from the private detective agency.'

"Upon being offered by the Attorney-General a full and complete opportunity for investigation of the said charges, the hon. member neglected to avail himself of that offer. The Government does not propose to leave room for doubt in the mind of any person inside or outside of this House with reference to the truth or falsity of the charges made. The Government therefore proposes that the said charges shall be submitted to a judicial commission for investigation and report. The Government will include in that commission power and authority to investigate any other charges against Mr. Ayearst or against any member of the License Board or any official or officer of the License Department which the hon. member for Southwest Toronto or any

other member of the House may desire should be submitted, provided the proper particulars regarding such charges are furnished to the Government so that they may be included in the commission. The Government has no reason to believe that the official in question has been guilty of wrongdoing, but should he or any other officer of the Government be found guilty of misconduct he will be forthwith discharged from the public service and made to answer for his offences so far as the laws of this Province or the criminal law of Canada may apply thereto."

Debt to "Righteous Dead."

Mr. Dewart at the outset referred briefly to the Budget. The large bank balance of \$1,395,000 did not mean a real excess of revenue, he pointed out. There was nothing in that statement that makes such a revenue surplus possible. A bank balance and special deposits of \$5,000,000 did not mean a surplus of that amount in the bank. But even that amount was on October 31 last, and it would be interesting, he said, to know what the amount was on December 31, 1918. He contended that the financial statement should show the details of the profit taxes of \$863,000 credited to the Department of Lands, Forests and Mines. Then it could be seen how much of the surplus of \$1,800,000 was due to the insistence of the Liberals upon "the nickel industry paying something more than the paltry taxation to which the Prime Minister had without legal authority agreed." If the succession duties had not been boosted by a few rich men dying the Provincial Treasurer might have had to apologize for an unexpected deficit. The Government owed much to the "righteous dead," and he said it was surprising the Government did not introduce a bill to "Oslerize a larger number of our wealthy men, since succession duties form such an important portion of their annual receipts."

The "nickel and other war-profiteering corporations" were next referred to by the speaker. "I regret that in so far as those profiteering institutions are concerned there has been no suggestion that they will be made to contribute to the extent they should contribute," declared Mr. Dewart, "or that in so far as they are concerned these combines will be regulated in the interest of the people."

Alleges Stock Yard Abuses.

Mr. Dewart next turned his attention for a few moments to the high cost of living. He regretted there was no proposition from the Government to take over the Union Stock Yards, which, he declared, were controlled by the Swifts. Referring to the condition in the United States, Mr. Dewart said that the Federal Committee had recommended taking over the stock yards, packing houses and cold-storage warehouses. Herbert Hoover, American Food Controller, last September said that stock yards should be entirely disassociated from the control of the packers.

Discussing the local situation, he said that the Live Stock Association was composed of ten members, who controlled the sale of all cattle and received commissions of \$1 a head and \$17 a carload on all cattle consigned to the Union Stock Yards. "You will find that no man can sell his cattle without putting his deal through a commission man. He has to pay for the feed to the commission man, whether he uses it for his cattle or not." Six or eight years ago it was possible to get into an association for \$5, whereas it now cost \$1,000 for a ticket to the Live Stock Association, "because of the profits these men have been able to make by their close corporations and their agreements." Farmers, he said, had had to hire a man to look after their interests. When such a state of affairs were found to exist he believed it was evidence that there must be some sort of an agreement.

Association of Packers.

"Therefore it is up to the Attorney-General and the officials of the Province to go into the matter and see that we get relief," declared Mr. Dewart emphatically. If a man wanted to sell his cattle he had to