

# GOVT. NAMES MEREDITH TO CONDUCT INQUIRY

## Will Be Commissioner to Investigate Mr. H. H. Dewart's Charges Against Mr. Ayearst

Sir William Meredith, Chief Justice of Ontario, has been appointed by the Government to make a thorough investigation into the charges made by Mr. H. Hartley Dewart, M.P.P. for Southwest Toronto, against Chief License Inspector J. A. Ayearst. Mr. Peter White, K. C., has been appointed to assist the Chief Justice in the conduct of the investigation. This information was given to the Legislature yesterday by the Prime Minister, Sir William Hearst, who made a statement before the orders of the day were called. Pending the investigation and report of Sir William Meredith, Inspector Ayearst has been suspended. The Prime Minister stated also that Mr. George E. Morrison, a Provincial License Inspector, had resigned, and that his case would be investigated by the Commission.

At the conclusion of the Prime Minister's announcement, Hon. T. W. McGarry moved a resolution, seconded by Hon. G. Howard Ferguson, referring the public accounts connected with the License Department for the last six years to the Public Accounts Committee for investigation. The motion was carried.

### The Premier's Statement.

"Supplementing what I said on Thursday last," said Sir William Hearst, in rising before the orders of the day were called, "I desire to inform the House that the Government has requested the Hon. Sir William Meredith, Chief Justice of Ontario, to investigate the charges and statements made by the member for Southwest Toronto, Seat 'A,' in his address in the House, and that the Chief Justice has consented so to do. A Royal Commission will be issued forthwith authorizing the Chief Justice to conduct such investigation.

"Mr. Peter White, K.C., a well-known and eminent counsel, has been appointed to assist the Commissioner in the conduct of this investigation. The Government is requesting the Commissioner to proceed with the investigation as quickly as circumstances will permit. In addition to the Commission referred to, the widest possible latitude will be given, and every facility provided for a full and complete investigation of the manner in which the affairs of the License Department have been conducted. To this end the Government will ask the House to permit the accounts of this department for the years 1913-14, 1914-15, 1915-16, 1916-17, 1917-18, and for the portion of the year 1918-19 down to the 28th February, 1919, to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

"This is a very unusual course for a Government to adopt, in view of the fact that the time for investigating most of these accounts has long since passed, and that it may be difficult, if not impossible, to get evidence relating to some of them at this late date, and especially in view of the fact that a number of these accounts were incurred under a former Administration, and at a time when the department was presided over by a Minister now deceased. The Government, however, deems it in the public interest to take this course so that the fullest possible opportunity may be afforded for investigation of the affairs of

this department, and in order that if there has been wrong-doing or impropriety on the part of anyone connected with the department the same may be brought to light and proper action taken. The department in question exercises functions of the very greatest importance, and the Government is determined to see that not even the breath of suspicion shall attach to it. The Government will not continue in its services any man whose conduct will not stand the closest scrutiny.

### Mr. Ayearst Suspended.

"In view of the charges made against Mr. Ayearst, Chief Inspector, he has been suspended from office pending the investigation of such charges and the report of the Commissioner with respect thereto.

"Mr. George E. Morrison, a Provincial License Inspector, has sent in his resignation and the same has been accepted, and he is no longer in the employment of the Government. Mr. White has been instructed to examine into the facts concerning certain financial interests Mr. Morrison is said to have had while an official of the Government, and to take such steps and to conduct such investigations with reference thereto as the circumstances may warrant.

"The House will note that the Government proposes to refer to the Public Accounts Committee the accounts connected with the License Department for the last six years, being all the accounts mentioned in the amendment moved by the member for Southwest Toronto, Seat 'A,' last week, to the motion of the Provincial Treasurer that the Speaker leave the chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply. But in addition to doing this, the Government is appointing the Chief Justice of Ontario to hold a judicial investigation into the specific acts of wrong-doing mentioned by the honorable member in his address."

"Is there any truth in the current report to-day that Mr. Ayearst has resigned?" questioned Mr. William Proudfoot, the Liberal Leader.

"I don't know anything with reference to that," replied the Prime Minister.

Discussing the probe Mr. Peter White said last night that he expected to confer to-day with Sir William Meredith as to the date of the inquiry. "You may rely on it that there will be no time lost," said Mr. White.