

might be reached, rather than to rush the thing through in the House without full understanding of the situation and facts, and perhaps make some mistake.

"The whole question, as I see it, and as the Government sees it, is an exceedingly complex one. The Government has been in touch with the Hydro Power Commission. The Government has been greatly concerned over the possibilities of this strike, which, I think, is now in the way of being averted. And we have not been at all neglectful in giving our consideration to the matter.

Must Keep Within Figure.

"The position, briefly, is this: The Hydro-electric Power Commission has undertaken a work of good proportions in order to supply power from Niagara Falls in increased quantities to the people of Ontario. That development has already cost, owing to reasons which I do not think I need go into before the House (everything suffers from it), a great deal more than was anticipated. On the cost of that development depends in the future a great deal the industrial welfare of the Province. And the Hydro-electric

Commission, wisely, I believe, has taken the position that this development must not exceed a certain figure. If it exceeds that figure it is a question whether power can be supplied to the Province at a cost that will be profitable, at a cost that industries can afford to pay. I think the Hydro-electric Commission is wise in taking that position. As I understand it, and the Government has consulted with the Hydro-electric Commission and the Chairman, the Commission feels that it has made the last offer, the highest offer that it possibly can, to the men engaged in that enterprise. Feeling that, and knowing that the usual course of Boards of Conciliation has been in the nature of compromise, the Hydro-electric Power Commission has not felt justified in yielding to the suggestion for a board.

"The Government may have another position to take in the interests of the whole Province. The Hydro-electric Power Commission is strictly a business institution, charged by the municipalities, and more than that, by the Government, with the performing of certain work. It has to look at it from a strictly business standpoint. The Government must also look at it from a much wider standpoint than can the Hydro Commission. It becomes a question of whether it would not be wise to follow the suggestion made by the mover and seconder of the motion and appoint a Commission or a committee. What form it should take I am not prepared to say to-day. Probably if you will leave it over for a few hours we will be able to say definitely to-morrow.

Regards Proposal Favorably.

"And so I am not prepared to say to-day that the Government would endorse this Commission as it is drafted, and, while I am prepared to say I think it would be in the interests of everyone that a few hours more should be taken in the consideration of this, I am prepared to say that the Government at the present time regards favorably a proposal for a Commission of Inquiry which shall put the facts of the case before the people.

"We must realize in dealing with all strike situations that Boards of Conciliation, arbitrations and any other methods we might evolve are successful in their work only as they put the facts before the people, because in all strikes public opinion is the court of last resort. It is a court we cannot get away from. I think we are safe in taking this position: that we must see to it, in the interests of the success of this work, and in the interests of avoiding labor troubles with the Government (which, I think, would be a very bad example to set before the people of Ontario), that the people are made fully cognizant of the facts, that the people be put in a position to judge between the two parties.

"I therefore have no hesitation in agreeing with the honorable gentle-

man from Southwest Toronto (Mr. Dewart) in letting this matter stand until to-morrow, when it will be more fully debated. But I do not wish to be understood by anyone in the Province that by so doing we are at all shelving the proposition. We are letting it stand so that we may get a more firm, more sure and more intelligent solution for it.

Not Escape Responsibility.

"One other question raised by the honorable member for Southwest Toronto, and that is avoiding Governmental responsibility. It seems to me we are getting an awful lot of that—avoiding Government responsibility by a Commission that has power to act. I do not think this Commission should have power to act. I do not think the Government can accept that condition. But I do think, whatever choice may be—

whether the House may deem wise to appoint a committee of its members or a Commission composed of outsiders to consider and report the whole facts of the case—that this Commission must be placed in the position of reporting on the facts to this Government, who would then have to assume the responsibility. Therefore, I would suggest the debate be left over to-day."

Mr. Swayze, Niagara Falls, the mover of the resolution, expressed himself as content to lay over discussion to-morrow, with the definite promise that it would be taken up then. Mr. MacBride, seconder, also expressed concurrence, in the interests of better understanding and freer speech. Mr. Dewart then expressed his appreciation of the attitude of the Labor members, and moved the adjournment of the debate.