

DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO SWELL OVER-RUN, IS CHARGE OF RANEY

Lumber Mills Crowding Through Small Logs While Government Tests Were Being Made—Mc- Crea Trying to Bring Out Government's Legal Case

MEMBER DEMANDS NEW COMMISSION

The suggestion that there had been deliberate inflation of Government timber "over-run" test figures in some of the 26 mills at which Government experiments were being conducted was thrown out on the floor of the Ontario Legislature last night by Attorney-General Raney. The inference to be drawn from the Attorney-General's statements and quotations was that the 100 per cent. average and 171 maximum over-run figures furnished by Hon. Beniah Bowman on the floor of the House the other day over the protest of Hon. W. E. Raney were totally unreliable, and the 55 per cent. "over-run," declared by the Timber Commissioners to be the maximum permissible remained unaltered.

The Attorney-General, quoted, without comment, from letters of G. C. Hurdman, who was supervising the Government over-run tests. At one mill, Mr. Hurdman wrote, "The observation of my man is that the mill people endeavored to shove in as small logs as they possibly could."

Like Deliberate Frame-up.

Another letter from which he quoted stated: "When I was at the mill on June 30 they were feeding there about 1,400 logs a day. I note that our men scaled an average of 2,000 logs a day." It was quite evident to him, he said, that effort was being made to keep out the large logs and confine work to small logs. All the commission's evidence had demonstrated that over-run figures on sawn timber run abnormally large on small logs.

The timber discussion, launched by the motion of Charles McCrea, Conservative member for Sudbury, for the tabling of the Government report on timber scaling in Northern Ontario, lasted the whole day.

Trying to Draw Out Policy.

The Attorney-General condemned the motion as an effort to bring out prematurely the Government's legal case in respect of its civil action against the Shevlin-Clarke Co. Attorney-General Raney, in the very last words of a lengthy speech, said that the documents would be tabled when they arrived from the North today.

Mr. McCrea pressed his motion in a two-hour address, vigorously denouncing the conduct of the Timber Commission and ridiculing any finding which it might make.

H. H. Dewart, Liberal Leader, defined the position of the Liberal party in the timber controversy as one decidedly not in sympathy with the attacks on the personnel of the commission, and in favor of continued investigation into the alleged frauds of North country lumbermen.

Says Government is Victimized.

Mr. McCrea read from the order paper his notice of motion, which he described as one of "very special significance to the people of Ontario." He read also the order in Council inaugurating the Commission of Inquiry, dated March 9, 1920, whose conduct thus far, he declared, had led to the formation of popular

opinion to the effect that great scandals had been unearthed concerning the lumbering industry of the Province. In this, he declared, the Government of the day and private members on the Government benches had been victimized by parties privately interested.

The whole case of the commission, Mr. McCrea said, was inextricably bound up with a proper interpretation of the Doyle rule, and, inferentially, the commission had found anyone securing more than 50 per cent. over that allowed by the Doyle rule had been doing so wrongfully and in fraud of the Province. He entirely disagreed with the commission, he went on, as to 50 per cent. being a fair over-run on the class of timber cut in the Province during the past few years.

"There is an erroneous impression in the public mind," Mr. McCrea said, "that a man buying timber should pay for all that was in the log, and that when a lumberman saws out more lumber than is allowed under the measure he has paid on he is getting something in fraud of the Government and the people of Ontario."

Experts Should Advise.

The Doyle rule had been used in Ontario since 1879 and all lumber sold in the Province had been sold subject to measurement by the Doyle rule. The House and Province, he declared, wanted to know exactly, under tests conducted by experts, what was regarded as a fair over-run under the Doyle rule.

Mr. McCrea, referring to the action of the Government last June in appointing Mr. G. C. Hurdman to supervise a Doyle rule test in 26 mills in Ontario, called for presentation of the report thereon.

Referring to the figures quoted in the House last week by Hon. Beniah Bowman, regarding over-run in Government tests, the member for Sudbury stated that the figures "jarred very seriously and destroyed the report of the commissioners appointed under the Crown."

The commissioners themselves, Mr. McCrea charged, had "seemed determined not to have the benefit of the report" prepared for the Crown by Mr. Hurdman. Mr. Peter White, he stated, as well as Hon. G. H. Ferguson, had urged in vain their consideration of the report in evidence.

"Was it fair to the people of Ontario," he asked, "and was it fair to the lumbermen of Ontario, that these two honorable men should absolutely ignore the expert test scale being carried on by the Government?"

"This test, according to the answer brought down by Hon. Mr. Bowman," said Mr. McCrea, "completely upsets the findings of these commissioners, based upon evidence not half as valuable as the expert test conducted by Mr. Hurdman."

"Honesty and fairness demand that the Government bring down this report," he went on. "It will require a great deal of courage to bring down a report that utterly refutes, in the main, the findings of this commission. It will require a great deal of courage for the Government now to say to the people: 'We have been misled; we have been victimized by designing politicians; we have been a party to the creating of wrong impressions.' It will require a great deal of courage for the Prime Minister to do this, but I hope, in fairness to himself, he will bring down this report which he and his Cabinet have ordered to be made."

"Putting Something Over."

Mr. McCrea went on to show, from the stenographic report of evidence given by Mr. R. T. Harding before the Public Accounts Committee, that Mr. Harding had held at the same time private and public retainers; that the inception of the inquiry was political; that Mr. Harding "was de-