

"I cannot withdraw, because I am not at liberty to discuss it," said Mr. Dewart, referring to the fact that his motion being withdrawn, there was nothing before the House.

"I ask the honorable member to withdraw," said the Speaker.

"Then, Mr. Speaker, under your ruling, I withdraw it," said Mr. Dewart.

Mr. Casselman, in beginning his statement, referred to the special committee appointed two sessions ago to inquire into the possibility of more equitable distribution of Hydro-electric service at a more uniform price. Efforts during the 1921 session, he said, by members of the committee to have a bill passed substantially embodying the findings of the committee were unsuccessful.

Electric Range a Luxury.

In eastern Ontario the people paid excessive rates for Hydro-electric service under the Hydro-electric administration. The rates were so high that in these hard times farmers and very few townsmen could afford to pay them. Such luxuries as electric ranges were out of the question, while in the west they were common, thanks to Provincial financing, "with apologies to The Toronto Globe," he added.

Mr. Casselman said that in Williamsford township, in Dundas county, the service charge to the farmers submitted by the Hydro last summer was \$57 per year on a 20-year contract that virtually mortgaged the farmer's property, and a service charge that the farmer had to pay

whether he took the power or not. The consumption charge on top of that was 8 1-2 cents per kilowatt hour. These rates were arrived at after deducting the amount of Government assistance for the building of the low-tension transmission lines. There was a power company in the county that had under way a farm service on the basis of \$30 a year service charge and six cents per kilowatt hour.

Should Work Both Ways.

Mr. Casselman said he took the ground that Government assistance should be available to farmers taking service from reliable agencies other than the Hydro-electric Power Commission. That was the intent of the bill that he wished to bring before the House, but which might be ruled out of order.

Premier Drury said he was sympathetic to the bill. "It seems to me that, if it were to increase the use of electricity on the farm, we should be prepared somehow or other, if we can do it safely and properly, to extend it to any source of electricity. At the same time, as I have pointed out to the member for Dundas, this proposal needs a good deal of study and consideration. It would be manifestly im-

proper and unfair to extend Provincial aid in any way that might accrue to the benefit, not of the users of the electricity, but of a private company furnishing it. There is the difficulty I see in the way."

Not Sure of Safeguard.

Mr. Casselman asked if his bill did not safeguard this. Mr. Drury said he would like to study it more, and thought that maybe the Hydro Commission could step in.

"An arrangement of that kind I do not think would be satisfactory in Dundas county," said Mr. Casselman, "because we believe—and I am weighing carefully what I am saying—we believe the Hydro Commission is extravagant, and we think that private ownership down there in the east is more efficient and more economical."

Mr. Drury said he told Mr. Casselman that his bill provided for Government aid and would be out of order. Mr. Casselman had brought the matter before the House, as he wished to go on record. Mr. Casselman replied to this that he would not have introduced the bill unless he thought the Government would get behind it.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson "Gets In."

The Conservative Leader then went after the Government. The bill last year to provide for aid in rural Hydro distribution, he said, was jammed through in the last hours of the session. The Government then said that was all it could do. Now it was trying to do more. Mr. Ferguson

thought, by amending the present Rural Hydro Distribution Bill, the Government could see that private companies getting aid would not receive too much in profits.

H. A. Stevenson, London, advocated the appointment of a select committee of the House to consider the question. R. R. Hall, Parry Sound, said that it was time the autocracy exercised day after day by the Hydro Commission should be done away with and the commission put under the Government.

Hon. F. C. Biggs quoted Hydro rates charged to himself and farmer neighbors at his home in Wentworth county, near the town of Dundas. His service charge, he said, was \$72.96 a year. On the line, two and a half miles long, there were 28 users. Last year these lines had been extended with Government assistance, and the service charges reduced about \$1 a month.

Cities "Gobble It Up."

The great trouble had been that Hydro, to a large extent, had been "simply gobbled up" by the larger centres, and farmers were not getting their fair share of the power.

Col. Carmichael announced that the Hydro had built, under the Government bonus scheme, 125 miles of subsidized rural primary lines, and there were under contract to be built about three times that number of miles. There was no reason, he said, why any municipality could not enter into contract with the Hydro-electric Power Commission to build primary transmission lines and no reason why the commission could not enter into contracts to purchase power, whether from private sources or otherwise.

J. W. McLeod, Stormont, said that he thought the bill might well be taken up by the Government and given consideration. He outlined and stressed the requirements of eastern Ontario in electrical matters, and protested that this section had not as yet been able to get the power benefits which had accrued to western Ontario.

Member for Parry Sound Given Congratulations

R. R. Hall, Parry Sound, received the congratulations of the members of the Legislature yesterday upon the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday. Thoughtful friends placed a big bouquet of flowers on his desk and much desk-thumping greeted his appearance. Mr. Hall made graceful reference to the event, and thanked the members for the good wishes accorded him.

Before the orders of the day were called, he said that the "bulky" return, that had required the combined strength of two page boys to lift to the table on Wednesday, had been asked for by him, but if he had been supplied with information by the Minister last session when he asked for it, he would not have had to request such a large return.