

SHEVLIN-CLARKE SETTLEMENT

Ministry Wins First Important Debate of Session by 59 to 26 Votes—Tories Solid Against Measure While Liberals Split Evenly on It, With Leader Voting For It—Speakers Absolve Tory Chief of Any Wrong Intention

SETTLEMENT ATTACKED ON GROUND THAT COMPANY GETS OFF LIGHTLY

After debating for two whole days on the Attorney-General's bill to validate the million-and-a-half-dollar settlement with the Shevlin-Clarke Company of Fort Frances, the Ontario Legislature last night voted in favor of the measure, 59 to 26. Conservative members voted solidly in opposition to it, and Government members solidly in favor.

The Liberal ranks were split about evenly. F. Wellington Hay, Liberal Leader, voted for the measure, together with Messrs. Brackin, McLeod, Ramsden, McAlpine, Clarke, Curry, Marshall and Mageau. The Liberal opponents included the North country men—Malcolm Lang, Cochrane; J. H. Marceau, Nipissing, and R. R. Hall, Parry Sound, together with Messrs. Sinclair, Tolmie, Dewart, Rennie and Govenlock. G. G. Halcrow, Labor, also voted among the "no's."

Absolve Hon. Mr. Ferguson.

Yesterday's continued debate covered ground that already had been gone over in much detail. Outstanding, however, in the contributions was the absolution of any personal interests accorded by several members to Hon. G. H. Ferguson, Conservative Leader, and late Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines, in his much-discussed transactions with the Shevlin-Clarke Company. Even the Liberal Leader, Mr. Hay, passed that opinion, based, he said, upon his knowledge of the member for Grenville. He also said his information from lumbermen was that the prices obtained by Hon. Mr. Ferguson were fair for the period.

The pairs announced by the Government Whip, Mr. Hicks, after the division were: Messrs. Casselman and Gray; Crockett and Nickle; McWhinney and Joynt; Stevenson and Hill.

Throughout the debate Opposition members bitterly opposed the settlement on the ground that, if the allegations made concerning the operations of the company were correct, the Province should receive millions, and not the amount for which the Attorney-General proposed settling. Hon. W. E. Raney was pointedly asked if he decided

not to press the Logie judgment to the limit because he was afraid of the strength of his position in law.

Assets of Seven Millions.

W. E. N. Sinclair (Liberal, south Ontario), in making criticism of the settlement that had been arrived at with the Shevlin-Clarke Company, said that he had been informed on the best of authority that this company had assets of seven millions in Ontario. Mr. Raney asked him if this was authentic information or merely rumor. Mr. Sinclair said it was more than rumor, and asserted that he would not

have made the statement in the House if he did not believe that it was absolutely correct.

The South Ontario member referred to Mr. Raney's speech the day before, and said that the Attorney-General had told the House he had "jumped at" the settlement when the chance came. "It was jumped at, and by a mighty poor athlete," said Mr. Sinclair. He suggested that in making a settlement the Attorney-General should make a running hop, step and jump, and then more after that. He intimated that settlement had been arrived at with no proper investigation by the Government.

The Attorney-General retorted that all factors in the situation had been carefully considered, and that there had been investigation.

Question of Cruising.

J. C. Tolmie, Windsor, asked if the berths, other than those figuring in the dispute, had been cruised. The Attorney-General said there had been no occasion for any cruise more than was done. They knew what was on berth 51 by what had been cut. The other berths did not enter into the settlement at all. There was nothing in the report of the Timber Commission attacking berths, except berths 45 and 49. Complaints regarding the other berths were of fraud and of over-run. Nothing was involved in them in the way of title.

Mr. Sinclair, referring to the Attorney-General's claim that the ending of the former loose system of timber administration, if brought about by these transactions, was of more consequence than the mere dollars and cents involved, said that this was a "moral victory." Most men, he said, were satisfied with practical victories. "I do submit that this Province was entitled to something more than a moral victory after the great protestations made about the plundering of the forests of Ontario."

Not Prevent Fraud.

The amount received in the settlement was so small that the South Ontario member said he could not see how it would be much of a deterrent to anybody who set out to defraud the Province. The hornblowing that had gone on about the millions and millions of dollars going to come to Ontario ended up in a moral victory.