

the Premier, in a speech at Hamilton, took occasion to demonstrate his attitude toward the great scheme of public development, and particularly his opinion of the man in charge of the work, and he left no uncertainty as to what his opinion was. The Premier said then, went on Mr. Ferguson, that he proposed to have the situation investigated by a committee of the House.

Then, when the House met, the Leader of the Liberal party, Wellington Hay, had himself made the same suggestion. All remembered the Premier accepted then the suggestion of the Liberal Leader. Later came the time of the vote of the \$3,500,000 for Chippawa, and Hon. D. Carmichael had made a statement in the House, placing his resignation in the hands of the Premier. "At that time the Prime Minister in his place approved everything the Minister without portfolio said," said Mr. Ferguson, and again he had favored a thorough investigation, and by a committee of the House.

"The Prime Minister was very strongly of that view, and apparently nothing was going to shake him from that view, but the Prime Minister did not count upon the influence of his friends," said Mr. Ferguson. His friends surrounded him and he saw the light. Proceeding, Mr. Ferguson said the Government reached the point where it actually named the committee; the Prime Minister had called him up and scarcely gave him time to select his names, said Mr. Ferguson.

Why Change Names?

Mr. Drury asked him why he did not tell that he had changed some of the names suggested. Mr. Ferguson retorted that the names had been submitted to a meeting of all the members of his party, and the selection made.

"When it comes to action the home of autocracy is to be found on the Treasury benches, and the only democratic action ever taken in this House is taken by the two old parties," he observed, much to the amusement of the Premier and the Attorney-General.

The House Committee, proceeded the Conservative Leader, had been named by the Premier, and a resolution put on the order paper. Then, time was of great importance, but, apparently, time was no longer the essence of the resolution. The important feature apparently was to disturb and undermine public confidence in the biggest public ownership enterprise in the world.

There were only special reasons for a Royal Commission, said Mr. Ferguson—to narrow the scope of the inquiry, and not to examine into the soundness and accuracy of the estimates, but to strike a blow at the foundation of the project and try to introduce scientific controversy.

Too Much Attorney-General?

With a House Committee, every line of evidence would be available to every member of the House. With a commission, the only man who received a copy of the evidence would be the Attorney-General, the only man briefed would be the Attorney-General, and he was invariably briefed in a way that suited his own views. The average member would never see a single word of the evidence. Even when the report did come in, not 10 per cent. of the members of the House would avail themselves of the opportunity of wading through a long, and maybe technical, finding.

The normal method would be to have the House make the inquiry. It was the duty of the Premier to show why he departed from that method. No doubt the new scheme had been submitted to approval by caucus?

"I will answer that when the honorable member tells me the secrets of his own caucus," retorted the Premier. Mr. Ferguson said that he would venture a statement that it had been submitted to caucus. The Premier said he would not venture to say whether the statement was correct or not.

Drury's Translation.

Mr. Ferguson said he would like the Premier to tell the people if it was not a fact the caucus had been given an opportunity of deciding this thing, and it was largely, a farce for the Premier to come into the House and say that the House refused a committee, because the House was "loaded" against it. "I have no doubt that my honorable friend's followers over there are going to stand by him and carry out the compact made with him when

he was asked to translate himself to a higher place. I mean not up, but East."

Mr. Ferguson took strong objection to Mr. Drury's statement that the personnel of the commission was not to be mauled. "I will be quite prepared to express my views of their personality and their qualifications for the work," he said. Persons being tried had the right to change of venue or the right of challenging the jurors. "But the oracle of Crown Hill says, 'That day is past, and you are not to discuss the names I select.'"

Disclose Influences.

In closing, Mr. Ferguson said the Premier should tell of the influences that had caused him to change his mind on the subject of the probe. He thought the House was entitled to know why the Premier had so suddenly and completely changed his mind. "Whatever influence it was, it was not a friend of Hydro."

"I venture to say," he added, "that when the facts are disclosed it will be that this influence is attempting to strike a deadly blow at the whole scheme of public ownership in this Province."

"It is beyond my belief," declared Hon. Manning Doherty, Minister of Agriculture, in taking up the debate.

"that there is a man who desires to see this grand public ownership scheme succeed who will for a minute consent to have the affairs of this project investigated by a committee of the House, and run the danger of having this great enterprise thrown into the arena of politics."

Reason for Investigation.

It was well known to every citizen of the Province, the Minister proceeded, why the Government intended taking investigating action. Estimates had been mounting up year by year, "until there was growing up throughout the Province a spirit of want of confidence. It is the desire on the part of the Government to re-establish in the opinions of the people of this Province a confidence in this great project, in which this Government has full confidence."

Questions to be decided by the investigating body, Hon. Mr. Doherty said, would be of a technical character; questions such as final cost, ultimate capacity of the project, and at what price Ontario would be able to sell power. "It is almost out of the question to think," he added, "that the members of this House can possibly give the time to hear the evidence, go into these matters, weigh the evidence, and bring back a report."

Cabinet Behind Hydro.

Hon. Mr. Doherty credited the Conservative Leader with considerable versatility in his dealings with Hydro. In spite of Conservative protestations of Hydro love, however, the Minister of Agriculture would tell Hon. Mr. Ferguson "that the Hydro project in this Province never had behind it such a solid support as it has today in the Government of the day.

"The U. F. O. and Labor parties," he said, "have it in both their platforms, that they stand pledged to support public ownership, and this Government today stands ready to support public ownership, and it is our desire that public ownership shall be so constructed and so conducted that it shall be safe, that it shall be permanent, and shall succeed."

The Minister disagreed with the Conservative Leader also upon the point of a Royal Commission circumscribing the limit of the inquiry. A Royal Commission of qualified and fair men, "men who have at heart the success of this great project," could understand what was required by the Government and the people, and bring in their report, which would be a conclusive document, and not a majority and minority report.

Moves Vote of Confidence.

Hon. Mr. Doherty then moved his amendment: "This House has confidence that the Government will take the necessary proper steps to provide for a full and impartial and expert investigation into the estimates and expenditures of the Hydro-electric Power Commission; and, further, is of the opinion that when such investigation has been completed, the facts and findings should be submitted to this Legislative Assembly."