

VERBAL VOLLEYS IN LEGISLATURE

Ministry's Inaction on St. Lawrence Power Sharply Scored.

RANEY IS TRUCULENT

Hon. G. H. Ferguson and Dr. Godfrey Take Up Challenge.

Issues which maintained interest at the fever pitch were consistently before the Legislature yesterday and resulted in a sitting featured by incidents of bitter controversy. When the session opened the subject which almost immediately arose was that of protecting the Province's interests in the St. Lawrence power development, a concern which was of sufficient importance to arouse the members to pointed expressions of opinion with regard to the Government's policy.

When this question was settled by the Prime Minister's statement that the discussion had moved him to telegraph to Ottawa in Ontario's interests, Attorney-General Raney commenced his speech on the Address from the Throne and unloosed a storm of partisan feelings which culminated in one member giving him the lie direct.

It was the most heated sitting which the House has yet held this session, and the St. Lawrence power discussion, while spirited in itself, proved to be comparatively the calm before the storm. The Conservative side of the House impressed upon the Prime Minister the danger of his attitude of inaction with regard to the reports that American interests were preparing to develop St. Lawrence power. The reports, they stressed, must have some foundation in fact, and they emphasized how serious a matter it would be if American capital should commence St. Lawrence exploitation without regard to Ontario's rights. The Prime Minister expressed his own confidence in the Ottawa's Government seeing that Ontario was advised of any decisive movement in St. Lawrence power projects, but he stated that, since the discussion had started, he had despatched a telegram to Ottawa, stating that Ontario would expect to be consulted in any matters affecting its power interests.

When the Attorney-General arose to contribute his part to the debate on the Speech from the Throne, it was already after five o'clock. In the short period which remained at his disposal, however, he succeeded in drawing upon himself a shower of denials and protests from members which had not been equalled by any previous speaker. He was bitter in his complaints at the criticism which had been his from his opponents, and he was extravagant in his countercharges against them. Contending for a tone of political debate which should be above the use of personalities, he yet employed personalities himself to an extent which drew forth from Hon. G. H. Ferguson the reminder that opportunity for reprisal might come. He attained the summit of his appeal when he challenged Hon. Mr. Ferguson to embody his criticism in a vote of censure and to bring it before the House in which the Government had a majority.

The House did not receive the public accounts from the Treasury

Department, as had been expected. It is understood that they are indefinitely delayed.

Protecting Water Powers

Mr. R. R. Hall, Parry Sound, again raised the question of protecting Ontario's water power rights on the St. Lawrence, reading a news despatch on the question showing the alleged activities of United States interests.

Hon. G. H. Ferguson asked if any communication had been received from the Federal Government. The Premier replied in the negative.

Mr. Ferguson said the St. Lawrence situation was most serious, being the basis of the whole Ontario problem, for, in the last analysis, the Province would have to depend on the St. Lawrence for its supply of power. He alluded to a further despatch from Ottawa, which, he declared, showed the activities of interests to the south in endeavoring to secure power rights on the St. Lawrence River. If, he emphasized, any negotiations were entered into, or agreements made, Ontario must be consulted and be a party to the transactions. "Ontario should, in any case," he said, "make known its position in no uncertain way." He agreed with the Premier that all surplus water not required for navigation purposes belonged to Ontario. The eastern part of the Province was now facing a serious lack of power, and must look for development, and he would press for strongest protest to go from the Legislature against any action being taken on any project without the Province being consulted. Mr. Ferguson also pointed out that any development on the American side of the river would reduce the flow and interfere with safety.

Premier Drury did not attach much importance to the despatch from Ottawa. He said that the relations between the Ontario and the Federal Government on the whole question of waterways were such that it was inconceivable that the latter would even consider such matters without fully notifying the Ontario administration. The two Governments had reached an agreement on the western waters, and he did not think the Senate would throw the bill out a second time.

Mr. Ferguson: "Because you told them what you would do?"

Premier Drury: "Yes, and we will do it." He assured the House that a close watch would be kept on the whole question.

Mr. Wellington Hay would prefer to see more business and less politics in the matter before the House. He charged that Mr. Ferguson when in office did not send any protest to Ottawa, and wondered what was the reason for the Conservative leader's interest now.

Mr. Ferguson: "The leader of the Liberal party should know that he is discussing something he knows nothing about. He has challenged me, in effect, to define the position of the Conservative party on the waterways situation. The litigation against the Dominion Government claiming the surplus water now under discussion was commenced by the Conservative Government of Ontario."

"What was the dispute?" asked Mr. Wellington Hay.

Ferguson Took Action.

Mr. Ferguson: "The whole question of surplus water, canals and streams in the Province of Ontario. The Dominion Government claimed superior rights. Our contention was that the Federal Government could use the waters for navigation, but that we had the right to the power. Not only the Conservative Government, but I myself began the action. Now what is my honorable friend talking about? When he begins to discuss matters of this kind he should at least inform himself correctly before he undertakes to correct anyone else. Where would Ontario have been if the party he followed had continued in power in connection with the Niagara power? Where would the Hydro project have been? There would have been no public ownership inaugurated if his friends had been permitted to carry on."

Mr. Ferguson recalled an all-night session in the Legislature when the Conservative Government fought to destroy an agreement giving power rights to a private corporation. "These," the Conservative leader de-