

## BIG HYDRO PROJECT ON ABITIBI RIVER UNDER NEGOTIATION

### Pulp Company Proposal Being Considered by Ontario Government

Further discussion of Northern Ontario's power troubles in the Legislature yesterday afternoon drew from Premier Drury a statement to the effect that a tentative proposal had been made by which the development of power along the whole length of the Abitibi River would be placed in the hands of the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Company.

The Premier stated that if the proposal were endorsed by the Government and by the company power would be provided for the mining districts at a price to be regulated by the Government. As yet neither party had investigated the proposal, but if it fell through steps would be taken to lease the power rights to other private concerns.

#### Premier Replies to Protests.

This was the Premier's answer to vigorous protests against alleged Government inactivity in the face of power shortage which was crippling the Porcupine and other mining districts.

Malcolm Lang (Independent Liberal, Cochrane) raised the question by quoting newspaper despatches which stated that 500 married men had been placed on part time at the Porcupine mines owing to the inability of the mines to secure power. Hon. G. H. Ferguson declared that unless a remedy were provided by the Government the production of gold would fall off by two-thirds.

M. M. MacBride (Independent Labor, South Brant) wanted to know why the development of powers on the Abitibi River could not be placed in the hands of the Hydro-electric Commission. He had received a telegram from the labor organization in the mining district which demanded Government action to relieve a situation which was fast becoming acute.

#### Private Firm Has Foothold.

In reply Mr. Drury stated that it was difficult to say whether or not a public development could secure a footing on a river the storage of which was in the hands of a private company. The previous Government had turned over control of the storage waters in Lake Abitibi to the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Company, and the development of the whole river was, to all intents and purposes, linked up with control of these storage waters. Under the circumstances he did not see how the Hydro could step in.

J. E. Thompson (Conservative, Northeast Toronto) sponsored a bill to authorize the Finance Commissioner of the city of Toronto to take advantage of varying exchange rates in retiring bonds. The measure provides that bonds may be sold in New York and the proceeds applied to the retiring of bonds held in London, or vice versa.

## PROVINCIAL BANKS ACQUIRE DEPOSITS WITH MUCH SPEED

### Seven Branches Hold Savings Aggregating Almost Five Millions

#### MEMBERS ASK QUESTIONS

Hon. Peter Smith yesterday afternoon relieved J. McNamara's curiosity as to the progress made by the Provincial savings deposit banks. In answer to a question by the Labor member for Riverdale, the Provincial Treasurer stated that deposits in the seven branches already established, less withdrawals, totalled \$4,870,112. This figure covered the period between March 1, 1922, and January 31, 1923, and included deposits from some 15,000 individuals.

At the present time there are two branches in Toronto and one in each of the following cities: Brantford, Hamilton, Ottawa, St. Catharines and Woodstock.

This was but one of nearly a dozen subjects referred to in Ministers' answers to members' questions.

#### Borrows \$74,525,000.

Hon. G. H. Ferguson elicited the information that the total amount of money borrowed by the Government from the end of the fiscal year 1921 to December 31, 1922, was \$74,525,000.

There was a touch of irony in Hon. W. E. Raney's answer to Dr. Forbes Godfrey's question as to cost to the Government of luncheons arranged by the Hotels Committee. According to the Attorney-General the committee had invited guests on only one occasion—at Ottawa—at a cost of \$80.50. But "the Provincial Auditor has not passed the account." Somebody is out of pocket.

In answer to M. M. MacBride, the Attorney-General tabled a detailed statement of the cost of maintaining the eight Government liquor dispensaries during the years 1919, 1920, 1921, and the first 10 months of 1922. The figures for the respective years are \$307,176, \$520,899, \$458,910 and \$374,896, the total being \$1,661,781.

Hon. Manning Doherty stated that during the three years ending December 31, 1922, the Salvation Army had brought 3,965 immigrants to the Province of Ontario, of whom 436 were farm laborers.

Hon. H. C. Nixon, Provincial Secretary, stated that there had been a few complaints with reference to the Homewood Sanatorium at Guelph, but that on investigation they had been found unwarranted.