

# HYDRO COMMISSION PROVIDES MATERIAL FOR PEPPERY DEBATE

## Warm Passages Mark Prolonged and Bitter Discussion in Legislature

### EXPENDITURE UNDER FIRE

## Many Harsh Things Are Said, and Some Are Withdrawn

Reference to the evidence taken at Tuesday's sitting of the Gregory Commission, and a request for information as to the Government's connection with the Hydro-electric Power Commission's expenditure of campaign funds during the controversy which preceded the recent vote on the construction of the Toronto, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls Radial Railway, precipitated in the Legislature yesterday afternoon the most spectacular argumentative "free-for-all" of the current session.

#### Charge Follows Charge.

For nearly three hours the orders of the day languished on legislative desks while Ontario's law-makers competed in hurling charges at each other, the Hydro Commission, the Gregory Commission and the Government. And for every charge there was a rebuttal, and usually a counter-charge. The result was a welter of recrimination and personalities which, after culminating in a bitter attack by W. F. Nickle, K.C., on Hon. D. Carmichael, Minister without portfolio, found its double denouement in a demand that Premier Drury either "curb" Sir Adam Beck or make way for someone who could, and a statement by the Premier that the Gregory Commission was endeavoring to discover whether or not a "clique of officials" was managing the Hydro without deference to Governmental authority.

#### Culmination of Squabble.

After the Premier had declared in one of half a dozen speeches that money for propagandist purposes had been expended through the Hydro offices in direct defiance of his Government; after M. M. MacBride had declared that "British justice" was not being meted out to the Hydro Commission by the Gregory Commission; after J. A. Currie had attacked the Chairman of the latter body as being "anti-Canadian" and an "annexationist," and accused him of "smelling around" in an effort to "get" Sir Adam Beck; after R. L. Brackin had declared that the Hydro had expended \$1,250,000 illegally; after W. H. Casselman (U.F.O.) had attacked the Government which he ostensibly supports, and after H. A. Stevenson had insinuated "graft" in connection with the sale of Hydro debentures, Mr. Nickle stretched the tension of an already over-wrought House to near-breaking point by likening Hon. D. Carmichael, Government representative on the Hydro Commission, to a spineless oyster—an oyster which remained silent in the House for fear that another "outburst" such as that which attended the tendering of his resignation last year would precipitate acceptance of that resignation, and consequent deprivation of the emoluments of office.

#### A Few Withdrawals.

"Offensive and untruthful" came the retort direct, coupled with a demand for an apology. The upshot of it all was the withdrawal of the "spineless" and "offensive and un-

truthful" and a statement by the Premier accepting complete responsibility for non-acceptance of Mr. Carmichael's resignation.

"Why does the Government Minister without portfolio continue to sit as a member of the Hydro Commission?" asked Mr. Nickle (Conservative, Kingston), after observing that Mr. Carmichael had taken his seat, toward the close of the afternoon. "Surely if a man is being paid \$8,000 of the people's money, the representatives of the people have a right to hear his voice when matters are raised such as those which have been raised this afternoon."

#### "He Sits Silent."

"I sometimes wonder," he continued, "if the honorable Premier has told him to be careful, and that he keeps silent because he fears that if there is another outburst similar to that of a year ago, the Premier would accept his resignation."

The events of the afternoon, added Mr. Nickle, had produced an exact parallel to those which attended the recent attacks on the Workmen's Compensation Board. Then the Minister concerned had spoken only after extreme provocation. "And today the Minister without portfolio sits silent, as quiet as an oyster, and without much more spine."

"If the Minister without portfolio intends to maintain his position on the commission, then the House demands that it have his opinions. If this \$11,000 was spent for propaganda purposes, if the Premier had advised his Minister that such expenditure was not authorized by the Government, where was the Minister without portfolio when the expenditure was being made? Was he then as silent at the board of the commission as he has been here this afternoon? And if he was silent, is not the Government as much to blame as the Chairman of the commission, who is alleged to have acted in an improper manner?"

#### Answer Not Ready.

After F. G. Sandy (U.F.O., South Victoria) had intervened with a declaration that the Minister referred to had "just as much principle in the House," Mr. Carmichael took up the cudgels in his defense.

He referred first to the demand which J. W. McLeod (Liberal, Stormont) had made for an answer to his question regarding the Hydro campaign funds. The answer was not ready, but he had asked the Secretary of the Hydro Commission to prepare an answer.

"As far as the expenditure itself was concerned," he continued, "the matter was not brought before the Hydro Commission. I knew perfectly well that no funds had been authorized for Hydro-radial purposes."

"I knew that the Government had refused a request of the Chairman of the Hydro Commission. I can say in all truthfulness that the account for the money expended was never brought before the Hydro Commission; that it was never sanctioned by the Hydro Commission, and that the expenditure was not authorized by the commission."

"If it was made, it was made without my knowledge, and if the account was passed, it was done without my knowledge."

The Minister then turned to answer the personal remarks of his opponent, remarks which he termed "uncalled for."

#### Red-hot Crossfire.

"The Premier knows," he continued, "that he is at liberty to accept my resignation whenever he wishes to do so. I think that the member for Kingston owes me an apology. His remarks were offensive and untruthful."

Mr. Nickle was on his feet with an immediate demand for a retraction of "the last two words."

"Certainly," replied the Minister, after admitting that he had used the terms in the heat of debate. "If the honorable member treats me with the same courtesy he will also withdraw."

Mr. Nickle refused to comply.

Mr. Carmichael stuck to his guns. "If anybody would suggest that I would do anything under duress, if he would make the statement outside the House, I would treat him as one man usually treats another who makes such statements."

Then ensued an argument as to what Mr. Nickle had said, to the