

MARCEAU CHARGES

Member for Nipissing Tells House Contractors on Timiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway Fleeced Their Employees—Minister of Labor Says He Was Unaware of Conditions

PREMIER PROMISES AN INVESTIGATION

Prompt investigation into allegations made in the Legislature last night as to conditions under which workmen on the Timiskaming & Northern Ontario extension were placed under by the sub-contractors was promised by Premier Drury, who said that he would "have the matter thoroughly investigated, get information and submit it to the House before it rises."

Capitalizing Contracts.

The statements were made by J. H. Marceau (Liberal, Nipissing), who said that the contract for the extension had been "sublet and sublet, and sublet again," and the final contractors were getting the men to work for "nothing but their board."

Mr. Marceau brought the matter to the attention of the House by asking the Minister of Labor, Hon. Walter R. Rollo, why a fair-wage clause had not been inserted in the contract. Mr. Rollo replied that he had been promised by the T. & N.O. Commission that a clause would be inserted to pay the prevailing rate of wages in that district. This was the first intimation he had that this clause had not been placed in the contract.

Says Men Were Underpaid.

Premier Drury then took a hand, and asked Mr. Marceau for particulars. Mr. Marceau said these sub-contractors paid the men as little as possible, and charged for mail service, doctors' fees, transportation and the like. Under questioning by the Premier, he admitted that on certain work the men were paid from \$26 to \$32 a month with board, but were charged for board the days they were sick, and for baggage, in addition to the other charges. The Premier asked him what wages were paid in lumber camps. Mr. Marceau replied, \$35 to \$40 a month, "but there is not the same thievery in the lumber camps."

The Premier asked for proof and asked also what transportation these men were charged. Mr. Marceau said they were charged transportation for whatever distance they came, but had it refunded if they worked for three months. The contractors charged on the railway from Cochrane north, but Mr. Marceau added that the charge was not always alike. "Hundreds of men told me they have been fleeced by the sub-contractors," he declared.

Would Encourage Hospitals.

During the consideration of estimates of the Provincial Secretary, F. Wellington Hay, Liberal Leader, put in a plea for the hospitals in small centres. There was a tendency to make the requirements such that small hospitals could not meet them, he claimed. He suggested that the department encourage in the small towns any efforts to build hospitals.

Mr. Dewart made strong criticism of the Government for not putting details in the estimates of the building of the T. & N. O. extension so that the House would know what it was voting for. He wanted some record, he added, so that the House would know how the decision of the Government was arrived at. The Premier explained that the vote in question was to fulfil the contract made two years ago—to finish the second section of the extension, the first extension being already practically completed.

CROWN ASSISTANTS IN LOCAL DISTRICT TO GET INCREASES

Blue Sky Bill Again Signal for Raney-Dewart Bout

NORTH TO GET \$5,000,000

Earnest pleas for higher salaries for the Assistant Crown Attorneys for Toronto and York county were made in the Legislature yesterday by H. H. Dewart, K.C. (Liberal, Southwest Toronto), and backed up by J. Walter Curry, K.C. (Liberal, Southeast Toronto), and W. H. Price (Conservative, Parkdale).

Increases Are Probable.

"I think I can assure the House that the Government will recognize their services by substantial increases," said Hon. W. E. Raney. "I think the figures mentioned by Mr. Curry are not out of the way." He added that he would be disposed to recommend them to the Government. In reply to further questions by Mr. Dewart, the Attorney-General said he could not make the recommendation until after the session, as there was an agreement that Ministers should not ask for increases for their departments during the session.

The figures mentioned by Mr. Curry were \$5,000 a year for Mr. McRuer; \$4,000 a year for Mr. McFadden, and \$3,500 a year for Mr. Murphy.

A vote of \$10,000 was passed for publicity purposes in regard to hotels, to be carried on by the Board of License Commissioners. The vote was anticipatory of the action of the House on the report of the Hotels Commission, Mr. Raney said.

Sale of Ontario Apples.

While discussing the agricultural estimates Hon. Manning Doherty said that he would like to see the Niagara Peninsula Growers' Company go farther and take on the marketing of apples. The only way in which the Ontario apple would be put on the market, he claimed, was by a marketing organization to take hold of the grading and packing, and push the sale of apples on a large scale.

A vote of \$5,000 was passed for a radio broadcasting station at the Ontario Agricultural College. The Minister said that if he considered information could be broadcasted to a sufficient number the department would go on with the installation.

Aero-electric Latest.

One thousand dollars was voted for an experiment on the O.A.C. farm as to the value of an aero-electric plant for farm light and power. The Minister explained that this method was substantially the substitution of a windmill for a gasoline engine in running the generator for private farm power plants. In some places in the American West the scheme had been tried out.

Joseph E. Thompson (Conservative, Northeast Toronto) introduced the bill to permit Toronto to acquire the Toronto Suburban Railway within Toronto. The bill was given first reading.

Third reading was given to the Act to Amend the Judicature Act.

\$5,000,000 for North.

The House adopted the resolution

of Hon. Beniah Bowman authorizing the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to raise \$5,000,000 for Northern development. Mr. Bowman explained that this was a renewal of a vote of \$5,000,000 made in three previous sessions. The money would not have had to be voted this year except for money expended following the Northern fire of last September. The money would be used to carry on the present system of trunk road building, lending money to settlers, and expenses along these lines, Mr. Bowman explained.

Second reading was given to the Act Amending the Rural Hydro-electric Distribution Act, which provides that the bonus for building these lines can be paid only when a municipality planning to extend lines to an adjoining municipality

obtains the consent of such municipality. This makes the law conform with the Public Utilities Act. Charles McCrea (Conservative, Sudbury) asked if the Government expenditure for rural Hydro distribution was in the nature of a gift or was it to be paid back. "This, of course, is a gift from the Government," replied Hon. D. Carmichael. Speaking offhand, he would say it should be charged against ordinary expenditure, he said.

To Amend Assessment Act.

Second reading was given also to Hon. H. C. Nixon's bill to amend the Assessment Act, which permits a manufacturer who has part of his premises used for retail purposes to appeal to the Court of Revision to have his 1922 assessment so rectified that the retail portion shall be assessed only at 25 per cent.

There was considerable discussion on the second reading of Hon. Harry Mills' bill respecting certain Canada Company lands, especially in Elgin county. R. L. Brackin (Liberal, West Kent) asked if it were wise to pass legislation that enabled the company to relieve itself of taxes owing to townships. Mr. Mills argued that the townships had not the right to tax minerals, but Mr. Brackin retorted that they had. Eventually the Attorney-General suggested that amendments might be submitted in committee to cover Mr. Brackin's point. The bill was given second reading.

Second reading was given also to the bill to amend the Guelph Railway Act, which brings the act into conformity with the agreement.

Three Bills Withdrawn.

Three bills were withdrawn—the bill relating to land titles and the registration of instruments relating to lands, the commercial agreements bill (anti-combines bill) and the bill regarding the boring and protection of wells.

There was a sharp clash between H. H. Dewart and the Attorney-General when the latter called for consideration of the "Blue Sky" law. Mr. Dewart asked if the bill had been reprinted, and Mr. Raney said it had not. "It was the understanding of the House that the bill would be printed," claimed Mr. Dewart. The Attorney-General replied that the changes in the bill were so trifling that it was not necessary to reprint the bill.