

Thursday, Feb. 19th

Discusses Hydro Affairs.

After paying the usual compliments to the new members and testifying to his high regard for the late Sergeant-at-Arms, Sam Clarke, Liberal member for Northumberland, went on to discuss Hydro matters, particularly those arising out of the Snider investigation. Much as Mr. Clarke respected Sir Adam Beck, he believed that one or two of the findings of the Commissioner had demonstrated that the biggest and best of public men were not infallible, and that officials in high office in big institutions were apt to take it for granted that they owned the business.

Mr. Clarke commenced to question the propriety of releasing to the public only parts of the Settell letter, but professed himself agreeably surprised to learn that the whole of the letter had been handed to Commissioner Snider for his own selection of those portions upon which charges were to be based.

Comment on Hydro Insurance.

The member for Northumberland spent some time reviewing the evidence and the findings affecting the insurance department of the Hydro, presided over by Hon. I. B. Lucas, and emphasized the salaries drawn by Mr. Lucas, his sons, and the lawyer, Evans, who were either in the Hydro or with the Municipal Underwriters, the concern formed to handle Hydro insurance. He wondered why all this legal talent of the Lucas family was unable to draft a charter for the underwriters without paying the Hearst legal firm some hundreds of dollars as a retainer.

Coming to the question of the proposed 4.4 per cent. beer—an issue which, Mr. Clarke said, he perhaps

knew more about than he did of Hydro—the Liberal member said that, while last year he had told the House he would give the Province 5 per cent. beer if he were Premier, he could not now endorse such a policy, in view of the sustaining of the O.T.A. at the polls.

"You would have done a mighty sight better if you had given the Province 5 per cent. beer a year ago," said Mr. Clarke to Premier Ferguson. "You are in an awful mess now."

Speaker Takes a Hand.

When J. A. McCausland, Conservative member for Southwest Toronto, interrupted for the fourth or fifth time, Speaker Thompson arose to declare, with some vigor, that these "eternal interruptions" from members had to cease. Such tactics, said Hon. Mr. Thompson, were beneath the dignity of the Legislature, and he would insist not only that members confine themselves to questions, but that they observe the rule which restricts that privilege to members occupying their own seats. Mr. McCausland, who was at the moment sitting behind the Treasury benches, thereupon crossed the floor, resumed his own seat, and promptly arose with his third query of Mr. Clarke: "Are you in favor of 5 per cent. beer?"

"No," said Mr. Clarke. "Not under present conditions, when you have the vote of the people sustaining the Ontario Temperance Act."

The Liberal member, however, proceeded to say that he would sooner a thousand times have 5 per cent. beer in Ontario than Government control, under which every municipality would have a liquor shop inflicted upon it.

Twits Attorney-General.

Proceeding, Mr. Clarke twitted the Attorney-General with having travelled "from Dan to Beersheba" in his speech the night previous, "to try to bolster up the people behind him and convince the people of this country that this Government had not betrayed the people by changing this law after the people had voted upon it."

He derided the argument of Mr. Nickle that 4.4 per cent. beer was

a measure to save the Ontario Temperance Act from the doom which Mr. Nickle had said was impending. When Mr. McCausland interrupted again to say, "So it is," Mr. Clarke answered: "You will go to another place first."

"Imagine a man of his intelligence," declared Mr. Clarke, referring to Mr. Nickle, "arguing that 5 per cent. beer is the only salvation to keep alive and protect that good law, the O.T.A. Can you conceive of such an argument coming from a man who was almost looked upon as the good boy of the Legislature? If he is the good boy, then, from what I saw of him last night, I say Lord help the rest of us."

Mr. Clarke did not believe that the Attorney-General had been candid when he had said that the Government expected that the Ontario Temperance Act would be sustained in the plebiscite by a huge majority.

Expected Government Control.

"I think," said Mr. Clarke, "that if he would be candid with this House, the Premier himself would admit he expected to have Government control."

The Government could not get away from the issue, in Mr. Clarke's opinion. When they attempted to tell the House that they were passing a beer measure to assist the O.T.A., and that there was no breach of faith with the electorate, "then I say they are not saying what is correct."

Mr. McCausland—Are you in favor of 5 per cent. beer?

Mr. Clarke—I think I answered that before. But when they tell you that conditions all over this Province have not improved since the law came into force, then they are talking something that is absolute rot.

There never was anything more incorrect, Mr. Clarke declared, than the assumption that Ontario was gradually going wet. The town-

ships, he believed, were 50 per cent. drier today than they were a year or two ago. Mr. Nickle, he believed, had missed the chance of a lifetime to make himself the man above all men in the Province. A few more \$1,000 fines, with jail for the bootleggers, and, Mr. Clarke thought, Ontario would have been cleaned up in five years.

He twitted the Conservative morning newspaper which had said that this beer would cheer but not inebriate. Mr. Clarke said that in his experience the cheering nearly always indicated inebriation.

Agrees With His Leader.

With his leader, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Clarke thought that the onus rested upon the Legislature and the Public Accounts Committee to clean up the

matter of Home Bank commissions on the 1919 \$4,000,000 Province of Ontario loan, some of which money had been reported in evidence to have left for the Parliament Buildings. Much as he regretted that there were former public servants now languishing on milk without porridge in the Kingston "summer resort," he felt that if there were others who ought to join them the Legislature should do its duty.

While he was sincerely sorry that the Public Accounts Committee had not completed that portion of its job last year, he did not hold the Chairman or the committee members responsible for it. Conditions were obviously unfavorable, he said, for the clean-up that was so desirable.

R. H. Kemp (Progressive, Lincoln) adjourned the debate.