

Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

# SINCLAIR IN DOUBT THAT GASOLINE TAX CAN BE COLLECTED

Maintains That Government  
Has No Definite Legal  
Method

## BILL NOW IN LAST STAGE

Slashing criticism of Governmental reticence in giving details as to how it was going to collect its three-cent-a-gallon tax on gasoline, followed by sarcastic comment which made Treasury-bench occupants wince when the Premier said that the Government still was studying this matter, were the means by which Liberal Leader Sinclair livened a somewhat dull committee debate in the Legislature yesterday afternoon.

### Sinclair in Good Form.

It was the Liberal Leader's best impromptu effort this session and he roused his followers to much desk hammering. The incident began when Zotique Mageau (Liberal, Sturgeon Falls) argued that with a gasoline tax there should be a graded license fee for motor cars; that the man who ran his car only four or five months in the year should not have to pay the same license fee as the person who ran his car 12 months of the year. Mr. Sinclair backed up this claim, and declared that the present method, the basis of the present tax, was absolutely unsound, unfair, and indefensible.

Mr. Sinclair then demanded that the Government say where the consumer was going to pay the gasoline tax. Would it be at the gasoline station? Unless the tax were payable there the act was unconstitutional. "The Government won't tell us. I think this bill should not be allowed to pass the committee stage until the Government tells us."

### Collect From Purchasers.

"The tax will be collected by the agents of the Government," said Hon. George S. Henry, Minister of Public Works and Highways.

"Who will the agents of the Government get the tax from?" demanded Mr. Sinclair.

"From the purchaser," said Mr. Henry.

Mr. Sinclair pictured an army of tax collectors trailing 250,000 motorists to see that no rightful claim for tax was evaded.

These sarcastic remarks roused the Premier. "My honorable friend shouldn't get absurd," he said, rising.

"Absurd," retorted the Liberal Leader. "It is you people sitting there mute that are absurd."

The Premier explained that the gasoline tax obtained in various Provinces of Canada, and that there were different methods of collection. The Government was making inquiries, information was being collected, "and then the Minister will decide the best method of collection. The tax will be imposed on the consumer. If we can't collect revenue by making a declaration of direct taxation, the Province will be in sore straits for its revenue."

### Quebec Changes Method.

He explained that Quebec had changed its method, and that in Alberta the Government nominated the big gasoline companies as agents.

"I am delighted to know from the Prime Minister that they don't know how they are going to collect the tax," said Mr. Sinclair. "That's the admission we have been trying to get, and yet less than an hour ago the Attorney-General said that this bill was constitutional." The Government last year had not heeded