

Power for Eastern Ontario.

Replying to Liberal Leader Sinclair, who had asked what the Government was doing for Eastern Ontario and its power needs, the Premier admitted that the Government was now trying to secure a block of power for this section of the Province. Mr. Sinclair expressed the view that prices would have to be much lower than they are at the present time. Mr. Ferguson explained that Eastern consumers were actually getting power cheaper than their old contracts called for, and that the taking over of the contracts by the Central Development had meant a saving to the public of \$3,500,000.

Much of the present difficulty and complaint had arisen from the matter of variation in the contracts. However, he said, a point had been reached where a satisfactory agreement was but a question of a comparatively short while.

"And," said he hopefully, "I am prepared to go a long way in conducting a publicity campaign that will bring enterprise and industries to Eastern Ontario."

Mr. Ferguson declared he could not imagine "a more preposterous situation" than the one proposed by the project in connection with which the legislation was being sought.

"The canal project is not emphasized by the promoters," said he. "They are not looking for a canal. The canal will be built without dredging, paid by the power development."

Raising Water Levels.

He showed that in power development construction of dams was an essential feature. And at the same time these dams served navigation in raising water levels back up a river. When dams were built for power purposes in the project they would do away with the necessity of canal dredging.

Illustrating his point that power and navigation plans were linked up with dams, he noted that the Government intended development at Shaw Falls, "when we get this ghost out of the way." "We'll raise the water level all up the river by a series of dams that, though they are essential for navigation, are equally essential for power development."

No Study of Canal Possibilities.

He declared that the promoters were not only not looking for a canal, but there was no study of "business possibilities." There was no attempt, such as was made in connection with plans for St. Lawrence development, said he, to show what tonnage the "navigation" section of the project provided for.

"What the promoters are really trying to do," he emphasized, "is to create what lawyers call a nuisance value."

The promoters were not after a canal, he reiterated, for in the last twenty years of contract not a dollar was spent on development nor "a spade of earth" turned for a canal.

He went on to declare that the promoters of the project would "cash in" on the nuisance value in the course of years when the value of power was increased.

He hoped that the Dominion Government would see that by passing the bill it was creating a value that was fictitious. If in the business world the creation of "nuisance values" was considered "sharp practice," why should not the promotion of the legislation in question be also considered "sharp practice"? he asked.

Power Wholly in Ontario.

Another remarkable feature of the legislation, said Mr. Ferguson, was that it gave to the promoters powers on the French River wholly in the Province of Ontario. It provided "blanket rights" for the possession of power existing or power that might be developed in Quebec or Ontario.

"I can imagine nothing quite so alarming," he concluded, "as this action at the hands of people whose history has not been entirely philanthropic."

Mr. Raney dealt for a moment with power and navigation rights on waterways throughout the Dominion. "I agree entirely," said he, "with the Prime Minister's estimate of the importance of this action. I have no hesitation in seconding this resolution. I think we ought to take action immediately." The House, he felt, should show Ottawa that it had a unanimous opinion in this matter.

Wants More Time, Says Sinclair.

Speaking directly to the motion, Liberal Leader Sinclair reiterated the belief that the Prime Minister should have given the House at least two days in which to consider the resolution. He said he could not speak to the resolution with the knowledge that he would like to bring to it, and he very much doubted if the Conservative members who "banged their desks lustily at each and every mention of Hydro" knew any more about the situation than he did.

Mr. Sinclair wondered if any such resolution had been forwarded to Ottawa in past years. Mr. Ferguson could not recall any, but said that the Government and Hydro had on several occasions filed protests against renewal of the charter.

Mr. Sinclair wondered why there had been no resolution from the Ontario Legislature in the past. Was it, he wondered, because a Liberal Government was now in power in Ottawa, whereas—in 1915-19—on the occasion of an earlier renewal of the same charter, a Conservative Government had held the Federal reins? He felt that Premier Ferguson might be taking a too "serious" view of the situation, and was convinced that Ottawa would deal with the situation properly. Like others who had spoken, he was certain that the Dominion Parliament would never pass the bill.

Might Hurt Ontario, He Argues.

In passing the resolution on to Ottawa, he thought that the Ontario Legislature was "going out of the way." It was possible, he contended, that it might influence private members there to vote in favor of the bill, and against Ontario's seeming interference.

Personally, he had always been opposed to any suggestion in the Ontario House of advising Ottawa on matters of legislation. He was consistent if nothing else. That was why he had declined to permit his name to be associated with the resolution as one of the seconders.

"But," he added, "if I was a private member at Ottawa, and was called upon to vote upon the question, I would certainly cast my vote in the interests of the people of Ontario."

Karl K. Homuth (Independent-Labor, South Waterloo), speaking as the only elected Labor man in the House, declared he felt he expressed the view of the great mass of the working people in the Province when he endorsed the resolution.

Replying to Mr. Sinclair, Premier Ferguson stated that already the Province had on record at Ottawa a protest against the projected legislation. But it was felt that a resolution from the House, the opinion of all the representatives of the people, would add great weight to the protest.

The resolution then was carried.

Text of Resolution Protesting Charter

The full text of the resolution of protest against the renewal of the charter of the Montreal, Ottawa & Georgian Bay Company, which resolution was endorsed unanimously yesterday by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, is as follows:

"That this House respectfully urges the Parliament of Canada not to enact Bill No. 78 of the House of Commons respecting the Montreal, Ottawa & Georgian Bay Company for the reasons hereinafter set forth:

"That the bill proposes to renew a charter to authorize the construction of a canal and the development of water powers on the Ottawa and the French Rivers, which said charter has already been in existence for 33 years without any evidence of progress toward the accomplishment of the projected canal;

"That the application to Parliament is an effort on the part of private promoters to secure through the Federal Parliament the control and ownership of a great and valuable public utility;

"That the water powers in the Ottawa River in interprovincial waters are the joint property of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and that the powers in the French River are wholly situate within Ontario, and are the property of the Province of Ontario, and cannot be rightfully legislated upon by the Dominion Parliament;

"That the development of these powers is essential to the industry and the prosperity of the two Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and the only effect of Federal legislation purporting to vest these powers in a private company will be to retard development, create litigation, and impair the public interest;

"That the water powers of the Ottawa River, so far as they belong to this Province, are an essential part of the public development and distribution of power in Ontario, in which the people of this Province have already invested upward of \$276,000,000;

"That this Legislative Assembly desires to record its most earnest and emphatic protest against the attempt being made, by means of a private bill in the Dominion Parliament, to alienate valuable water powers from the control and ownership of this Province, and thereby deprive the people of Ontario of the advantage of one of our greatest natural resources for the benefit and advantage of private promoters;

"That the Province of Ontario respectfully urges that the rights guaranteed to the Provinces under the Federal Constitution should be at all times respected by the Parliament of Canada;

"That this House believes that the occasion calls for a strong and conclusive pronouncement against the proposed legislation as being contrary to the spirit and the terms of Confederation and prejudicial to the public interest.

"For these and other reasons this House directs that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada and to the Speakers of the two Houses of Parliament of Canada."

The resolution was moved by Hon. G. Howard Ferguson, Prime Minister, and seconded by Hon. W. E. Raney, Progressive Leader.