

"Travesty on Justice."

Mr. Sinclair, opening his argument against the motion, began: "The Premier concluded his remarks by saying that he sought to avoid any party flavor. It would not, to my mind, require a party man at all to rise and protest against a resolution of this kind in one of the Legislatures of the British Empire. I hold no brief for any newspaper, have no stock in any of them, and am not interested in them in any way whatever, other than to see that all public journals get a square deal, and have representation when they are being assailed. One would think that, instead of being the Ontario Legislature, we had suddenly been transferred to Mexico. There is a trial here and a declaration on a party that is undefended, unrepresented, and absent in person. What greater travesty on justice could there be than this in a Legislature."

"If," he declared, "resolutions such as this can be passed, there is little that cannot be passed." He recalled that a great writer had stated: "Parliament can do anything but make a man a woman, and a woman a man."

"It looks," Mr. Sinclair added, "as if the Ontario Legislature is getting down to the last act of its power."

The Star, he went on, had seen fit to state how its misstatement came about. "My honorable friends know," Mr. Sinclair added, "that in a libel action that goes a long way, if not altogether, to eliminate any chance of action. The Star has stated frankly to the people, on the first opportunity it had, just how the report came to be published. I suppose that papers, like human beings, are apt to make mistakes once in a while. They come forward frankly and say that they have made a mistake."

"What More Can Be Done?"

He, too, then read The Star's correction, and continued: "What more can be done? When the paper frankly admits its mistake and apologizes, why should we go further and place ourselves, as representatives of the people of Ontario, in an absolutely ridiculous and absurd position?"

Of course, said Mr. Sinclair, the Premier "feels it keenly, and somebody has caught somebody doing something that a lot of people do not approve of." But was that any reason why the paper which made the mistake should be "castigated"?

"There were not more than thirty members here when this came up in the House yesterday, or no more than thirty-five altogether," the Liberal Leader continued, "and yet you are getting ready to vote and going to vote on something you don't know anything about."

Laughter from the Opposition benches greeted this sally.

"This just shows the lengths to which you'll go if the Premier asks you to go," Mr. Sinclair continued. "I repeat what I stated the other day: that this is a one-man Government. And he is asking you to place yourselves in a ridiculous position before the people of the Province."

Like Judge and Jury.

He referred to portions of the resolution and went on: "This Legislature is placing itself in the position of Judge and jury, and trying The Star in its absence. Now, Mr. Speaker, surely the members of the Ontario Legislature are not going to have it known that this is the way they do things in this Legislature. Surely good judgment is going to say to the Premier that you had better withdraw your resolution, because the paper has apologized, because it is not represented, nor here in person, that this is entirely an ex-parte proceeding, and leave the matter where The Star has placed it itself. The Premier says that The Star 'shouts slander and whispers an apology.' But I can tell the Premier that it will be no whisper that will go up and down the length and breadth of Ontario when the papers carry the news that he has forced on the Legislature such a resolution as this on an absent, undefended party."

Mr. Haney started a little cross-fire with Mr. Sinclair over use of the word "forced." The West Lambton member wanted to tell the House "there's too much suggestion of a one-man Government, and all this nonsense. I represent a constituency of which I am proud," he started off, but the Speaker cut short this speech and told the ardent Mr. Haney that he was out of order. Mr. Haney apologized. He didn't mean to be out of order. He just wanted to ask Mr. Sinclair if he thought there was some force behind the resolution.

Believes Force Behind It.

"I think I made it clear that I do," the Liberal Leader replied. A lot of the members, said he, didn't know anything about the resolution until it was introduced.

"No, no!" came a shout from the Conservative benches.

"The Premier prepared a resolution and it is here for you to endorse," Mr. Sinclair retorted.

"I want to make absolutely clear the position I take," he went on. He was, said he, as anxious as any member to observe and maintain the dignity and privileges of the Legislature. "But," he added, "when it comes to trying a party ex parte, without representation, I for one stand aside and say I am no party to it." He would maintain such a position, said he, as long as he had a seat in the House.

"This," he continued, "is more than a party matter. It is a matter of justice, right and freedom. The Legislature is taking steps that would not be tolerated for a minute in any court or other institution. This is a thing that Britons have fought for since there has been a Briton, and will ever fight for: the freedom of the individual, and his right to be heard and give a defense. I am obliged to resist any such resolution as this going on the journals of the House and handed down to posterity as part of the proceedings of a Legislature in which I occupy a position as one of the members of that Legislature."

Lethbridge's Comments.

John G. Lethbridge, Progressive Leader, next took the floor to say that he thought there was "very little reason why a resolution of this kind should be brought before the Legislature." In the main, he said, the report in the paper seemed to be correct.

"The point," he said, "is whether the Prime Minister or the Attorney-General ordered the money returned."

"No, no, no!" shouted Government members.

The Progressive Leader started another explanation of what he thought to be the "point."

"No, no, no!" the shouting continued, and he was advised to "read the article."

Well, said Mr. Lethbridge, at any rate, he would say that, so far as the dignity of the House was concerned, it had been offended "times over" in the past, and he suggested that the whole matter go before the Privileges and Elections Committee.

D. J. Taylor (Progressive, North Grey) told the House: "I can't altogether agree with the remarks of my Leader." He thought that The Star had made a sincere effort to retract its statement, and in similar cases such a procedure was usually considered

"enough." He suggested that it was a matter of "whose ox is being gored."

He felt that the Premier was asking too much, though the Government members would certainly carry the resolution. "It is not of sufficient importance," he said, "except as the Prime Minister sees it possibly affecting his own political prosperity, to be handed to the committee."

"An Ill Return."

"To err is human, and to forgive divine," was the sentiment of P. W. Pearson (Liberal, North York). "If," he told the Premier, "you tread on a man's toes and he excuses himself, it is an ill return to buffet him on the ear." He thought that the misstatement was a regrettable matter, but it involved a remarkable affair, and that was the soliciting done among the liquor people by the Central Committee.

Leslie W. Oke (U.F.O., East Lambton) felt that the dignity of the House should be preserved, but he recalled remarks that had been uttered since the opening of this session which, in his opinion, did not maintain that dignity. As an example, he cited the definition—"suffering from the disease paresis"—which had been applied to Liberal Leader W. E. N. Sinclair.

The Government benchers, he said, had laughed over that remark, but, not being an academic man, he had been at a loss to understand what they were laughing at. He had got out a Webster's and had found that paresis was a disease caused by softening of the brain.

Oke Upholds His Leader.

Mr. Oke took exception to this description, also to the statement that had been made regarding Progressive Leader Lethbridge and his alleged "suffering from old age." Mr. Lethbridge, he believed, was not suffering in any such way, but that, on the other hand, he was a very capable leader of the group at his back.