

Friday - Feb. 22nd

Lyons. Then, amid applause from the Conservative benches, he rose to reply. "I may say that, so far as Mr. Cunningham's statement is concerned," he started off, "that there is not much to retract. According to his interview he says that the only possible way the money could have reached campaign funds was through the purchase of tickets which were sold to raise campaign funds. If the brewery bought a wagonload of tickets at a dollar a ticket and used that money to elect Mr. Cunningham, I presume that would be campaign funds. He doesn't deny that the brewery didn't buy tickets."

"Getting Monotonous."

"We've listened," he continued, "to a bombardment of innuendoes and insinuations against this Government on campaign funds from liquor interests and it's getting to the point of being somewhat monotonous at least. After listening to the member from East Kent (Chris. Gardiner), I thought they would have ceased, but he continued his insinuations with regard to the Conservative Party. And I thought it time to bring matters to his attention. Whether Mr. Cunningham at that time intended to be a member of the Drury Government or not, I don't know. But the way the honorable member from West Middlesex extolled his fine qualities, they didn't disown him when he got down here. He was recognized as a Drury man."

"Not in 1919," said Mr. Lethbridge.

"Sir William Hearst," Mr. Lyons went on, "tried to give the people of this Province the last word in prohibition. And where were the Progressives in 1919? Supporting Sir William Hearst with his possibly highest plane of temperance imaginable? No; they were out on the back concessions with their little tomahawks and pitchforks. And they have been using those tools ever since. Sir William Hearst was defeated largely by funds contributed by the liquor interests to defeat him in that campaign."

Would Publish Photos.

Mr. Lyons told the House that he had on public platforms in 1926 made the charges against the Cunningham campaign fund; that he had said if his charges were denied he would publish photographs of the cheques. "For," he added, "there was more than one cheque. And they never denied it."

"It is simply because of the attitude of the Progressives who posed as the simon-pure temperance party of the Province, that these things arise," he added. "Their whole policy was temperance, but their policy in this House was entirely different. There was no substantiation of the temperance policy in this House after they came into power."

"No, no," Progressives protested against this.

"One of the first things they did after they came into power," Mr. Lyons declared, "was to grant about fourteen export licenses in Ontario. Eight were in Kenora and three in the same constituency. I say this to show that a little bit of campaign funds from liquor interests would tarnish that simon-pure temperance party."

"As far as any retraction is concerned," he then declared, "I have none to make. I have stated facts. I made those statements on the public platform and I have no hesitation in making them again."

"Not Even Whispered."

Mr. Lyons's explanation did not satisfy Hon. Harry Nixon (Progressive Brant County). Mr. Nixon declared that Mr. Lyons had not touched on the point at issue. Paraphrasing an expression used in connection with the recent vote of censure on a newspaper, Mr. Nixon declared that in this case "we have the slander shouted and the apology whispered." Mr. Lyons, said Mr. Nixon, had in subsequent newspaper interviews revised the statement made in the House by explaining the brewery cheques had not been paid to the candidate in the Sault election, but to his campaign manager, and that it had been the 1919 election and not the 1923 election he had meant to refer to.

"Surely he can make such a revision in this House where he made the original charge," declared Mr. Nixon. But Mr. Lyons would make no retraction of his statements about the Cunningham campaign. He would, however, correct an impression of whom he meant when he talked about "little tomahawks and pitchforks." He was not referring to the farmers of the Province generally, said he, but to members of the Progressive Party. The Progressives, he declared again, were guilty of hypocrisy. And this ended the episode in the House.

Friday - February - 22nd

LYONS, UNDER FIRE, REFUSES TO RETRACT HIS SAULT CHARGES

Money From Liquor Interests Chief Aid in Defeating Hearst in 1919, He States — Reiterates Claim That Brewery Cheques in Campaign Funds

PROGRESSIVE CHIEF MAKES HOT ATTACK

Attacked in the Ontario Legislature yesterday afternoon by John G. Lethbridge, Progressive Leader, and Hon. Harry C. Nixon, Progressive stalwart and former Drury Cabinet Minister, because of his statements about the campaign funds of J. B. Cunningham, Hon. James Lyons, Conservative member for Sault Ste. Marie, and former Ferguson Cabinet Minister, refused to back down on his declarations.

Not only did he refuse to retract, but he hurled further charges at the Progressive group. He told them that it was money from the liquor interests that had been the chief aid in defeating Sir William Hearst in 1919, and he flayed them on the ground that, while they called themselves simon-pure temperance people, they gave no support to Hearst on his high plane of temperance, but "were out on the back concessions with their little tomahawks and pitchforks."

"And," he added, in derision of the Progressives of the Province, "they've been using those tools ever since."

1919, Not 1923, Election.

Mr. Lethbridge brought up the matter of Mr. Lyons's reference to the Cunningham campaign and a brewery cheque and his subsequent explanatory interviews in the newspapers before the orders of the day were called. First, the Progressive Leader read newspaper reports of Mr. Lyons's statements in the Legislature and later his reported interviews. He pointed out that in these interviews Mr. Lyons was quoted as having admitted that in the House he had meant to refer to the 1919 election and not the 1923 election at Sault Ste. Marie.

In the 1919 election, declared the Progressive Leader, Hon. E. C. Drury had not even been a candidate, nor was there any connection between the then U.F.O. and Cunningham, who was a Labor candidate. So, declared Mr. Lethbridge, Mr. Lyons's statement in the House had been one to mislead the members and the Province at large "and seeks to put the Progressives on a par with the Conservatives so far as campaign funds are concerned."

"I am sure," Mr. Lethbridge declared, "that the Conservative members will not condone or sanction such tactics on the part of a member."

The Progressive Leader wanted to say something on behalf of Mr. Cunningham, but before doing so he referred again to Mr. Lyons's statements in the House and his later remarks to The Globe when, recalling his statements, he explained with "I meant to say." Mr. Lethbridge emphasized those words, "I meant to say." "And I want to say," the Progressive Leader continued, "that Mr. Cunningham is a perfect gentleman, a man who would not stoop to such tactics as were brought forward in the House on this occasion." He then referred to a press report from the Sault declaring that in it Mr. Cunningham denied Mr. Lyons's charges.

Should Retract in House.

"I want to say to the honorable member, Mr. Lethbridge went on in regard to Mr. Lyons, "that with all the facts and the partial retraction—and thanks again to the press who followed him up—if he has any retraction or revision, on the floor of the House is the place to make that revision. It is due to the honorable member that he retract that statement on the floor of the House when he admits that he meant Cunningham, not Drury or the Progressive Party. It is due to the House that the member put himself right and make a complete retraction, so far as the Drury Government and the Progressive Party are concerned. So far as Mr. Cunningham is concerned, that is a matter between the honorable member and Mr. Cunningham."

Mr. Lethbridge concluded with this and sat down. All eyes were on Mr.