

and expressed the opinion that the press would have been up in arms had it been aware of these conditions.

Mr. Sinclair declared that it was "an old stock trick in this House" for the Government to denounce Opposition members who spoke of Hydro with the words: "You're opposed to Hydro." He declared that many people of the Province wanted information about Hydro affairs and were not getting it from the Conservative Government. "This Government," he said, "is not the friend of Hydro, for it is not treating Hydro as it should."

He went on to term Hon. John R. Cooke's contribution to the Budget debate as "The annual chastisement by the Minister of Power of those who seek information on their own greatest undertaking." He said that Mr. Cooke had opposed the proposals of a flat rate, but that his recommendation that \$240,000 of maintenance charges be taken care of by the Commission was in reality a step toward a flat rate system.

Cooke is Criticized.

Mr. Cooke, who had been absent from the House during these remarks, returned to his seat at this juncture. As the Liberal Leader went on to recall certain portions of Mr. Cooke's address the Hydro Minister protested that he had not made certain statements attributed to him. As Mr. Sinclair questioned him on what he had said, Mr. Cooke declared: "If I made statements as far from the point as my honorable friend's, he'd have the right to ask questions."

"I thank the honorable Minister," said Mr. Sinclair, "for his courtesy so generously extended and so characteristic of him."

A moment later he told Mr. Cooke if he had any Hydro melon to cut he'd "better go on and cut it for it isn't one, two, three with the brewery cheques and other melons."

He declared that Mr. Cooke should give the House a frank statement on Hydro matters. "We on this side of the House," Mr. Sinclair continued, "are not as the Minister would characterize us to be. He likes to say unkind things and he's master at that."

Mr. Cooke started to get to his feet, but Mr. Sinclair protested that he was not going to have his speech interrupted and the Hydro Minister laughed and sat down again.

"What we want and what the people of the Province want," said Mr. Sinclair, "is information on Hydro and the people are going to get it and they are not going to put a strangle hold on Hydro."

Extravagance Charged.

Mr. Lethbridge contrasted the four years of the Drury Government with the five years of the Ferguson Administration, that the great cry in the Legislature of "extravagance" should not be charged up to the former, but to the latter Administration. The Ferguson Government, he claimed, was collecting approximately \$19,000,000 more in taxes from the people per year than the Drury Government did, and was spending \$18,000,000 more. Most of the revenue, he stated, was due to taxation about which the Drury Administration knew nothing—gasoline tax, profits from sale of liquor. The Drury Administration, he said, knew nothing about liquor profits.

"Oh yes they did," interjected Premier Ferguson. "They got about a million dollars of this 'tainted' money."

"Call it what you like," said Mr. Lethbridge, "but it was at least \$6,000,000 less than the present Government got from liquor sales last year."

Mr. Lethbridge cited the \$2,025,000 Hydro refund as "a lucky find for the Government this year." "It hardly seems to me to have been an accidental find," said he. "I can't believe that the Province ever expected to get it back. Wasn't it a lucky thing that they should find it this year when they needed a lot of money to tide them over a big deficit?"

Increase of Debt.

At some length the Progressive Leader illustrated the increase in the present debt under the Ferguson regime, asking, "Where is this Province going to land, if a halt is not called on taxation and expenditure? He cited the figures of expenditure for the various departments of the Government, and when he came to the Department of Mines under Hon. Charles McCrea, he noted that this department had spent only slightly more than \$100,000 more than the Drury Government used to spend, in spite of the great development that is constantly taking place in the mineral fields of the North.

"Well," interjected Premier Ferguson, "there is at least one righteous in Sodom."

Mr. Lethbridge criticized certain Gov-

ernment offices, singing out for his particular attention the post of Highway Traffic Supervisor, now held by Morrison M. MacBride, former Conservative M.P.P. for Brantford. "Why," said he, "this seems really to be an office without a job."

"He is doing good work," put in Hon. George S. Henry, Minister of Highways.

Comparing the Monteith Budget with the Robb Budget at Ottawa, the Progressive chieftain said it was difficult to see where Ontario had so much to praise in a \$228,000 surplus, achieved at the expense of a \$24,000,000 debt increase.

Hydro in the West.

On the question of Hydro, Mr. Lethbridge questioned the "high rates" now charged, and pointed out, from a letter he held, that the Provincial Government in Manitoba had contracted for the next 30 years for \$13.80 horsepower at Winnipeg.

"Is that from the Seven Sisters?" asked the Prime Minister.

"Never mind where it comes from," said Mr. Lethbridge. "But it just makes us people wonder if we are paying too much for power in Ontario." Toronto rates were now \$25, he recalled, when \$14.50 was charged when the enterprise first got under way. Why the marked increase?

Speaking of the time when the question of Government bonusing of rural transmission lines was first advocated in the Ontario Legislature, Mr. Lethbridge stated that it was the late Sir Adam Beck who had lobbied in opposition to the proposed 50 per cent. bonus, in favor of a 33 1-3 per cent. bonus. In spite of Sir Adam's opposition, the 50

per cent. payment had passed the House.

Mr. Lethbridge's references to the rural extension program brought him into repeated clashes with Mr. Cooke, the latter charging that Mr. Lethbridge was trying to create the impression that the Drury Government had actually bonused rural lines, when, as a matter of fact, nothing in the way of a bonus had been paid until October of 1923.

Mr. Lethbridge submitted, amid the applause of his supporters, that while no money had been paid out—the Government's defeat in 1923 interfering—a lot of construction work had been done in 1922 and in 1921. The Drury Administration had passed the bonusing legislation out of which had grown the great rural expansion in evidence at the present time. Mr. Lethbridge did not doubt for a moment that Mr. Cooke was trying to aid the farmers along the present line of Hydro administration, but still more could be done, he submitted, and it was sheer absurdity for Government members of the House to argue that the Drury Government had not lifted a hand to aid the farmers in this field of activity.

There was, he said, a widespread feeling, however, that there was something wrong with agriculture. He disputed that a higher tariff could hold the remedy for this condition. If that were the case, then the United States farmers should be most prosperous, for they had enjoyed high protection for years. But instead the conditions of the farmers in the United States were such that a special session of Congress was to be called to deal with them.

Ovation for Premier.

Rising to speak at 11 o'clock, Premier Ferguson was given a tremendous ovation by his followers. When the uproar of applause died away, he voiced his appreciation of the kindly greetings given him on his return to the House.

He said that he wished to speak briefly on a few outstanding topics considered in the debate and he dealt first with Hydro. He declared that he did not want to speak in any partisan manner, but that the public should realize that when Hydro was broached in the Legislature in 1905, it was opposed by the Liberals. "Hydro," he emphasized, "never would have been born if it hadn't been for the Conservative Party." It was, he said, proudly, Sir James Whitney, who had been responsible for Hydro and the public should remember that.

He said that he could hardly believe that Mr. Sinclair was serious when he wanted the public to have the fullest information on Hydro affairs. "You could not get that information from any private corporation or business organization and give it to the world. Hydro as a business organization must be operated as such." That was why, he pointed out, certain information had to be kept "in the books and in our own hands" for if made public it might become the basis of unfair competition.

Wants Hydro to Grow.

He noted that the House had always sufficient confidence in Hydro to endorse its estimates and generally support it. "This Government," he continued, "is determined to see to it that Hydro grows apace. It is prepared to advance any money necessary to carry electric energy to the remotest part of the Province as is economically possible. We don't propose to let this great enterprise be destroyed by unfair competition. And this Government is prepared at any time to take drastic action to protect and conserve the electric energy for our own people."

He reiterated his recent declaration in the House that he foresaw the time when the Government, by a mandate from the people, might find it necessary to tell outside interests: "Keep your hands off. This electric energy belongs to the people, and we don't propose to let you undermine and destroy this public enterprise."

"This Government," he continued, "is ingenious in finding ways and means to do things. And it will find means to enable more people year after year to have the advantages of Hydro."

Liquor Control Act.

Next he wanted to reply to the critics of Government control. He said that one Reverend gentleman who was busy referring to the situation in the United States forgot to exhort the people to support the law in their own Province. And others, said he, were busy criticizing the Liquor Control Act in a general partisan criticism fight.

He wanted to tell the Opposition that they could not have prohibition in a Province. "Unless," said he, "you suppress the manufacture of liquor, you can't suppress the circulation of it. The question is: Can you control it?" And, said he, he did not hear any of the Opposition who criticized the Liquor Control Act get up and criticize the Ottawa Government for granting distillery permits and increasing the flow of liquor. "There is no effort on the part of these energetic self-styled prohibitionists," said he, "toward their friends at Ottawa."

He resented what he termed to be "this unfair carping criticism." "This Government," said he, "never said that the Act was perfect. We are aware of weaknesses, but we are trying to improve it and we want the help of this Legislature and the people of the Province to enable us to do that. Surely the Government is as much interested in making this law effective and satisfactory as any Opposition that sits in this Legislature."

Defends School System.

He referred to a report of the address of E. Blake Miller (Liberal, East Elgin), in the Budget debate, and given during the Premier's absence from the House. Mr. Miller, criticizing the Premier on his proposal to extend university work in high schools, had told of the disgraceful situation in high schools in the United States, of the high rate of suicides among high school students there. Surely, said Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Miller was "befuddled" and was thinking of junior colleges in the United States. He declared that he was not proposing to follow any United States custom, but followed "an example that is found in the British Isles." He declared that he had too much confidence in the youth of the country than to believe that their morals were going to be ruined.

"My honorable friend," went on the Premier, "criticizes the policy of two years at normal school. That two is founded on British practice and there is greater merit in the British educational system than is to be found elsewhere in the world. Who inspires these objections—some member of a university staff, some one who is afraid of losing his job?"

"No, no," from the Opposition benches. It was the purpose of the Administration to extend educational facilities as far as possible to the rural and outlying parts of the Province.

During the Premier's discussion of the criticism of educational policy, he took occasion to refute references made by the Opposition Leader regarding remarks attributed to Mr. Ferguson about free fertilizer.

"Where did my honorable friend get that story about 'free fertilizer'?" he asked. "He certainly never read it in the newspapers. He may have dreamed it. But one of the greatest needs of the day is cheaper fertilizer. And in this respect we are going to do something very substantial to aid the farmers."

Increasing Agricultural Wealth.

Referring to Mr. Lethbridge's observations on the state of agriculture, Premier Ferguson said: "I admit we are not going ahead as fast as we shall in future in agriculture. But I have no sym-