

SPECIAL COUNSEL MAY BE RETAINED BY POWER USERS

Local Bodies Ready to Assume Expense to Satisfy Wide Demand

THREE NAMES PROPOSED

Messages said to be pouring in upon Liberal headquarters from many parts of the Province demanding independent representation before Mr. Justice Middleton at the pending Hydro investigation are likely to result in the retaining—at no expense to the Province—of counsel to present certain evidence believed to be sensational in character and having vital bearing on the transactions under investigation.

The Globe understands that the demand for such action is practically Province-wide, and is accompanied, in several instances, by assurance of readiness on the part of local bodies to contribute to the expense involved. Certain representatives from municipal councils and local Hydro Commissions have indicated their desire to be associated with the movement.

Although no announcement has been forthcoming pending submission of the proposal to W. E. N. Sinclair, the House Leader of the party, it is believed that it meets hearty approval at the hands of Liberals generally and that they will ask Mr. Sinclair today to take it up officially and give it the imprimatur of his endorsement.

So far as could be learned, the counsel selected probably would be

Arthur G. Slaght, K.C., or F. W. Griffiths, K.C., of Niagara Falls, or J. C. McRuer, K.C. It is the expectation that the counsel will present himself before the Commissioner, reinforced by a retainer from hydro users in various parts of Ontario, who, of course, are directly concerned in the investigation, with an assurance that his services will be without cost to the Government of the Province.

"Such a plan would be quite satisfactory to those whom I represent," said Hon. H. C. Nixon, the Progressive Leader, when interviewed by The Globe last night. "Any one of the three eminent counsel named would meet the request of those who feel that the whole people of the Province should be represented before the Commissioner."

Prominent Liberals — including Mitchell Hepburn, the Provincial Leader—interviewed last night, declined to discuss the proposal until it has been submitted to Mr. Sinclair, the House Leader, for his consideration and approval. This, it is expected, will be done today.

MILK TRANSPORTERS SEEK CO-OPERATION IN PRICE REDUCTION

Sympathetic View of Situation Taken in Secretary's Statement

WOULD KEEP LICENSE

In connection with the discussion relative to the milk business in Toronto and its suburbs, Gordon Graydon, Secretary of the Toronto Milk Transport Association, issued a statement over the week-end on behalf of that association. It is as follows:

"During the period of unrest which has been experienced for some time past in the whole milk business in Toronto and surrounding district, many interviews have appeared in the press and many declarations have been made at meetings relating to various branches of the trade, but up to this time the milk transporter, who is a most important cog in the machine, has refrained from giving publicity to his side of the story. The transporter, however, now believes that, in order to clear up any misunderstanding which may be in the public mind, a statement of his position in the trade should be published.

130 Transporters in Toronto.

"Briefly, there are about 130 milk transporters hauling milk for the farmers to dairies in Toronto, and the great majority of the drivers are the owners of their vehicles. Of necessity they haul seven days a week, rain or shine, on bad roads and paved highways, and, with scarcely an exception, the service they render to the producer is excellent and the service has rarely been the subject of complaint by either the dairy or the farmer. The transporters are employed by the farmers and paid by them indirectly through the dairies, and carry loads of from 30 to 40 cans to 80 and 100 cans daily. They have a one-way load; that is, unlike most transporters of other commodities, they have no return load except empty milk cans, which they deliver to the farmer each morning. Their business has become a specialty, and of their efficiency there is little question.

"Following out its plan of licensing all public commercial vehicles, the Department of Highways some time ago compelled the milk transporters, as well as those transporting other merchandise, to register and obtain a public commercial vehicle license, and obliged them to set out the particular territory their business covered. This move was made by way of definite regulation by the department so that the entire transport business would be kept on a high plane of efficiency, and was especially enacted for the benefit of shippers generally. In addition the department required each transporter to insure his cargo and deposit the policy with it

for the shipper's protection. The license was not regarded as a monopoly or franchise, but was rather a guarantee to the shipper that his goods would be properly protected and a high standard of service maintained, and it was further a certain protection to the transporter in that he was not so liable to illegitimate competition, which could only end in disaster to both the shipper and transporter and demoralize the business. The matter of efficient service was the foundation of the license, and, as has been related before, the milk transporters, with practically no exception, kept up their standard of service in a most commendable manner.

License Questioned.

"During the process which has finally ended in the farmers receiving \$1.45 per hundredweight, the milk transporters have been subject to much criticism at public meetings of the shippers and through the press, which agitation finally culminated a short time ago in a resolution at the Toronto Milk Producers' meeting asking the Department of Highways to withdraw the license under the Public Commercial Vehicles Act, and branding the license as a variety of monopoly.

"The Toronto Milk Transport Association, which represents the body of milk truckers, has always believed that much of the criticism given the transporters has not been altogether justifiable, but, rather than engage in verbal warfare with the producers, whose future in the business really ran along the same channels as the transporters, decided that some move should be made to re-establish its members in the confidence of the shippers instead of entering into a useless controversy which, at best, could avail nothing to either party.

Desire Co-operation.

"Shortly after the price of milk fell finally to \$1.45 per hundredweight on Feb. 1, the transporters of milk, convened at a largely attended gathering, decided to place themselves on record as being in favor of the license remaining in force, and at the same time they took a most reasonable and sympathetic view of the position of the farmer who was forced to reduce to a price which left only a meagre return for his labor on the farm. Many of those present stated they had already reduced their rates and were at rock bottom and many others expressed their intentions of making some reduction in their rates at once. A recommendation for price adjustment was made by the President of the association, Nelson A. Boylen, and the meeting approved a resolution that each trucker should adjust his rates with his own customers on a reasonable basis having regard to the new conditions. The men expressed the opinion that it was impossible to fix a percentage for each transporter to reduce, as some had taken a reduction and others had special conditions existing on their routes which made any sweeping reduction impossible. It was also pointed out that out of the 10 cents per quart the consumer pays to the retailer in Toronto, on an average only 3-4 of a cent finds its way into the trucker's pocket, approximately 3 cents goes to the producers clear of cartage and the balance is consumed in the other costs of distribution by the dairies. This indicates clearly that the transport charges are a very small factor in the whole milk situation and that even if the milk were hauled free of charge no cure-all for the producers' troubles would result.

Meet Minister of Highways.

"However, with the object of satisfactorily adjusting the disturbed relations between the shippers and transporters, a meeting of representatives of both parties met Hon. Leopold Macaulay yesterday and stated their positions, and both sides showed a positive desire to meet each other's difficulties in a friendly and reasonable way. The transporters stated that they were anxious for the good of the milk trade generally, to have the licenses remain as they are, as any removal would have the effect of many more trucks drawing the same amount of milk, and that some of the transporters thus displaced might go further afield into the districts of cheap milk, to the obvious detriment of all concerned. The transporters' representatives agreed that the farmer was badly hit in Toronto vicinity, and stated that they were urging their men to meet the situation with their shippers as it should be met. The producers also realized that, to exempt milk transporters from the Public Commercial Vehicles Act would demoralize a much distressed business, but made a strong plea for adjustment of rates. They expressed willingness to recognize the license of the transporter, provided such license was not unreasonably used for the purpose of imposing high cartage rates.