

FINLAYSON DENIES PAYROLLS PADDED ON NORTHERN ROADS

Will Let Opposition See All Documents—Scores Star Tactics

FEW MEMBERS PRESENT

Declaring that he was willing to provide any Opposition member with full access to all payrolls, accounts, etc., in connection with any allegation of maladministration on work in Northern Ontario under the Northern Development Act, Hon. William Finlayson yesterday in the Legislature replied at length to charges of drunkenness, padded payrolls and fraud on works proceeding in that district.

Admitting that there had been difficulty with an inspector and officials at Warren, and that five men had been let out following investigations there, Mr. Finlayson stated that the honesty and efficiency of those engaged in the various works in Northern Ontario had been outstanding.

Replies to Charges.

Mr. Finlayson took advantage of the opportunity when his bill to provide \$3,000,000 for the Northern Development work was before the Committee of the Whole, to reply to allegations of corruption, paying especial attention to those contained in the Toronto Star. The bill was approved by the House.

He read the statement of Father Routhier of Corbeil, and the statutory declaration of Reeve John Dufresne of East Ferris Township that two reporters of the Star had masqueraded as Government officials during interviews with them, and that their reports had been inaccurate and misleading.

"The action of the Star in sending up two men telling the parish priest and the Reeve that they were representatives of the Government is one of the lowest types of political brigandage possible. I suggest to the responsible editor of the Star that such action will not bring credit to any political party or paper," said the Minister.

"Low Type of Political Warfare."

"It is a low type of political warfare, which I do not think will succeed or appeal to the people of Ontario. By deceit and dishonesty they were able to find out about one foreman who had been drunk and who had been dismissed. It is not surprising that the odd man of the thousands working in this district should have been drunk. We had to let out a few men on account of this. But it is a wonder there were not more," he said. The Public Accounts Committee was still sitting, and he was willing to produce any one, any accounts, payrolls, etc., that any member should ask for.

The Warren difficulty was one mainly of two factions in the area, he said, reading voluminous documents. Complaints had been received by his department of dead men being on the payrolls, and of other men being paid for horses which had never been born, and of drunkenness, and of a man being employed who had appropriated some funds of a municipality.

Three Suspended.

An investigation had been made first by H. C. Draper, a department solicitor. No dead men were found to be on the payroll, nor were there any horses unaccounted for. But it had been found that Pat Rochefort, the inspector, was given to strong drink, and that his brother was a timekeeper; that there was loose bookkeeping. The two brothers and three other men were suspended.

But Rochefort, the inspector, had been with the department fifteen years. "When there was work to do he was a slave-driver, but when there was no work he wanted a good time." The head officials of the area spoke highly of his ability, and he was given another chance, after signing an agreement to keep away from liquor, Mr. Finlayson stated.

But his intentions were better than his will-power, and complaints were made again. This time Inspector Miller of the Provincial Police went in and investigated. As a result, Rochefort was let out, and an engineer from the Highways Department was sent in to take charge of the work, so that he would work with both factions. The work at Warren was now closed down, he said.

Sturgeon Falls Hearings.

While the investigation at Sturgeon Falls disclosed a bad situation, this was in connection with relief, and not under the Northern Development work, he pointed out. He then disposed of the other charges one by one.

At one stage of Mr. Finlayson's explanation, Earl Hutchinson (Labor, Kenora) was the only Opposition member present, and William H. Ireland, Conservative Whip, and George Shields (Conservative, Toronto-Woodbine) took up positions on the Opposition benches. This compared with one stage on Thursday night, when D. J. Taylor (Progressive, Grey North) was speaking, and there were but eleven Government members and thirteen Opposition members present. Hon. Harry C. Nixon, Progressive Leader, who had asked Mr. Finlayson to give his explanation, had to leave early, but stated he was perfectly satisfied.

PRICE WOULD PROLONG TEMPORARY STATUTE

Changes in Workmen's Compensation Act Proposed by McCrea

Attorney-General Price introduced legislation in the Ontario Legislature yesterday which would continue the provisions of the temporary insurance statute of 1932 until a revision of the Provincial laws is made. The Dominion insurance statutes have been repealed and re-enacted since the last session of the Legislature and the temporary enactment will be in force until a revision is made in Ontario to coincide with the Federal laws.

Hon. Charles McCrea introduced proposed changes to the Workmen's Compensation Act pertaining to total disability of workmen, which is affected by certain diseases. Men working in mines or in other occupations where silica dust is prevalent are benefitted under the clauses.

GOVERNMENT QUESTIONED.

Several questions pertaining to the Apprenticeship Act were tabled in the Ontario Legislature yesterday by D. J. Taylor (Progressive, Grey North). Mr. Taylor seeks information on the number enrolled over various periods; the membership of the staff, its expenses and remuneration; and inquires regarding administration, assessments and cost of operation since the inception of the act.

ASSESSMENT ACT CHANGES APPROVED

Municipal Committee Approves Redrafting of Don Valley Bill

FLAT 35-MILL RATE

The Municipal Committee of the Ontario Legislature yesterday approved the proposed amendment to the Assessment Act, which provides a flat 35-mill rate on all income assessments in those municipalities which levy for this form of taxation. Under the new legislation, if it finally passes the House, those centres where the tax rate is below the 35-mill rate must bring the rating up to the new mark, and likewise localities where it is above the new figure, they must lower the charge to correspond with the general flat rate.

There is no change in the act, however, which provides that municipalities not levying on incomes will have to do so. An attempt to revise this clause was made by T. W. Jutten (Conservative, Hamilton Centre).

Under the new provisions localities taxing incomes may now do so the year after the income is earned. At present, as an example, a man would earn his salary in 1931, be assessed for the income in 1932 and billed for the tax in 1933.

The committee also approved the redrafted bill introduced by Wilfrid Heighington (Toronto, St. Davids) to enable improvements under the Don Valley development scheme. The Ontario Municipal Board will have power under the amended clauses, to order that any sums expended by municipalities must be submitted to the people.

No Conclusions By Committees

Three special committees handling proposed legislation and the Waldron charges met in Queen's Park yesterday without bringing down definite conclusions. The group under Hon. Charles McCrea convened for the purpose of drafting a recommendation in the Murphy-Waldron dispute, but adjourned its session until Monday without agreeing on the contents of the report to be sent on to the Legislature. The committee on voters' list, studying the bill of Russell Nesbitt, K.C. (Conservative, Toronto, Bracondale), met under the chairmanship of Attorney-General Price for organization purposes; and the body reviewing the City of Toronto legislation on gasoline stations, Louis Cole (Conservative, Ottawa East) Chairman, held a lengthy session, adjourning to meet again on Monday, when the City Solicitor will be heard.