

## DENIAL BY PREMIER OF OWING ENGINEER ACCEPTED BY HIPEL

Follows First and Likely  
Last Public Accounts  
Meeting

### BRIDGE DESIGN CHANGED

Premier Henry flatly denied in the Legislature yesterday that Frank Barber, consulting engineer on the Breslau bridge project in 1930, owed him money at that or any other time, and drew from Norman Hipel (Liberal, Waterloo South) the acknowledgment that he accepted his word. The denial of Mr. Henry followed the first, and what is likely to be the last, meeting of the Public Accounts Committee, when the Breslau bridge contracts were investigated. Mr. Henry was Minister of Highways at the time the work was proceeding, and the present Minister was relieved by Mr. Hipel of any responsibility.

During the session of the committee, Mr. Hipel, who caused the inquiry to be held, asked Deputy Minister of Highways R. M. Smith if he had had any knowledge of the Minister (Mr. Henry) or the Dufferin Construction Company being owed money by Barber prior to and during the latter's services with the department.

#### "Very Impertinent Question."

This drew from Hon. Leopold Macaulay the comment: "That is a very impertinent question and one you should not ask if you have nothing to back it up."

Mr. Smith (answering Mr. Hipel)—Not in so far as I know; I hope he didn't.

Before the orders of the day in the Legislature, Premier Henry asked: "I want to know what the member (Mr. Hipel) meant by that question. I have known Frank Barber for twenty-five years and he is one of the finest bridge engineers in the Province. I wonder what the Liberal member was insinuating?"

"There is not a tittle of foundation to it, and there should never have been any suggestion that Barber or his son owed me money. They do not owe me a single cent; I would like a statement from the member about it."

Mr. Hipel—The full report of the meeting will be tabled verbatim. What I did say, when I asked the Deputy Minister, was if he had ever, to his knowledge, heard a rumor that Barber, prior to or after the construction of the bridge, owed the Prime Minister money. He said that he did not know anything about it. I said then that it must have been a street rumor.

He had asked further questions, and found that Donald Barber, the son, was inspector of the work and getting \$120 a month, while there was another inspector who was getting \$200 a month. "I asked if this Barber was the son of the consulting engineer, and the answer was that he was a son," he said.

"I am willing to take the Prime Minister's word for it that that Frank

Barber did not owe the Prime Minister any money at that time," said Mr. Hipel.

"Or at any other time," prompted the Premier.

"Just as you like to put it," agreed the Opposition member.

During the hearing of the Public Accounts Committee it was brought out that prior to Frank Barber being engaged by the department on the project he had been in the employ of the Dufferin Construction Company, the firm which received the ultimate contract; that Mr. Smith "believed" that Donald Barber, who was an inspector on the work under a Provincial engineer, was a son of Frank Barber; that no tenders were advertised for after the original design had been changed, and that the Dufferin Construction Company obtained the contract; that no tenders were asked for the paving work, and the Dufferin Construction Company was also given this undertaking; and that the Deputy Minister had a free hand in deciding the type of bridge, and that the Minister "always approved" his recommendations.

Evidence showed that the bridge finally cost \$129,000, after the design had been changed, whereas the lowest tender on a different type was set at \$61,000. Mr. Hipel claimed that, with all the revisions in the designs, the Province could have saved \$30,000 by advertising for tenders on the type eventually decided upon.

Mr. Smith gave evidence that Frank Barber received \$4,033.06 in fees and expenses for his services on the plans and for supervision; that Engineer Gilbert of the department was paid \$2,064 in salary and expenses, and that Donald Barber received \$880.

The committee adjourned sine die.

## BUSSES AND TRUCKS WILL BE LICENSED BY MUNICIPAL BOARD

Should Be Handled by Non-  
Political Body, Says  
Macaulay

### MANITOULIN FARM HYDRO

Granting of bus franchises and commercial vehicle rights is to be transferred from the Department of Highways to the Ontario Municipal Board, according to two bills introduced in the Legislature yesterday by Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Minister of Highways. They are entitled the Public Vehicles Act and the Public Commercial Vehicles Act, both to be designated as acts of 1933.

Heretofore the issuing of such privileges had been within the purview of the Highways Department, the Minister explained. "But the pressure for these licenses is getting greater, and it is felt that the matter should be handled by a non-political body. The number of busses and common carriers are increasing, as shown by the effect on the railways, and it is thought that the Municipal Board is the proper body to deal with such applications," he explained.

Two bills affecting the Hydro Commission were introduced by Hon. J. R. Cooke, Chairman of the Commission, and given their first reading. The first is an amendment to the Power Commission Act, and affects the people of Manitoulin. "The farmers of Manitoulin have become very interested in the rural Hydro service, but because the district is sparsely settled they are unable to get the specified number of farmers. This would provide the villages might be termed townships for the purpose of this act in this district," he said.

The other bill, the Power Commission Act of 1933, is the annual bill validating by-laws passed by the Commission during the year.

Wolf bounty is to be decreased from \$25 a pelt to \$15, by a bill introduced by Hon. G. H. Challies, Minister of Game and Fisheries. The bounty has already been reduced in Quebec, while in Manitoba it is not being paid, and it is said that there was "bootlegging" in pelts because of the higher rate paid by Ontario.