

March 28

MUNRO MAINTAINS PADDING CHARGES VIRTUALLY UPHELD

Declines to Accept Macaulay Advice That He Retract

COMMITTEE REPORTS

"My accusations were substantiated in the main," declared D. Paul Munro (Liberal, Wellington South), in the Legislature yesterday, in refusing to retract his charges concerning irregularities in Elgin County roadwork. The demand for retraction had come a moment before from Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Minister of Highways.

The report of the Public Accounts Committee, which investigated the Liberal charges, was tabled in the House by Hon. W. D. Black, Chairman. At a committee meeting earlier in the day, it had been agreed that the report should consist only of the evidence, exhibits and list of witnesses, with no findings on the case.

Macaulay's Comment.

In comment on the investigation, Mr. Macaulay told the House that the accusations had been "heralded by the Liberal press throughout the Province." Mr. Munro, he continued, had made the charges on his responsibility as a member. At the conclusion of the probe, Mr. Macaulay had suggested to Mr. Munro that "the honorable and fair thing to do was retract." The charges, said the Minister, related to something that had happened four years previously, and had subsequently been discovered and corrected long before by the department.

The whole affair, in Mr. Macaulay's opinion, amounted only to "village tittle-tattle from Talbotville," and the only revelation had been that a road foreman, rather than wait for months to pay small accounts, had entered them on the pay-sheet. Also, he had charged up as team-time what was really truck-rental. But the matter had been "disinterred by the Board of Strategy" to discredit the Conservative Party, and "heralded by The Globe" in big headlines. But The Globe, said Mr. Macaulay, had been fair in its report of committee proceedings.

Board of Strategy Rapped.

Mr. Munro had been used unfairly by the Board of Strategy, the Minister continued, in their effort to gain "political kudos" from the incident. Now, when all the facts had been revealed, he was giving Mr. Munro his "last opportunity to do the decent thing in this House."

Mr. Munro said he had made his statements concerning highway work "quite advisedly" and, in the same manner as that of any member saying anything from the floor of the House, on his responsibility as a member. The investigation had disclosed irregularities, such as payment for truck hire as team-time, and a long list of purchases and services which were wrongly entered on the pay-sheets, the aggregate amounting to something like \$3,400. If nothing further had been disclosed, it was shown that the records were not, as certified, actually true and correct. When the departmental investigator had gone to Walker originally, he had been told only of the Fife matter, but subsequently the Minister of Highways had frankly admitted other sides of the case.

No Regrets.

The Liberal member doubted that the bookkeeping methods on the Elgin County highway would be followed by many people. There was no fraud nor dishonesty, it had been stated before the investigation by the Prime Minister. Mr. Munro brought the matter to the House's attention because it was impossible, without special direction, for the Public Accounts Committee to carry its inquiry back past the end of the last fiscal year. "I have not the slightest regret for having brought up this matter," said Mr. Munro.

Whether the methods of bookkeeping, said Mr. Munro, might open the way to fraud and dishonesty, and whether there actually was, was a matter to be decided at the bar of public opinion and by the members of the House. "I do not think it quite honest to charge these things up as team-time," he asserted. He was glad to hear there had been some rectification of the methods, but the fact was

that it had been disclosed that a foreman, acting as an employer, had employed himself, and his truck in the names of his sons and of other people. "Does not that raise a serious question: is it right for him to certify this as true and correct? Was it fraudulent or dishonest, or was it not? The inquiry was justified, the accusations were fair."

"I'm quite willing to leave it to the bar of public opinion," agreed Mr. Macaulay.

In closing, Mr. Munro said that the evidence had been fairly obtained, "and may I say my accusations were substantiated in the main."

BONDS ABSORBED IN OTHER LOANS

Cooke Gives Figures on Installing Water Heaters

"All bonds maturing in each of the fiscal years ending Oct. 31, 1931, 1932 and 1933, were absorbed in other loans except the portion provided by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission in accordance with the Debt Retirement Plan," Premier Henry stated in the Legislature yesterday in answer to a question from N. O. Hipel (Liberal, Waterloo South). The answer was one of a series of twelve with which the Government halved the Opposition queries still standing on the order paper.

Installation costs accruing to Hydro for the recently introduced water-heaters were aired in an answer to another Liberal question. The cost to Hydro of installing a water heater in an average home is \$22 for flat rate heaters, and \$10.50 for booster heaters (not free), Hon. J. R. Cooke, Chairman of the Hydro Commission, stated. In answer to the clause of the query asking what the total cost to the Commission of this installation was in 1933, Mr. Cooke stated that the estimated cost for the 11,732 flat-rate heaters which were installed was \$258,104, and for booster heaters, \$15,330, but appended a note declaring that expenditure to Dec. 31, 1933, had been only \$192,294.22. A sum of \$32,249.99 accounted for the total cost of advertising the heaters in 1933.

The Chairman of the Hydro Commission said that the increase in power consumption amounted to about one horsepower per heater, and that the cost of installation would be paid by the increase in consumption of power in less than one year from the date of installation.

Another of the Government's answers to Opposition questions disclosed the extent of gasoline tax arrears and was associated by Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Minister of Highways, with the introduction of the bill designed to check up on the vendors. Nine gasoline vendors were in arrears in the payment of taxes to the Government, Mr. Macaulay stated, and the amount of arrears totalled \$33,905.95. The Minister pointed out the contrast between this and the huge sum collected.

Names and salaries of the inspectors appointed under the Public Commercial Vehicle Act were listed in another answer, the latter ranging from \$2,196 to \$1,200 a year. Mr. Macaulay reported that 201 prosecutions had been conducted since the beginning of 1932, and 163 convictions obtained. Twelve cases of prosecutions for infractions of the restrictions on hours of service were cited in the answer.

Hon. W. G. Martin reported that no reductions or cancellations, other than statutory, had been made in mothers' allowances during the last fiscal year. Cancellations had numbered 87, or a total amount of \$47,584.

To a query asking if any connection existed between the Central Supply Warehouse and the Provincial Government, Hon. Dr. J. M. Robb answered in the negative. The warehouse has obtained from the Provincial Government the business of supplying cloth to those on relief to the extent of \$235,916, of which the Dominion refunded half.

Another Opposition question asked about the relationship between Frank Anglin and the Hydro. Mr. Cooke answered that the Commission had purchased an electric distribution system and lines and equipment in Sydenham from Mr. Anglin, but to the question of price repeated the Hydro formula. "The Commission considers it would be a breach of confidence to give data on matters in which others are involved, both financially and otherwise." In answer to the clause asking "Is this Anglin the party who failed to file nomination papers as Opposition candidate for Addington in 1926 after having campaigned for some time," the Chairman of the Hydro Commission answered, "No information."