

\$96,000 SAVING MADE

Hepburn Explains Hydro Engineers' Salaries

Premier Hepburn, in the Ontario Legislature yesterday, was asked by Leopold Macaulay, (Conservative, South York) to clear up what he regarded as conflicting statements in connection with Hydro engineers' salaries.

"The Attorney-General," Mr. Macaulay said, "has stated that the salaries haven't been reduced, and the Premier stated according to a newspaper report, that they had all been reduced to \$5,000. Now just who is right?"

"The reference I made," declared the Premier, "was to the action of the Hydro Commission in putting all engineers receiving over \$5,000 on a day-to-day basis. That was done and there has been a saving already of \$96,000. I want to say also that the Ontario Hydro is not yet finished with this question of salary revision."

Mr. Macaulay objected to a previous statement by Ian Strachan, (Liberal, St. Georges') that he (Macaulay) had suggested that Hydro purchase statements had been secured from engineers after they had been threatened with dismissal.

"What I did say," explained Mr. Strachan, "was that such a suggestion from the honorable member from South York, was grossly unfair and unworthy of him."

Widening Bill WILL BE STUDIED

Sent to Committee

Opposition members in the Ontario Legislature yesterday urged careful consideration in committee of a City of Toronto bill seeking the right to widen thoroughfares as "forced" improvement, without a petition from owners affected. It was maintained that the bill might work hardship on property owners by forcing them to bear the cost of a widening which would be of no benefit to their property.

A similar bill was killed in committee last year, when it was suggested that it was an attempt to gain authority to widen the thoroughfare past the home of the Hon. G. Howard Ferguson on Avenue Road, north of St. Clair Avenue.

The bill was given its second reading and sent to committee. It was introduced by J. J. Glass (Liberal, St. Andrew's), who declared that owners had the right to appeal to the Railway and Municipal Board in respect to the advisability of a widening and also in respect to levying costs.

Leopold Macaulay (Conservative, South York) maintained the bill should state that such improvements, designed mainly to aid traffic, be undertaken at the expense of the city and not the owners on the line of the improvement.

Hepburn Halts Waste of Time On Questions

Tories Oppose Tabling Answers to Dismissals They Queried

RESULT CALLED FIASCO

PREMIER MITCHELL F. HEPBURN in the Ontario Legislature yesterday abruptly halted what he termed "a fiasco" and "waste of time" precipitated by Hon. George S. Henry, who insisted written answers to Opposition questions be read in detail and not tabled.

The Premier's action came a half-hour after the Leader of the Opposition charged him with an attempt to inject rules of the Ottawa Parliament into the Ontario House. This was denied by the Premier, who maintained his action in tabling questions was wholly to expedite the affairs of the Legislature.

Objection Raised.

When Attorney-General Arthur Roebuck rose and asked permission to table answers to several score of questions, all pertaining to the dismissal of Magistrates in Ontario, the Opposition Leader raised his objection.

"It has been the time-honored custom of this House to have the answers read," Mr. Henry declared. "In that way we can grasp the salient points and know immediately if the questions have really been answered. The present Premier, in tabling the questions as he did some days ago, is attempting to inject the rules of the Ottawa Parliament, in so far as they favor him. I object to this shovelling-in of answers to questions on the table by the Attorney-General."

Premier Hepburn denied the charge and then from the Government benches came the word that the answers would be read.

"I'm quite prepared to stand here for an hour and read these answers," declared the Attorney-General, as he commenced his task. The answers in regard to the Magistrates were identical in every case and for twenty-five minutes the Attorney-General reeled off the answers.

Opposition members glanced at the clock and squirmed restlessly in their seats, but the Attorney-General showed no mercy and merely smiled complacently as he read virtually the same answers over and over again.

Questions Similar.

On 21 pages of the order paper the Opposition had inscribed fifty-six questions inquiring: (1) Why . . . Magistrate of — was dismissed; were there any charges; what was his salary; who takes over his work; what is his salary; and what are his travelling expenses?

Interpolating only the varying proper names the Attorney-General took sheet after sheet from the Prime Minister, and read the answers—as requested by Mr. Henry—aloud.

"Answer No. 1: Magistrate —, together with other Magistrates, was retired in order to facilitate reorganization of the magisterial system. His services were not needed after the reorganization. Answer No. 2: No. Answer No. 3: Answer No. 4: The position is abolished. The municipalities are now served by district Magistrates. Answer No. 5: Answered by No. 4. Answer No. 6: Answered by No. 4."

Hon. Harry C. Nixon was grinning when Mr. Roebuck read the answer aloud for the fourth time. Even Hon. W. H. Price in the Opposition smiled at the ninth or tenth repetition.

Hepburn Indignant.

Suddenly Premier Hepburn jumped to his feet.

"This fiasco and waste of time is not going on," he asserted heatedly. "It may have been an established practice to read these questions, but it will be suspended for the present, at least. For the moment the Government is not prepared to answer any more questions. The Cabinet will confer as to what the procedure in future will be."

In answering Mr. Henry's charge, Premier Hepburn declared he was willing to have the questions made "orders for return," but pointed out that in that case the answers would not be recorded in the Votes and Procedure, constituting a House record, if this were done. He repeated that his action in tabling the answers to some lengthy questions was merely to save valuable time of the members.