

"Spoils by Statute" Is Tory Accusation

Bill to Allow Hydro Commission to Fire Its Representatives on Municipal Boards Draws Conservative Fire—Second Reading Postponed

The Hepburn Government, in the Ontario Legislature yesterday, was flatly charged by Opposition members with attempting to introduce "the spoils system by statute."

The attack of the Opposition was launched by Hon. Leopold Macaulay (Conservative, South York) and centred around second reading of a bill designed to give the Ontario Hydro Commission power to discharge its representatives on local Hydro boards "at pleasure."

The Storm Centre.

It is well known that the storm centre is the action of the present Ontario Hydro Commission in appointing Kenneth Christie to the Toronto Hydro Commission in place of Loftus Reid. The contentious bill, introduced by the Hon. T. B. McQuesten, a member of the Ontario Commission, would ratify the dismissal of Mr. Reid, despite the fact that the Supreme Court of Ontario has ruled he is entitled to his place on the Commission; and would legalize the replacement of Mr. Christie. By the same token the appointment of John Newlands to the Hamilton Hydro Board in place of Willoughby Ellis would be legalized.

The affairs of the Legislature had been proceeding at a leisurely pace, with no one seemingly in a militant mood. The Premier was away in Ottawa to attend the dinner to the Federal Liberal Leader, as was the Attorney-General. A few guarded pleasantries had been exchanged and it looked like an uneventful afternoon.

Tories Open Attack.

The lethargy was broken, however, when the bill was introduced for its second reading.

"Now," commenced the Hon. Leopold Macaulay, rubbing his hands, "the real political flavor is starting to come out. This bill has all the defects that a political bill designed to wield the axe could possibly have. The Government, right in the broad light of day, has taken the axe in hand and decided to fire honorable

members of local Hydro Commissions, and they want to make it retroactive. This is nothing but the introduction of the spoils system by statute."

There was a murmur of protest from the Government side.

The Hon. David Croll, Minister of Public Welfare, took a hand.

"Just let me tell you about the spoils system by statute, and retroactive legislation, at that, put through by the Henry Government in 1932," he said. Mr. Croll then referred to an act in connection with the Solloway-Mills case, where a measure was put through declaring the Assistant Master at Osgoode Hall to have the same powers as a Master—during the time the case was before the courts.

Debate Postponed.

"The cases aren't parallel at all," put in the Hon. George S. Henry, Leader of the Opposition.

"Oh, yes, they were," differed Mr. Croll.

"Nothing of the kind," said Colonel William H. Price (Conservative, Parkdale). "This measure before us is purely political, and there is nothing judicial about it." Colonel Price moved an adjournment of the debate, explaining the Opposition had not anticipated the bill coming up at that time.

Discussion, however, dragged on for a while with the Provincial Secretary declaring that dismissals in this instance were entirely in the open, and the debate was eventually postponed.

HENRY HAS PRAISE FOR WELFARE MINISTER

Amendment to Deserted Wives Act Passes Committee Stage

En route through committee yesterday, the Ontario Government's current amendment to the Deserted Wives and Children's Maintenance Act drew "constructive" Opposition fire.

To Wilfrid Heighington the amendment was too comprehensive in its transfer of separation agreement difficulties from civil courts to "quasi-criminal law in the Domestic Relations Courts." Mr. Heighington offered an amendment limiting this transfer.

Though not acceptable to the Government, a qualifying clause on the same section was brought in by Hon. David Croll. In the interim the Opposition commented at length on the Government attitude toward "constructive criticism."

"I want to express my appreciation to the Minister of Welfare," said Hon. George S. Henry, when Mr. Croll brought in his amendment, "in his realization that sometimes a 't' ought to be crossed or an 'i' dotted."

Challies Curious About Pheasants

Hungarian partridges have aroused Conservative curiosity at Queen's Park.

George H. Challies wants to know what arrangements have been made for the removal of pheasants from Pelee Island to any other part of the Province; and what has been done with all persons charged with or reported for illegal shooting of pheasants or Hungarian partridges since last July.

Bill Retroactive To Qualify Judge

An Ontario Legislature bill qualifying a judge for the position of municipal arbitrator is avowedly retroactive to clarify the appointment of Judge O'Connell last fall as official arbitrator for the Toronto area.

This explanation was made yesterday by W. F. Schwenger (Liberal, Hamilton Centre) when he piloted his two bills, legalizing such appointment through second readings.

Hon. W. H. Price commented on the retroactive feature.

"We have all been guilty and we might as well legalize it," said Hon. David Croll.

"Axe" in Coat of Arms Kick-Back for Curator

THERE was a kick-back in the Ontario Legislature yesterday to the suggestion of the Curator of the Ontario Museum that the "axe" be included in Ontario's coat of arms.

The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. George S. Henry, was in a quizzical mood when he said: "I presume, Mr. Speaker, that the axe in question will be the same one the Government has wielded so vigorously recently."

"How about a power baron for the coat of arms?" put in J. H. Clark (Liberal, Windsor-Sandwich).

"I'm going to say right here," declared the Hon. Harry C. Nixon, Provincial Secretary, "that if the present Government had been in power before last year it would have wielded that axe in connection with the Royal Ontario Museum. The expenditure was needless."

"That hardly answers my question," declared Mr. Henry, smiling.