

April 9

All-Night Sitting Is House Prospect At 3 in Morning

In Five-Hour Speech Hon. George S. Henry Charges "Rank Repudiation" of Quebec Contracts and Favors "Negotiations" — Suggests Progress by Way of Moratorium

"GOOD FOR 50 HOURS," UNOFFICIAL ULTIMATUM OF OPPOSITION

WHILE Government benchers murmured "filibuster," endless debate had thrown the Ontario Legislature into an indefinite stalemate on Hydro contract cancellation at 3 o'clock this (Tuesday) morning.

At this hour, after a 12-hour session, members were dozing in their chairs, chattering in groups, or reading the morning papers, while W. A. Baird, Conservative, High Park, continued the dreary debate, reading the radio speech recently delivered by Fred A. Gaby, former Hydro Chief Engineer.

Prospects at this hour are for an all-night session. Premier Hepburn earlier in the day had intimated intention of keeping the House sitting "until noon" today (Tuesday), if necessary, to get second reading for his measure cancelling the power agreements. Restaurant preparations are being made for morning "breakfast."

As the power battle raged on and on, corridors buzzed with speculation as to the probable duration of the impasse—also with rumor as to compromise which, it was thought might arise out of conference between Ontario's Premier Hepburn and Quebec's Premier Taschereau.

The guessers had it that Premier Hepburn, after the passage of his cancellation bill, would negotiate other contracts with the bondholders and four Quebec corporations on terms dictated by Ontario.

To Premier Hepburn's afternoon ultimatum, no second reading—no adjournment, the Conservatives answered with a five-hour speech from Leader of the Opposition Hon. George S. Henry.

If he were Prime Minister, said Mr. Henry, he would favor reasonable negotiations rather than a "club in a mailed fist" in an effort to perhaps postpone the delivery of the power.

Opposition's Stand.

"No repudiation," was the attitude of the Opposition on the power contract issue, it was made clear early in the night, when Premier Hepburn addressed a blunt question to Hon. George Henry.

What would Mr. Henry do about the contracts if he were still Premier, Mr. Hepburn wanted to know.

"I would have negotiated with the bondholders and attempted to set up some form of moratorium for a postponement of delivery of power," replied the former Premier. He then suggested that, although the present burden of power costs was great, it was not insupportable. However, he felt that the bondholders would have been willing to accept a lower rate of interest.

To Mr. Henry's charge that the power cancellation bill was an "iniquitous measure," the Premier replied that it was "conceived in iniquity."

"Tory Propaganda."

When Mr. Henry produced a sheaf of newspaper clippings to assist in his delvings into previous Liberal public utterances, the Premier several times interjected, "Tory propaganda."

To Mr. Hepburn's question as to why the Henry Government had not taken steps to secure a moratorium, Mr. Henry replied: "Because we had a little more faith in our Province than you have."

Thirty-three members sat in the House as Mr. Ellis spoke. No interruptions were interjected from the members, who leaned back listlessly in their chairs, save when the handful or half a dozen Conservatives thumped their desks at a high point in debate. Outside, the lobbies were more alive, with members keeping fairly close to the Chamber in case of call.

"Rank repudiation," former Premier Henry charged, as he summed up his attack on the cancellation bill, which he declared to "be beneath the dignity of the House."

GOVERNMENT CAN FORCE VOTE

RULES of the Ontario Legislature provide that when second reading of a bill is being discussed any member of the House, provided he has the floor, can move that the vote on the second reading of the bill be taken. By this rule the Government could force a vote, but at midnight no such motion had been presented.

In detail, with clippings and records, the Opposition Leader reviewed one angle after another of the Hydro situation until Attorney-General Arthur Roebuck called for readings from "Anthony Adverse."

Premier's Short Speech.

The Premier introduced the bill to the House with a speech of some fifteen minutes, in which he declared that the Government would not shift from its course, and was determined on a second reading if the House sat until noon the next day.

At midnight the Premier's forecast was one-third of the way toward fulfillment. Members and the galleries settled down to the drone of debate, and Conservative whisperers claimed that the Opposition was good for fifty hours.

"Ontario's credit is not at stake,"

Premier Hepburn declared, as he noted the attacks from both sides of the Atlantic. The Premier described the Province as the agency acting between 300 municipalities and the four companies. "Ontario's bonds are not involved—Ontario's credit is not involved," he said. "Ontario's credit will be strengthened if the Government presses a courageous stand."

There were precedents for changes required by public necessity. When Britain, he said, found that she could not pay the war debt to the United States—it was repudiated in part. When she found she could not pay in gold—she went off gold. For that matter the Dominion was off gold.

Contract Cancelled.

In 1916, he said, the Ontario Legislature had cancelled a Niagara Falls contract—the Electrical Development "monopoly" of the Niagara Falls power. Currently, under Ottawa's Farm Development Act, Provincial mortgages made with Provincial moneys had been broken down.

"There is no intention on the part of this Government to change one iota of the course they have mapped out," the Premier declared. Provincially, Ontario was prepared to negotiate with the Government of Quebec about the matter and an amicable outcome was anticipated.

"The municipalities," the Premier said, "cannot absorb the costs due to improvident deals of a former Administration. Rather than condone their acts they," and he locked directly at the Opposition, "should hang their heads in shame. If we have to sit here until noon tomorrow this bill is going to get a second reading." The Government benchers applauded, as the House was stirred with murmurs.

If the municipalities were involved, W. A. Baird queried, why had they no representative on the Commission?