

Not Ontario Hydro But Bennett Regime Hit Credit, Is Claim

Premier Hepburn's Income Tax Should Have Been Imposed Ten Years Ago, Asserts M. M. MacBride

THE cancellation of the Quebec Hydro contracts had not harmed Ontario's credit abroad, but the policies and conditions of the Bennett regime at Ottawa might well have damaged it severely, the Ontario Legislature was told yesterday afternoon by M. M. MacBride, Liberal member for Brantford.

Enemies and Foes.

In a two-and-a-half-hour speech devoted to a defense of the Hepburn Government's administration of financial and Hydro matters, the veteran Brantford politician classed the opponents of the contract cancellation as enemies of Hydro and foes of public ownership.

Mr. MacBride hailed the Provincial income tax as a meritorious measure, but one ten years overdue. Between 1923 and 1934, he said, the moneyed people of the Province, after they had paid all taxes for which they were liable, had more than \$8,000,000,000 left in their pockets. And similarly the corporations in the same period retained \$4,000,000,000. Were these figures an indication that the moneyed class or the great corporations were suffering, he wanted to know. Could they not well have afforded to pay a Provincial income tax during those years?

"The people of wealth," he proceeded, "are only too willing to wave the flag and profess patriotism. But the minute you suggest that they should bear a larger share of the burden of the great public services and in keeping the unemployed from privation, they arise in protest." During the war, he said, when business was flourishing, and the money-lenders were charging as much as 6 per cent. interest, taxes should have been imposed that were not imposed. Even the Government, he said, was at the mercy of the war-time money-changers.

Defends Policies.

He stoutly defended the loan and debenture policies of the present Government, and when Colonel W. H. Price, Conservative member for Parkdale, and former Provincial Treasurer, interrupted to ask him his views on callable loans, Mr. MacBride offered the opinion that if Provincial loans were issued on a callable basis, much of the difficulties of Governmental financing could be averted.

As for London, where detractors of the Government claimed that Ontario's credit had suffered as a result of power contract cancellations, Mr. MacBride asserted that the present and past Governments had done very little financing in the Empire Capital for some years past. "In the interest of Hydro itself and of its consumers," he said, "this Government could have done nothing but what it did if the vast Hydro enterprise was to be saved. It was not a pleasant duty to cancel the contracts, but it had to be done."

The Brantford member then reviewed the Province's finances during the war years, when, he said, "Hydro

is being attacked by the same interests that now are criticizing the cancellation of the contracts. They always have been opposed to public ownership," he said. "They were enemies of Hydro then, and are enemies of Hydro now."

Discussing the credit of Canada and Ontario abroad, Mr. MacBride denied that it had been affected by

the contract decision. He suggested that, if damage had been done, it had been due to former Prime Minister Bennett's "blasting" policy; by his breach with Right Hon. J. H. Thomas; by the addition of \$552,600,000 to Canada's debt, for which he blamed Mr. Bennett; by the Saskatchewan drought and the shrinking of the markets for Western live stock. The day would soon come, however, he predicted, when Canada's credit would be the strongest in the world.

PRICE AGAIN RAPS ROBERTS

Quotes Letter on Sault Dismissal

The affairs of Merl Running, the 21-year-old discharged employee of the Department of Northern Development at Sault Ste. Marie, were back in the limelight in the Legislature yesterday.

Colonel W. H. Price, former Attorney-General, who previously had charged that Dr. A. D. Roberts, the Sault member, had been responsible for Running's dismissal, produced a copy of a letter written by Running to Dr. Roberts reviewing the circumstances of the dismissal.

In the letter, Running claimed that Dr. Roberts had entered the department office at the Sault on July 11, 1934, and told Running he was "through." The letter further quoted Dr. Roberts as saying that, even if Running himself had not voted in the election, his father was a Conservative, and that, anyhow, he (Roberts) had promised a lot of men jobs. Roberts, the letter claimed, then discussed how he had been disappointed at not getting a portfolio in the Hepburn Cabinet.

Dr. Roberts heatedly told the House that the letter was untrue. Running had been replaced by a returned soldier with a family, and had been actively engaged in work for a Conservative association while employed by the Government. Furthermore, Dr. Roberts asked: Was it reasonable to believe that he, a member of the Legislature, would discuss his own political ambitions with a youth who was leaving the Government service, and was an active Tory? He denied that he personally had dismissed the lad.

"HEELERS" FORCE ROAD HOLD-UP, IS TORY CLAIM

Six miles of partially completed highway had been abandoned by the Government because of the demands of "a group of petty party heelers" in Peterboro' County, the Legislature was told last night by T. P. Lancaster, Conservative member for that riding.

Long after Department of Highways engineers had agreed on the route of the Burleigh Falls-Apsley-Bancroft Road, and work had been started, one stretch was left to fall into disuse when political pressure was brought to bear by Liberal farmers who wanted the new road to pass their doors, the Tory member said.

Mr. Lancaster, who described himself as the only Conservative returned to the Legislature in the last election with an increased majority — since his majority rose from 29 to 34 — urged the following steps upon the Hepburn Administration: less "petty bickering across the floor of this House"; the appointment of a non-political Commission to administer fish and game affairs; the reinstatement of dismissed game overseers; the propagation and restocking of muskellunge in Peterboro' County and elsewhere; the reinstatement of a motor vehicle license issuer named Curtis at Havelock, who, he said, had been dismissed in favor of a butcher at Marmora; efforts made to attract tourists who, he said were ignoring Ontario in favor of other Provinces; a rebate on motor license fees for farmers and villagers unable to drive their cars during the winter; Government-subsidized prospecting in his riding as well as in New Ontario; and finally, Government study and support of the settlement scheme at King Ridges, where the Rev. Father McGoey is establishing unemployed families on the land on his own initiative.

In closing, the Peterboro' member speculated on the political future of Prime Minister Hepburn, in view of newspaper revivals of reports that he might retire.

"I just wonder," he hazarded, "if the Prime Minister is going to shake the fetters of Ontario Liberalism off his feet and leap to the higher fields of Dominion politics?"

Dr. M. T. Armstrong, Liberal member for Parry Sound, who out of sheer modesty has been diffidently postponing for almost two entire sessions his maiden speech in the Legislature, finally took the plunge last night, and informed the Opposition that they were "splendid fellows individually, but a total loss as a group."

He would be forgiven, the Northern member said, if he asked for a generous slice of appropriations for his riding. Reforestation was badly needed, particularly in pine, since some areas in the district looked like "a plucked chicken."

Provincial Cars

IN THE PAST YEAR the Ontario Government bought 49 motor cars, 58 trucks, and 18 snowplows and 14 tractors, according to a report tabled in the Legislature yesterday by Provincial Secretary Harry Nixon. The Department of Highways bought most cars—17—all of which, it was stated, replaced old cars. Of the 58 trucks, 25 were for the Highways Department, 17 for Northern Development and 10 for Lands and Forests.