

PASS SECOND HYDRO BILL BY 62 TO 17

Would Withdraw \$127,000
Posted With Courts
by Hydro

LIKELY TO ADJOURN

Conservatives Again Sound
Warning of Power Shortage
in Province

Warnings of a power shortage if the present Hydro policy is maintained were again flung across the floor of the Legislature yesterday by the Conservatives as the second of the three Hydro bills went through second reading.

By a vote of 62 to 17, the Legislature approved an amendment to the Privy Council Appeals Act which has for its main objective the return to the treasury of \$127,000 posted by the Hydro Commission as costs. The bill would also exempt Hydro from posting bonds for future appeals.

Adjournment Likely.

Discussion of the third and last Hydro bill, one to require a fiat from the Attorney-General for institution of action against the Hydro Commission or any of its members, was continued up to 6 o'clock adjournment. Acting Premier Nixon sought and obtained from House Leader George S. Henry an undertaking that the Opposition would not attempt to block adjournment of the House for a two weeks' recess.

There were no spectacular incidents, no violent clashes as have enlivened other debates on Hydro matters, but undivided attention was given by members on both sides as well as by listeners in the galleries to the addresses of Colonel W. H. Price, Conservative Member for Parkdale, and George S. Henry, the Party House Leader. Hon. T. M. McQuesten, Minister of Highways and Hydro Commissioner, sponsored the two Hydro bills, but for the main part it was left to Attorney-General Roebuck to defend the Government's policy under Opposition attack.

Price to Retire.

Colonel Price, who incidentally confirmed reports that he was leaving politics when the life of the present Legislature comes to an end, spoke briefly but eloquently. He was mild in his criticism of the Hepburn Government but vigorous in expression of his belief that the present policy would bring the Province into grave danger.

The member for Parkdale said the Hydro problem was "too big to fool with." The public did not care who was responsible for the breakdown in negotiations, but they did care about the future of Hydro, their own enterprise.

"Let this Government take a long-range view of the situation," he urged. "It won't do the Conservatives or the Liberals any good if fifteen years from now there is a power shortage in the Province, but it will do the Province an immense amount of harm. We should get power from any source, so long as the price is reasonable. Ten years from now we may not be able to purchase power from sources that are now open to us.

"What the Government is doing is simply passing a bill, sitting back

and saying: 'Let them come to us.' In my view this is the wrong policy. The Government has a chance to do a magnificent thing. But to proceed along the present line will do more harm to settlement of the power question than anything else."

Ellis Sees Purpose.

Col. Price said he was not attempting to claim that the old Government was not to blame. Probably it was, he said, but it had not been remiss in its duty as it saw it. He did not believe, either, that the present Government was remiss in its duty.

"The time has come to stop quibbling," he declared. "This is too big a matter to quibble over. It means too much to the people of the Province."

If the Government decided to get an outside expert to make a survey of power needs, that man should be independent, he said. He mentioned the Chicago power expert, Ryan, obtained to make a survey of the Provincial power situation.

The sole purpose of this bill, submitted Arthur Ellis (Cons., South Ottawa), was to set aside a Court of Appeal judgment in favor of the Ottawa Valley Company and to recover for Hydro \$127,000 which the court had ordered paid into court. If the Government considered the bill good law—"and it isn't"—why didn't it exempt all the local Hydro Commissions from the provisions of the Privy Council Appeal Act? The Government, he felt, had lost track of the true legal position of Hydro. It was absolutely independent of the Government under the Power Commission Act—an entirely separate body from the Government, just as separated, he said, as the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway, if not more so. "And it should stand on its own feet," he added.

Would Ban Debate.

Admitting that the Legislature was all powerful, and could pass anything it wanted to, Mr. Ellis suggested to the Attorney-General that he could "make things even nicer" for himself if he passed a bill prohibiting Opposition members from speaking against any Government measure and from voting against it. "And you'd be able to put through even more iniquitous legislation than you've already put through," he told Mr. Roebuck, "if you would pass a bill dividing all Cabinet portfolios between you and the Prime Minister, with equal priority."

Wilfrid Heighington, Cons., St. David, described the bill as "a legislative trick." It lacked sportsmanship. "Every step the Government takes to reinforce its 1935 legislation," he said, "puts it in a more difficult position."

"It's just making a farce of the highest court in the land, the Privy Council," declared W. A. Baird, Cons., High Park.

Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Cons., South York, asked the Attorney-General to say whether or not he was in favor of abolition of all appeals to the Privy Council. The Attorney-General sat silent.

"I'm waiting for an answer," said Mr. Macaulay. Hon. Paul Leduc leaned over and whispered to Mr. Roebuck. "My honorable friend," said Mr. Roebuck, "suggests that you put the question on the order paper."

"It took you some time to think that up," Mr. Macaulay shot back. The day would come, he felt, when Mr. Roebuck would propose the wiping out of all appeals to the Privy Council.

No Apologies—Henry.

Dealing with the third power bill, Mr. Henry assailed the Government for its Hydro record and declared that he had no apologies to offer for the purchase of large quantities of power up to 1929. He traced the background of the power situation in the Province and pointed to the fact that from a power point of view, Quebec Province had twice the available power that existed in Ontario.

"We are friendly competitors with our neighbors in Quebec," he said. "But from a power standpoint they

are in a much more favorable position. When, in 1926, the opportunity presented itself of buying power from Quebec, we did so because it was an opportunity to break down the differential by two. We seized the opportunity by two. We seized the opportunity to buy power and still retain for ourselves the power possibilities within the Province."

The House Leader said that with new electrical appliances coming on the market, and a general upward trend in industry, more power would be used in the future. He charged that Ontario was now taking 300,000 horsepower of Quebec power, and he contrasted this action with the "repeated" statements of Attorney-General Roebuck that the 730,000 horsepower contracted for was surplus.

Charges Figures Wrong.

"The Attorney-General says the increase in power consumption last year was only 30,000 horsepower," said Mr. Henry. "Well, I ask him, what is he doing with the rest of the 300,000 horsepower now being taken?"

There was no answer at this point from the Attorney-General.

"Out of your own mouth, Mr. Attorney-General, I prove your figures are wrong," asserted Mr. Henry. "Where would we be without the Gatineau and Chats Falls? But the Government says the 730,000 horsepower was all surplus power. My honorable friend, the Attorney-General, sought to give the impression that there was no reason for the signing of the Beauharnois contract."

"There wasn't," remarked Mr. Roebuck.

"Let me tell you that the peak load in January, 1930, was higher than the peak load in January, 1929, the year the depression started," retorted Mr. Henry. "Who gave us a warning in 1929 that a depression was on the way? Who told us that it would last five years? No one. Not a single man in public life foresaw what was going to happen. I can bring scores of quotations into the House from prominent leaders in industry, who said the depression was a natural wave that would pass in a few months."