

Says School Grant Still "Under Table"

Leopold Macaulay, M.L.A., Forces Admission From Minister of Education That Revised Schedule Had Been Shelved

From Hon. Dr. L. J. Simpson, Minister of Education, there was forced in the Legislature yesterday the admission that the revised schedule of school grants which had been tabled by him at the 1936 session had been shelved, and that his department was still operating under the grants policy of the former Henry Administration, "the under-the-table" method, as repeatedly labelled by Premier Hepburn.

"In other words," cracked Leopold Macaulay (Cons., South York), who forced the admission, "the separate schools are going to get their grants just as they always have, and in addition they are going to get increased revenue under your Assessment Act amendments of a year ago."

While Conservative benchers applauded and laughed loudly, Mr. Macaulay said, sharply: "The problem is plainly just what it started

out to be—not a mere problem between rural and urban peoples as the Prime Minister has stressed, but a financial problem bulking large in the school life of Ontario."

Scores Tactics.

Scoring the Government tactics on the school tax question in the recent East Hastings by-election, Mr. Macaulay said that today that issue was even a greater issue than Mr. Hepburn realized it to be after the East Hastings ballots had been counted. "The Prime Minister has said glibly that all the fight was over some \$200 that would be diverted from the public school to the separate school in Tweed. Thank God, the people of East Hastings knew better than that—realized that a question of principle was at stake and cast their ballots accordingly. The Government does not appear to be in any hurry to bring on the by-election in North Wellington, and no wonder.

"But in East Hastings the late Jim Hill was scarcely cold in his grave before that election was on. Let me say that if East Hastings gave the Prime Minister the jitters, I don't know what North Wellington will give him."

Harry Johnson, the Liberal organizer, he claimed, was up in that riding "gumshoeing around," trying to find a candidate who could be depended to hold the Conservatives to no more than a majority of a thousand. Was it true, he asked, that the Premier would not go to the country in a general appeal, this year?

"I don't know," Mr. Hepburn flared, "if I am under any obligation to my honorable friend to answer that question. I'll let him know in good time."

"When do you want an election?" Provincial Secretary Nixon interposed.

"Any time will suit us from now on," Mr. Macaulay threw back.

Newspaper Support.

Mr. Macaulay could not understand, he said, what had prompted the Government to frame the legislation it had. The only Toronto newspaper to support its action had been the Star, and then the changes in the act it had espoused had been very moderate ones compared to what eventually had been enacted. He didn't know where The Globe and Mail stood on the question, he said, but for a good many years every one had known where the old Globe was. Turning quickly to the Premier, Mr. Macaulay asked him

if grants would be paid to rural separate schools this year.

"Certainly there will be grants for rural separate schools—" Mr. Hepburn was answering, when the Conservatives began to pound their desks.

"Based on their needs," concluded the Premier, "but their needs will not be so great."

"You created the impression among the people of East Hastings, or you induced the electors to believe," said Mr. Macaulay, "that there would be no further need for grants with the new act in force."

Mr. Hepburn sat silent.

Grants Questioned.

"If you are compelling separate school supporters to contribute to the support of their own schools, why are you still going to give them grants?" demanded Mr. Macaulay. When no reply was forthcoming, he said:—"Because you realize, as we of the former Government realized, that grants were required in many special cases. That was the 'under the table' method of which you so long and lustily accused us."

Hon. Dr. Simpson rose at this juncture to confess that the Government, today, was operating "under exactly the same grants" as the Henry administration. Mr. Macaulay immediately wanted to know what had happened to the regulations which Dr. Simpson brought down last session, and which effected changes in the grants.

"We reverted to the old system, and did not use them," Dr. Simpson admitted.

"Who's under the table now?" clicked Mr. Macaulay, while the Tories applauded.

"There is nothing under the table now," Dr. Simpson said.

"But you laid the new regulations on the table last session," said Mr. Macaulay.

"The new system will come into effect sooner or later," said Dr. Simpson.

"It's the first time we were aware you were operating under the old grants system," said Mr. Macaulay.

"You could have found out if you had asked," said Dr. Simpson.

"I think the fair thing would have been to let us know that you had abandoned your new grants," said Mr. Macaulay.

Dr. Simpson made no reply, and Conservative back-benchers chuckled audibly.

"I don't know what you're laughing at," Premier Hepburn injected into the argument. The old regulations were being used, he said, until the act was well under way. Then a study would be made, to determine final policy. "As I say," he added, "I don't know what you're laughing at."

"If my friends want to laugh at the predicament into which you've got yourself," gibed Mr. Macaulay, "I really don't blame them."