

March 26

# Macaulay Balks At Ratifying Bill Ere Power Quiz

## Opposition Chief Demands House Be Adjourned Until June, if Necessary, So That Committee of 12 Named by Premier Can Report Result of Pacts Probe Before Measure Approved

### EXTEND SCOPE TO ORIGINAL AGREEMENTS

Emphatic declaration that he and the Opposition will not vote second reading of the Quebec contracts ratification bill now before the Legislature until such time as the special committee authorized to probe all the circumstances of the writing of these agreements has reported to the House was voiced yesterday by Hon. Leopold Macaulay.

If necessary, Mr. Macaulay submitted, the House, instead of proroguing within two weeks as planned, should be adjourned until around June 15. Such action, he said, would not only give the committee time to deliberate, but would meet the contracts' own requirements providing for their ratification by July 1.

#### Argues Against Delay.

Premier Hepburn argued that the passage of the bill should not be held up while the committee deliberated. After all, said he, "we are only one party to the contracts." The bondholders had to be considered, for instance. The people of Ontario, the Opposition Leader replied, were entitled to more consideration than any bondholders, and to pass the legislation with the verdict of the ordered investigation still lacking was tantamount to "putting the cart before the horse," and depriving the Legislature of possible information to which it justly was entitled.

Before the orders of the day, Mr. Hepburn made public the personnel of the committee demanded by and promised to Mr. Macaulay on Wednesday. Liberal members dominated by eight to four. Attorney-General Conant will be Chairman, with the rest of the panel as follows: Hon. M. M. MacBride (Brantford), Hon. Harry C. Nixon (Brant), Ian Strachan (St. George's); James Cooper (Sudbury), Major James Clark (Windsor-Sandwich), John Newlands (Hamilton Centre), A. J. Haines (Lincoln), Hon. Mr. Macaulay, L. M. Frost (Victoria), George H. Challies (Grenville-Dundas), and W. A. Baird (High Park).

#### Roebuck May Be Added.

Former Attorney-General and Hydro Commissioner Arthur Roe-

buck, who contributed so much spark and support to last Wednesday's House allegations which forced the pending probe, will probably be added to the committee slate as a result of yesterday's brief debate between Messrs. Hepburn and Macaulay. The originally drafted scope of the probe will be extended to include not only the ramifications of the new agreements of last December (as first considered), but the original power pacts of 1926-1930, and the rewritten versions of 1936. The first meeting of the committee has been set for May 2—in the sessional interim, unless Mr. Macaulay has his way and obtains Mr. Hepburn's very improbable assent to adjournment until July.

In announcing to the House the committee personnel and the nature of the inquiry, Mr. Hepburn said that the Government had desired to be most fair in the matter. The resolution, covering the committee's authorization, had been prepared, he said, by the Opposition Leader, who had consented to the Chairmanship of Mr. Conant and to the May (organization) sitting. "We on this side," he said, "are just as anxious to get the air cleared on these Hydro contracts as the Leader of the Opposition."

#### Extension Accepted.

Mr. Roebuck expressed the belief that the inquiry had not gone far

enough, and that it should be extended to cover not only the 1937 agreements, but those of 1936 and 1929 as well.

"We will be glad to do anything that is asked of us," said Mr. Hepburn. "We have nothing to cover up, and we will make it as wide as necessary. My honorable friend's suggestion is a good one."

Mr. Macaulay said it was quite fit and proper that Mr. Roebuck, if he desired to, should be a member of the committee. He regretted, he said, that he had overlooked him in drafting the resolution. While, he added, he had tentatively agreed to the May 2 date for the committee's first sitting, it was with the idea that consideration should be given with the least possible delay to the various questions to be submitted. Chairman Hogg of Hydro was now, the Premier had informed him, in Jamaica in a poor condition of health. Former Chairman Lyon was also in the South, and other possible witnesses required might have to travel some considerable distances to attend the probe.

#### Would Hold Up Vote.

"We are not going to get anywhere in this matter," said he, "unless all these people are available. And while I agreed to the date the Premier has mentioned, I want to make it absolutely clear to the House and to the people at large, that I am not prepared to vote second reading to Bill 71 until the committee has made its report."

The time-limit for ratification of the contracts had been fixed for July 1, said Mr. Hepburn. "It does not seem fit or fair to me to hold up the passage of the bill, particularly when no charges have been made."

In 1937, said Mr. Macaulay, the Government had ordered a special session, lasting only a few days, to ratify important legal legislation in connection with the Hydro situation. If the Government could direct a special sitting then, why not now, when equally important matters were under discussion and inquiry, he asked.

There had been no special session in the spring of 1937, Mr. Hepburn told the Opposition Leader. The only special session called was last fall, when special Succession Duties Act amendments had been enacted.

But the spring session of 1937, Mr. Macaulay came back, had been a split session. And if a split session could be held for one thing, why not, he demanded, could not the present House adjourn until the middle of June, instead of proroguing within a couple of weeks.

The Prime Minister ignored this demand, but Mr. Macaulay's earlier request that the committee establishment resolution be redrafted to widen its scope, as suggested by Mr. Roebuck, was granted.