

Hon. William Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests, disputed Mr. Sinclair's claim that the Government was to blame for the belated convening of the committee, and alleged, instead, that the Opposition had been negligent. The Government, he said, was not shirking its responsibility. It had nothing to hide. And the committee could sit day and night—"for weeks, as far as that matters"—if it desired. On the other hand, the Government had no objection, he said, to meeting the Liberal Leader's request, provided that such approval did not involve any reflection on the Government.

Col. J. A. Currie, Conservative member for Toronto St. Patrick, at once protested. Postponement of the inquiry would mean, he said, that "a dirty rag would be tied to the Tory party," and that the Opposition would go shouting around the hustings: "We've got them." Col. Currie submitted that the Sinclair resolution did not lie within the power of the committee. To this contention Mr. Finlayson agreed after a half-dozen other Conservative members took the Currie stand, and appealed for "an immediate inquiry, if any."

Gossip Downtown.

Col. Currie further alleged that it was common gossip "at downtown hotels" that the Opposition had two Ministers of the Government in its hands, and "could do anything with them."

"They're saying," Col. Currie told Mr. Sinclair, "that you have two or three Cabinet Ministers you're going to trim. Come on now, let's have it."

Mr. Finlayson expressed himself as agreeable to accepting the Sinclair motion provided the preamble, which, he said, was inclined to lay the onus of responsibility for the late summoning of the committee on the Government's shoulders, was struck out. In that shape, he would have no objection, he added, to it going before the House as a recommendation.

"You're foolish," interjected Col. Currie. "If the Opposition has anything to do, let it do it now."

On the prompting of Leo Macaulay, Conservative member for South York, Mr. Finlayson suggested that Mr. Sinclair lay before the committee the items which he proposed to probe in 1928. Mr. Sinclair declined to do so.

Would Not Give Names.

"Will you file the men's names with the Clerk?" asked Hon. Joseph Thompson, Chairman of the committee.

"I'll file them with no one," said the Liberal Leader.

Russell Nesbitt, member for Toronto Bracondale, urged that the committee be called for "next week." That would, he thought, give the Liberal Leader plenty of time to prepare for examination of witnesses. Unless the inquiry was held this year the public would be under the impression for twelve months that Mr. Sinclair had seven specific charges against Government officials, whether they were specific or not.

Mr. Finlayson then framed a motion which he thought would cover the situation, but which Mr. Sinclair refused to accept. Mr. Finlayson then filed it as an amendment to the Liberal Leader's original resolution, and it carried the committee by a vote of 30 to 12. It was worded as follows:

"That the Public Accounts Committee are now prepared to consider and hear evidence on any matter in the Public Accounts of 1926 and to devote as much time as is necessary for the full hearing and consideration of all such matters; and as to any matters which the Leader of the Opposition or any other member of the committee wish to postpone to 1928, the committee leave such matter or items to be determined by the committee of 1928."

ROAD BUILDING PLANS IN NORTHERN ONTARIO GIVEN BY FINLAYSON

Importance of Development Outshadows That of Any Political Party, He Says

FAVORS LEGISLATURE TRIP

Debate in the Legislature yesterday on the resolution of M. E. Scott (Liberal, South Oxford) "that moneys granted by the House for Northern and Northwestern Ontario development should be used only after appropriations therefrom have been approved by the House in estimates," drew from Hon. William Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests, some interesting information regarding the Government's road development plans in the North for the present year, and the assurance that, while it was impossible to estimate expenditures for this section of the Province because of ever-varying conditions, an effort would be made next year to provide for the House more detailed information concerning moneys spent in this regard than has been available in past years.

Rush North Bay-Timiskaming Road.

Mr. Finlayson informed the House that the North Bay-Timiskaming road would be completed by Sept. 1, if not by July 1. He said that one section of 25 miles, from Swastika north, remained to be constructed. Premier Ferguson, he admitted, had given instructions, in view of the approach of the Diamond Jubilee anniversary of Confederation, that the work toward the highway's completion should be rushed with all possible speed.

Work on lateral roads in the Kapuskasing district; repairs on the trunk road west from Sault Ste. Marie; expenditure of a large sum for improvement of the main highway south from Port Arthur and Fort William; extension of the road from Kenora easterly as far as Wabigoon; and extension of the road from Fort Frances north to Nesbitt's Falls and the Lake of the Woods, also featured the development program as announced by Mr. Finlayson for the present season.

Mr. Finlayson went into the question of Northern development on a large scale, and, in this connection, expressed the hope that two years from now, if not later this year, the Legislature, as a whole, would make a tour of this end of the Province and see for itself a growing development, "the importance of which far outshadows the importance of any political party."

"Sorry End" for Resolution.

The Scott resolution was withdrawn. Another resolution debated during the afternoon was also withdrawn. Liberal Leader William E. N. Sinclair, who had sponsored it, termed its withdrawal "a sorry end." It expressed the belief of the House that the Public Accounts should contain a statement in detail of all revenues and expenditures in connection with the T. & N. O. Railway Commission, the Board of License Commissioners, the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, similar to the statements furnished by the various departments of Government.

Mr. Sinclair's vigorous support of the motion was disputed by Premier Ferguson, who claimed that "policy and cost" were two factors which interfered with supplying details of all public expenditures in the manner suggested by Mr. Sinclair. If, he said, all details, such as advocated, were to be included in the Public Accounts, "the volume named would be as big and cumbersome as the Revised Statutes."

Hon. W. E. Raney, Progressive Leader, submitted that there was just as much need for the detailed expenditures of these Commissions being carried by the Public Accounts as there was need for the detailed expenditures of the Lands and Forests or Public Works Department. While agreeing with Premier Ferguson that such action would necessitate a change in the law, there was no reason, he contended, why this change should not be made.

BUSINESS OF HOUSE DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Prorogation of Legislature Set for Tuesday of Next Week

TODAY MAY SEE WIND-UP

Official business of the Ontario Legislature will wind up today or tomorrow at the latest. Prorogation will be set for Tuesday, April 4.

Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, will finish his speech to the Agriculture estimates this afternoon. A night session will provide Hon. Charles McCrea, Minister of Mines, with a chance to review the work of his department and to speak also on the game laws of the Province. With the exception of some legislation from the Statutes Revision Commission, most Government and private bills are ready for third reading or Royal assent.

Two special committees meet this morning for the first time this session, namely, the Committee on Privileges and Elections, and the Committee on Legal Bills. To the first committee Hon. W. E. Raney's bill to prohibit political contributions from distilleries, breweries, corporations, etc., was referred a month ago, following the House's discussion of it. The committee ruling on the measure will be an interesting one, inasmuch as Mr. Raney, it is said, will vigorously support it again, as he did before.

FIRST STEP TO CHECK THEFTS OF CHICKENS

Crown Attorneys Requested to Emphasize Serious- ness of Crime

As a first step of a plan with which the Government hopes to check the practice of chicken-thieving and resale to foreighners that obtains at the present time in several sections of the Province, Attorney-General W. H. Price has requested the Crown Attorneys in various centres and judicial districts to emphasize the seriousness of this crime. In fact, the Attorney-General has directed that the general public be educated to the fact that stealing chickens is every bit as serious as stealing horses or other animals.

The next step, it is understood, will come at an early date when Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture completes a preventive measure on which he is now working.

Information to this effect was divulged in the Legislature yesterday by George Shields, Conservative member for Toronto Woodbine, who, at the request of poultry dealers of Tilbury, where a regular epidemic of this sort of theft is said to have raged in recent months, appealed to the Attorney-General's Department for assistance.

Mr. Shields was inclined to believe, he said, that much of the failure to stop "this thieving" was due to Magistrates who "treated it as a trivial matter."