

The Enquiry Conducted by T. Hollis Walker, K.C.

(Continued from Page 6.)

MR. WARREN—Your answer to me yesterday in relation to Mr. Meaney's appointment (quotes from evidence) no vote was taken and nothing was done. That may have been critically correct, but was it absolutely correct?

A—Thinking back the actual details, I don't think it was a vote. I got their views as I went round to every member of the Council.

COMMISSIONER—No vote was taken.

WITNESS—No vote was taken in at least half the cases decided by Committee of Council.

MR. WARREN—Did you ever know a vote to be taken in Council, Sir?

WITNESS—I take the vote in the way I indicated.

Q—What do you call a vote?

A—A certain question comes before the Council, and after it has been debated if there appears to be a divergence of opinion expressed I should probably inquire around from each member.

MR. WARREN—You would ask them all, to express an opinion?

A—If in favour of it they would answer by a nod of the head.

Q—I have never known a vote to be taken in Council since I have been there.

A—I call that a vote.

COMMISSIONER—That is the object of most votes to discover if the members are in favor of it, and I quite understand there may be many methods of taking it.

WITNESS—That was the way it was done in a very large number of cases. When they were plainly routine matters, patents and that sort of thing, if anybody had an objection he would make it. There was no such thing as going around.

COMMISSIONER—Did you still consider him a fit and proper person for a position of public trust?

WITNESS—I did not look upon him as ideal.

COMMISSIONER—That is not an answer to my question. Did you still consider him a fit and proper person for a position of public trust?

A—A qualified yes.

COMMISSIONER—What possible qualification can you give? You either did not, you know. You either thought he was a fit and proper person or you did not.

WITNESS—To my mind dealing with positions of public trust, some man may be pre-eminently fit for a position and another man may not be fit for it.

COMMISSIONER—This is not a question of deciding which of two men would be fit for a post. I don't remember I expressed an opinion or not. I suppose you might put it in that way.

A—Yes.

COMMISSIONER—He would get that position from the new administration after the election in connection with the re-organization program as you undertook it.

A—Yes.

MR. WARREN—That brings us up to just prior to the election of 1923. The election was early in May, 1923.

COMMISSIONER—Just before you leave that subject, long before this you had heard rumours against Mr. Meaney?

WITNESS—That was due to considerable newspaper comments and criticisms.

COMMISSIONER—You had long before heard rumours of wrong doing on the part of Mr. Meaney?

A—No, this rumour of wrong doing I think you will find was in the spring of 1923.

COMMISSIONER—It was then the first step was taken?

Yes.

COMMISSIONER—I am only speaking of what I understood or rather misunderstood from you—understood certainly. I understood you to say that long before 1923 you had heard rumours that Mr. Meaney was misconducting himself in the business of Acting Liquor Controller.

A—Nothing more than the public criticisms that appeared in the press concerning the Liquor Department.

A—Nothing more than the public criticisms that appeared in the press concerning the Liquor Department.

COMMISSIONER—Had you knowledge of any rumours outside of the papers?

A—The general talk around town would be crystallized in the papers.

COMMISSIONER—Had you heard it suggested that Mr. Meaney was receiving commissions from purchasing liquor?

A—I think the first time I heard about commissions was in the spring of 1923.

COMMISSIONER—Before that?

A—I am not prepared to say it was before that. I think not.

COMMISSIONER—Well, you say that directly after this came the day of the election.

A—Yes, I think that the first I heard about commissions was from a man—a political supporter—who came to my office and told me that Mr. Meaney did not favour us. A man came to see me in connection with my political campaign and told me that Mr. Meaney did not give him any orders, and such like.

COMMISSIONER—But I thought you placed it at a much earlier date than this. That in 1923 you heard rumours against Mr. Meaney's methods, rumours of misconduct in connection with his office?

A—Only references in the public press.

COMMISSIONER—You were still a party to his appointment to the full liquor control?

A—The entire Government concurred in his appointment.

COMMISSIONER—Never mind about the other members of the Government, they may or may not have heard of these rumours. I say you were still in favour of appointing him.

A—I did not oppose his appointment.

MR. WARREN—You did not oppose his appointment.

WITNESS—I did not advise against his appointment.

Q—Do you remember if anybody else opposed his appointment?

A—I don't remember.

Q—Still, his appointment was getting "less and less probable every day." You had your mind made up that he would be appointed.

A—Absolutely.

Q—And still it was getting less and less probable every day, at the same time he was actually appointed.

A—That is incorrect.

Q—I don't think so. You know perfectly well he was appointed, and still you said his appointment was getting less and less probable every day.

A—Every member of the executive Government present decided upon giving him the appointment after the election was over.

Q—I understand you to say why it was getting less and less probable was that this appointment would have to be brought before the Executive Council, and you did not think they would unanimously approve of it, that it would have to be brought before your party and you were not sure whether they would approve of it.

A—I did not say it would have to be brought before the party. I said

it would have to have the support of the party.

Q—You said it was getting less and less probable that Mr. Meaney would be appointed, and all the while the appointment was made, and yet concurred in it.

A—It was not gazetted.

Q—You mean it was not made in the sense of being submitted to the Governor in Council?

A—Yes, the form of gazetting is a sort of camouflage. When the appointment is made a Minute of Council is signed and sent to his Excellency the Governor.

ATTORNEY GENERAL—His appointment, after the election, had been concurred in by the whole Executive?

A—You mean by the new administration had been concurred in. In other words the actual effect was a recommendation by the Executive Government that was retiring to the new Executive to make the appointment.

Q—But we were all sure that we were coming back?

A—You might have been, but I was not.

Q—So that so far as you were concerned, up to the middle of May you were satisfied that Mr. Meaney was to be appointed to full control, with the order of the Meeting of Council and I take it you had confidence up to then. What happened after that period in May, 1923, to shake this confidence as far as you were concerned?

A—You mean any particular event or any particular series of events.

COMMISSIONER—It may be one or the other; you can tell.

A—I don't think I could tell exactly without reference to official records, but as far as I can remember there was something about an over-draft and I think there was some interview or correspondence about it between the Auditor General and myself and I think there was an interview about it with myself and Mr. Paddon, Manager of the Bank of Montreal and a decision was come to that the cheques of the department should no longer be signed by Mr. Meaney personally.

COMMISSIONER—You told us before about the introduction of the Auditor General.

ATTORNEY GENERAL—There was a kind of a big stock carried at the department, was there not?

A—There was a lot of stock there.

Q—Really what happened was that the account was largely overdrawn and the Bank of Montreal refused to honor any more cheques of Meaney's and accordingly cheques were in future to be signed by the Auditor General and Mr. Meaney jointly. They this burglary happened. Was Meaney's account of the alleged burglary to Byrne the first shock you got with regard to Meaney's integrity?

A—As to the shocks regarding Meaney's integrity there were, perhaps, little shocks all along the line; but the alleged burglary was the outstanding incident.

Q—And according to you he charged you with being at the bottom of that burglary?

MR. HOWLEY—That is incorrect.

COMMISSIONER—If it is not correct with the witness merely say so?

A—I received a report signed by Head Constable Byrne over Byrne's own signature. I read that report and that report has already been discussed here.

COMMISSIONER—Did it suggest that Meaney attributed this burglary to your investigation?

A—A man by the name of O'Keefe is the person whom I am supposed to have used for committing this burglary. I immediately suspended O'Keefe who was a messenger in the Prime Minister's department at the time. I brought Byrne's report before a Committee of Council and I asked that Meaney be dismissed or suspended. The Committee of Council thought it a rather harsh thing to do, but he was suspended.

ATTORNEY GENERAL—And notice of his suspension has been put in evidence.

COMMISSIONER—He was suspended pending enquiry.

A—That was stated in the letter

COMMISSIONER—Has any enquiry ever been held?

A—I do not know whether it was held or not.

ATTORNEY GENERAL—In that letter of suspension I think there is no hint or charge of any shortage?

A—None whatever.

Q—He was suspended as far as this letter is concerned for accusing the Prime Minister of being a party to the burglary.

WITNESS—I did not think that any member of the party, certainly I did not think myself, could think that \$1 could be short in that department because the accounts were audited generally monthly, perhaps fortnightly, by a gentleman who is now the Deputy Auditor General and there was never any report made to me of any shortage or irregularity whatever, and I do not think that any member of the Executive Council knew of the shortage to which Mr. Meaney was referred.

ATTORNEY GENERAL—Yesterday you mentioned some connection I had with these proceedings. Before going into this I want to ask you more or less as a rumouring up. You have heard Mr. Meaney's evidence that he gave Miss Miller those amounts aggregating in the neighbourhood of \$23,000, you have heard Miss Miller say that she got the amounts at your request and you have heard her say what she did with them. How do you disbelieve this statement?

A—In so far as Miss Miller said that I had any knowledge of her getting money from Meaney or that I authorized her to get any or that I had any knowledge whatever of the date of Meaney's dismissal or suspension, on my recommendation, the statement is entirely and absolutely untrue. The fact is that it is just as untrue by the evidence as the truth is patent. There was a regular in the Liquor Department and neither you as Attorney General nor I as Prime Minister at the time had or could have the faintest shadow of knowledge that the accounts in the department were crooked.

COMMISSIONER—According to the way the audit was conducted, will you tell me how or by what method any shortages in the accounts could be detected. In view of the manner Mr. Meaney exercised the funds, how could the audit detect that?

A—I thought that every dollar in that department any everything in the way of cheques and I.O.U.'s, in that department would be covered and detected if they were outstanding in the same way as they would if they existed in the Post Office, Finance and Customs, Agriculture and Mines or any other department of the Civil Service.

Q—Then this audit was carried on in such a way in the Controller's Department that it would not detect any irregularities?

A—It looks that such has been the case, as the Auditor General believed there could be no shortage in the cash.

Q—I understood that he assented to the question that he could not detect any shortage in cash?

A—The Auditor General did not have the faintest shadow of a doubt that any funds in that department had not come into his audit.

ATTORNEY GENERAL—Before adjourning I would ask that the witness produce certain matter that he was asked for at to-morrow's proceedings. The Commission adjourned at 5:15 p.m. until Thursday at 11 a.m.

THURSDAY, Jan. 17.

COMMISSIONER—There are indications already that the next section is not so entirely separate and apart from this. It may be possible that the second part may throw some light upon this. I am not inclined to entirely close this section. I think at the conclusion of this evidence if you are ready to go on with the next section and then Mr. Howley's address will be postponed to me until the next section had been heard. He might want to address me in connection with something in this section. I want you to be ready Mr. Attorney to open the next section to-morrow as the evidence of this section appears to be completed.

MR. HOWLEY—I am not yet able (Continued on page 8.)

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