

and on this basis the vote of the ratepayers was taken. Nay, Sir, the actual cost was fixed in Toronto from \$14 to \$18.10 per horsepower; in other municipalities a different specific figure. That, Sir, was the first scheme, and yet the Honorable Minister has the remarkable audacity to tell this House that that scheme was not changed. He knows perfectly well that the scheme he is operating under now does not sell power at a fixed price at the city gates, but that they sell power at a fixed price at Niagara Falls, the point of development, and that the whole risk and the cost of transmission, whatever it may be, is put upon the municipality. (Applause). I now here challenge the Honorable Minister to deny my statement. (Applause). Yet, Sir, he had the temerity the day before yesterday to stand up as a Minister of the Crown and publicly state to this House, and through the press to the people of the Province, that there has been no change in the plan. (Applause). Why, Sir, the ratepayer in any of our towns voting on the first scheme, living, say, in Galt, would say, "The Government is bound to bring power to Galt for from, say, \$17.37 to \$22. I am not obliged to enquire how they will do this. They promised to do it. This is cheap power. I will make no further enquiry and I will vote Yea to the by-law." But, Sir, if the plan as changed had been submitted to that ratepayer and if he had been told that the Commission would sell power at a fixed price at Niagara Falls, and that Galt must assume its fair share of the cost of building and maintaining a transmission line, then that ratepayer would have been called upon to enquire into the whole scheme and might have voted Yea or Nay according to the conclusion he arrived at. (Applause). Now, Sir, I say unhesitatingly that our advice was all right on the floor of this House, and that is, that when the scheme was changed, when the plan was so entirely changed, that the vote of the ratepayers already taken meant nothing, we strongly urged that the vote be re-taken and that the ratepayers of the several municipalities should be consulted with reference to the new scheme and should have the opportunity of saying whether they would take the risk or not. (Applause). We believed then, and we believe now, that the Province in this way would have kept itself right and that as between the Province and the municipality there should not be any room for finding fault afterwards. (Applause). The ratepayers of any particular town have the right to say whether they want any particular scheme or not. Under our municipal law, Sir, no Council can bind the ratepayers on money matters, other than current, without consulting the ratepayers, but here, Sir, is legislation binding the ratepayers of these fourteen municipalities, and the ratepayers to this day have never voted upon the particular scheme that binds them, but it has been made binding upon them without their consent by the arbitrary action of this Government. (Applause). This, Sir, is another excellent illustration of the arbitrary centralization of power that I do not approve of. I repeat, Sir, that instead of passing amending Acts year after year, binding the municipalities, it would have been far better if our suggestion had been adopted and that the ratepayers of the municipalities had been allowed to vote upon the question and the scheme as it now stands. Now, Sir, that is the general situation. On this particular question let there be no misunderstanding. I have always stated, many a time upon the public platform, with reference to this Hydro-Electric question, and I think in so stating that I speak the voice of the Liberal party, namely, that the Government, or rather the Commission in this scheme, are only acting as the advance agents for the municipalities; that the Commission has a right to so act; that the Government has a right to lend to the municipalities the strength of the strong Provincial arm, in obtaining cheap power for the municipalities for which cheap power can be obtained, and charging up to the municipalities interested the whole cost. That, Sir, has been our position and that is our position still in so far as the general scheme of so assisting the municipalities to obtain cheap power is concerned, we are in accord with the movement; but, Sir, we are not in accord with many of the methods used by this Government and with much of its legislation. (Applause).

THOSE EASEMENTS.

Another question of procedure has been much discussed during this debate. It is rather a subsidiary question: it is, Sir, nevertheless an important one, and not by any means a small one. I refer to the manner of the obtaining of the easements by the Commission from the farmers. The Honorable Minister of Power may belittle it and say that only a few farmers are dissatisfied. He may tell us, as he has told us, that in dealing with two or three thousand farmers he has only had difficulty with a very few. I desire to state emphatically, and I have no hesitation in making the statement, that so far as I can judge from