

cost of building transmission lines, etc., was greater than the estimate the Province as a whole would be obliged to pay the difference in cost. This statement was made in direct contradiction of the clear provisions of the Statute that neither the Commission nor the Province of Ontario should in any way be liable for any such miscalculations. That position was immediately attacked by the Leader of the Opposition, and the Minister of Power was forced to recede from the position taken. It would be manifestly unfair to tax those portions of the Province that are not within the electric zones for a portion of the cost of supplying power to manufacturers and municipalities within the electric zones. Section 24 of the Act of 1907 is clear and explicit on this point and reads: "Neither the Province nor the Commission nor any member thereof shall incur any liability by reason of any error or omission in any estimates, plans or specifications prepared or furnished by the Commission." On account of the fact that the Government had thus blundered, they brought down during the very closing days of the last session an Act to validate all by-laws passed in connection with the supplying of power. Because of the fact that the question is an important one and that several municipalities desire that practical steps shall be taken to obtain cheap power, the Opposition in the Legislature did not oppose this validating Act although it leads to this peculiar position:—If the Government proceed to build transmission lines they will in advance spend the money of the Province in building those lines, and if the proportion of the whole cost which it is found necessary to assess against any municipality is so great that it will bring the cost of power up to a higher figure than that stated by the Minister of Power and higher than that contained in the by-law passed by the ratepayers, the Council in executing the contract will have exceeded the power given to them by the ratepayers; on the other hand, if the Validating Act gives the Council power to do this, then the Legislature will have rendered it possible for the Council to place a greater indebtedness against the municipality than the ratepayers authorized the Council to do and in either case the blundering of the Government has left the position at once awkward and anomalous. The fair and frank thing for the Government to have done would have been to have given to the municipalities in Western Ontario estimates of the whole cost of the whole transmission lines, etc., then to have told each municipality what its fair proportion of that would be, and then the Council could have submitted to the ratepayers a by-law authorizing them to expend that amount, or even