

It was my privilege last September to stand as the Liberal candidate for North York, which is a riding which is buried in the middle of a very strong and very prejudiced type of political opinion, and I am surrounded by and have underneath and on top of me a great deal of hydro discussion. Perhaps some people do not think I am a good public ownership man; I am not on the side of the province as against the Federal authority. We may as well be clearly understood on that. I have some doubt of the soundness of acknowledging any long-distance distribution service from every side right in the province; I think that is a policy which could be left to private enterprise. If the province could be divided into sections and compete with each other, we would have arrived at just as good a position as we are in now. I look with certain distrust on the Hydro Commission with regard to branch lines, and I feel that the people should expect the Federal authorities to develop such an asset as water-power. I think it has all the elements for success. Four years from now, if our Liberal Convention in North York is kind enough to ask me to stand, if it is possible, I shall accept the honour, and I shall no doubt be presented with what is called a royal North York fight against my position on public ownership. I want to tell the people here, now, that I have nothing to apologize for, and my position will be this: that this great water-power resource of Canada is the heritage of the whole Canadian dominion; it is the property of the whole nine provinces, and nobody in any one province should suggest the idea that this asset should be developed by two of the nine children of our family. I thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Do any members of the committee wish to ask Mr. Sifton any questions?

Mr. CHEVRIER: May I express my thanks to the committee and yourself for extending to me the courtesy to say a few words. As I understand it, the evidence is to be printed, and will be available in the morning. Mr. Wynne Sifton, the vice-president of the company, wishes to make a statement, and his evidence will be taken, and these two gentlemen will be available at any time the committee desires, and the members of the committee will secure copies of this evidence to-morrow, and can digest it, and these witnesses will be available for cross-examination. I suggest that they be given the opportunity of making this statement, so that the members of the committee will know their stand, take time to read their evidence, and then avail themselves of their presence for cross-examination if desired.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any member of the committee wish to ask any questions now, or shall we follow Mr. Chevrier's suggestion?

Several Hon. MEMBERS: Follow Mr. Chevrier's suggestion.

Mr. WYNNE SIFTON: I would like to answer the question which has been addressed to my brother. I am more familiar with the details of this question than is he. I am familiar with the English question, and the actual figures for any statement of claim which will be made against the government are figures which will be made by auditors. We have never had an auditor go through the books for that purpose, and I think it is unfair for us to be asked to bind ourselves in dollars and cents, before the auditors have a chance to go through the statement. I notice Sir George Perley is here, and I think he will remember that the English holders under this charter, some years ago, when he was in London, were asked with regard to their costs, and what amount they would claim. My remembrance of it was that it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of £225,000 in 1912. I have the correspondence in the office, which could be looked up, and produced to the committee, but I would like to have notice as a matter of definite figures.

[Mr. Wynne Sifton.]