

# ROYAL COMMISSION WILL PROBE CURRIE CHARGES

## LEGISLATURE FAVORS ENQUIRY INTO CHARGES AGAINST SPEAKER

**Royal Commission Will Hear Evidence on Accusation that Hon. William Currie Defrauded the Government by Having Statement of Lumber Cut on Crown Lands by His Company Falsified—Legislature Continues Discussion of Public Health Bill and Other Matters.**

(From Official Report.)

Fredericton, April 25.—The House met at 11.30 a.m.

Mr. Baxter in pursuance of notice, moved for the appointment of a committee of the House to investigate the charges made against Hon. Mr. Currie, the Speaker of the House.

Hon. Mr. Foster said that his purpose in rising was to propose an amendment to the motion proposed by his hon. friend, the member for St. John county. That, instead of referring this important matter to a committee of the House, a royal commission be appointed. His purpose in doing so was not because he did not feel that a competent and capable committee could not be selected from among the members of the House, who would deal with the subject matter in hand, and hand out even-handed justice and British fair play and bring in a report in accordance with the facts, but because it was late in the session and it would be a hardship to compel the members to remain, or delay them unnecessarily from proceeding to their homes and continuing with their usual vocations of life.

### Complete Probe.

The sole desire of the government was that the fullest and most complete investigation be had, in order that the matter might be sifted to the bottom and fully cleared up. Whoever was wrong in this matter, the results would be serious, for, if the charges were proven, then the consequence would be serious to those involved, not only to the accused himself, but to those who had made such a transaction possible; on the other hand, if the charges were not proven, then those responsible for them must be placed—to say the least—in an unenviable position. While he regretted exceedingly that such serious charges had been made against a high official of the House, he was glad that the information which, judging from the dates of the affidavits, had been in possession of his friends opposite for some time, had been forthcoming. He took the opportunity of announcing that it would be the policy of the government, over which he had the honor to preside, to court at all times the receipt of any and all information in the possession of anyone in or out of the House, or any information which might be in the possession of any person involving wrong doing by either members of the House or officials in connection with any of the departments, in order that they might be given the fullest publicity.

Personally he was tired of investigations. The province had had many during the past ten years, but the government must and would proceed when any information reached them which called for an explanation on the part of those who had or who might have been connected with it in the past.

### Hon. Mr. Baxter.

Hon. Mr. Baxter said that he was very glad that the hon. leader of the House had proposed the course which he had outlined. What his hon. friend had said was only what he thought it only fair to express his belief that the premier was determined to uphold the honor of his administration. They might differ in details regarding the administration, and in other matters, but it was only right and proper, when a man was doing the right thing, or what he considered was the right thing, that no differences in political matters should prevent him (Baxter) from expressing his approbation. He agreed that it was not desirable to keep the House in session to await the report of a committee, but under the rules of the House, a member had no other tribunal to which he could appeal. He might draw attention to the fact that a former government, when very serious charges were laid, could have appointed a committee which would have been very one-sided, in view of the political complexion of the House at that time, but they also had been determined to uphold the highest standards of the House and had appointed a royal commission; he was glad to learn that his honorable friend would follow the same course. He was not going to say one word to reflect on the gentleman who had been accused. If he were in fault, others must have shared that fault, but that could not be taken as justification; it was a case where two were necessary for carrying out an arrangement. He understood the honorable leader of the opposition to say that, if they were not proven, it would be serious for those who made the charges.

Hon. Mr. Foster—"You misunderstand me. What I said was that it would be serious for those responsible for the charges—for the person who made the affidavit."

### No Political Aspect.

Mr. Baxter, continuing, said that was another matter. Every possible care had been taken to avoid giving this matter a political aspect. He also was tired of investigations, so far as

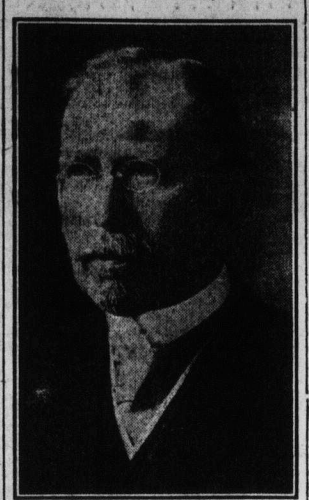
withheld. I gave the reasons, decent and clear reasons. If he knows of any others, let him state them. One investigation at a time is enough."

The amendment moved by Hon. Mr. Foster, providing for the appointment of a royal commission, was adopted.

Hon. Mr. Byrne introduced a bill to provide for the holding of an inquiry into certain charges preferred against the Hon. Wm. Currie, which bill, on the ground of urgency, was read a second time, forthwith.

### Public Health Bill.

The House went into committee of the whole and took up consideration of the public health bill. Hon. Mr. Roberts moved to amend the bill by providing that the department of public health should be under the charge of a member of the executive, who should serve without salary.



DR. J. ROY CAMPPELL

### Afternoon Session.

On the committee resuming at 3 o'clock, consideration was given to section 5 which sets forth that the ministers' decisions shall be final, except in cases involving the expenditure of public money.

Mr. Tilley did not approve of the wording of the section, as he thought there should be the right to appeal to the lieutenant-governor-in-council.

Hon. Mr. Baxter said that the action of other members of the executive were subject to review by the lieutenant-governor-in-council, with no exception should be made in regard to the minister of health.

Hon. Mr. Robinson proposed an amendment and the section was made to read: "The minister shall decide on all matters of doubt or dispute as to the working of the act, subject to the approval of the lieutenant-governor-in-council."

Hon. Mr. Roberts, replying to Dr. Campbell on section 7, said that the chief health officer of the department need not necessarily be a physician, but he would need to possess special knowledge on matters pertaining to public health and sanitation. It was necessary, however, that the chief medical officer should be a physician and the salaries of the two officials would be the same. The minister would have charge of the bureau and there would be three special officers appointed to carry out individual duties. The minister of public health would be presiding officer.

Hon. Mr. Murray (Kings) pointed out that when the bill was introduced, it had been set forth that in the absence of the minister, there would be another minister holding a portfolio could act in his place. He thought the same rule must apply to the health department.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that the bill did not propose that an official of the department should act as minister, but only that he should preside in the absence of the minister.

Hon. Mr. Murray said that the House had been given to understand that the bill had been given careful consideration, but the different views in regard to some features of it, that had emanated from the same one individual, indicated that such was not the case. If the minister was to pass on all things, it should be so stated in the bill. He thought the word executive was made to apply to people who were to serve only in an administrative capacity.

### Compliments Hon. Mr. Baxter

Hon. Mr. Roberts thought that if any man in the province was capable of interpreting legislation, it was the hon. member for St. John county. The bill set forth that the minister of health should preside and certain officials to be appointed would act with him in administering the department.

Mr. Campbell said that he had pointed out on previous occasions that the bill was top heavy and he had used the words advisedly. He thought there was no need for both a chief medical officer and a chief health officer, and that a chief pathologist should be appointed instead of a chief of laboratories.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that the present act provided for a bacteriologist and pathologist. There was already a laboratory, but as the facilities were limited, it did not give the desired results. Under the terms of the bill, it might be necessary to establish a second laboratory in some central part of that province in which case the bacteriologist would have charge of both.

### An Amendment.

The chairman said that section 6 having been amended by striking out the salary of \$2,100 to be paid the minister, it would be necessary to eliminate the section from the bill altogether.

Mr. Baxter said that he proposed to move an amendment that only the word "twenty" should be struck out, as he felt it was necessary for the minister to consult the people.

Hon. Mr. Murray (Kings) said he agreed to the principle of the bill and the opposition had no desire to obstruct its passage; it was their duty and right to criticize and assist in making the measure as perfect as possible.

Hon. Mr. Baxter, on the motion to

Hon. Mr. Murray (Kings) speaking to the section of medical inspection in schools asked who would bear the expense of surgical operations upon children whose parents were too poor to meet the cost.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that they would be cared for as they were to day.

### Factory License.

Mr. Tilley asked what was meant under the act by a license for a factory. He considered it very drastic legislation, to permit a minister of health, to prevent the operation of a factory.

Hon. Mr. Roberts replied that the provision was similar to that existing in Ontario, and in certain states of the union. Conditions in factories and mills were not always sanitary, and the regulation was for the purpose of correcting them.



DR. H. I. TAYLOR

It was particularly desirable that the conditions under which women and girls worked should be corrected, when necessary.

Mr. Tilley said that the right of prosecution of the owner or manager of any factory was sufficient. Why should a license be required?

Hon. Mr. Byrne—"To see that the regulations of the health act are carried out. There is nothing drastic about the proposal and no hardship is incurred. A license can easily be obtained."

Mr. Tilley said that this was putting a tremendous power in the hands of a politician, for that was what the minister of health would be. If the department were to be administered by an independent man, it would be different. Under the circumstances, the power was too great.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said he had no desire to be arbitrary in this matter. He did consult with the proprietors of large factories in and about St. John on this matter, and they had offered no objections.

### Mr. Michaud.

Mr. Michaud moved that section 28 be amended to remove from factory owners the burden of registering and also to substitute certificate for license, for the document issued by the department to factories complying with the law.

The section passed as amended. Section 30 limiting the treatment of certain diseases to qualified physicians was amended by eliminating a clause which might be construed as giving the minister power to authorize treatment by others.

Hon. Mr. Roberts on section 31 said that the increasing prevalence of certain diseases had led to the adoption of more drastic legislation in many parts of the world. He had been advised by physicians that the section was not stringent enough.

Dr. Taylor said that the regulation providing that persons suffering from certain diseases should report them was likely to make persons conceal

their ailments to avoid the registration.

Hon. Mr. Roberts quoted from an act recently passed in Ontario of similar effect.

It being six o'clock the committee took recess, to resume at eight o'clock.

### Night Session.

Mr. Campbell on the committee's resuming at eight o'clock, moved an amendment to section 32, which was adopted. It provides that persons suffering from certain diseases who do not take the treatment prescribed for them within thirty days, that warning will be given to those threatened with contagion, the patient being first warned that notice will be given.

The sections of the bill dealing with the registration of births and marriages were adopted without discussion.

Mr. Burchill on the section relating to burial permits, said so far as country districts of the province were concerned, it was more liable to be more honored in the breach than in the observance. He did not think that in all cases burials could be delayed until a certificate of death was received from the attending physician.

Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. McGrath that people in remote country districts sometimes died without the knowledge of the physician. Still it was a important matter to have the cause of death so that it could be tabulated for future use.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that he attached great importance to the part of the act dealing with vital statistics. At present there was no record made of many deaths taking place in country districts, and it was important that it should be done.

Hon. Mr. Veniot submitted an amendment which was satisfactory to the committee. It provides that in country districts burials may take place without a certificate, but notice must be sent to the health authorities within thirty days.

### Diseased Animals.

Mr. Mersereau on the section relating to diseased animals, wanted to know if such animals were destroyed if the owners would be reimbursed.

Hon. Mr. Veniot said the power was given to destroy diseased animals in the old act.

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said he thought it was too much power to give to a board of health. It should be left with the Dominion Government.

Mr. McGrath said that the health officer should report cases of diseased animals to the minister of agriculture.

Mr. Tilley thought the section might interfere with the prerogative of the Dominion government.

Hon. Mr. Roberts read from the N. B. Health Act to show that local boards of health had authority to examine herds and destroy animals found to be diseased.

Mr. Murray (Kings) wanted to know if the cost of inspecting herds would be borne by the department.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that the matter had been discussed and it had been decided to make a regulation governing the matter of expenses.

Hon. Mr. Veniot had the section amended by striking out the part of it relating to the destruction of diseased animals.

Mr. Campbell on section 42 which defines the duties of the district medical health officer, said he thought that official would be kept pretty busy. He thought it scarcely necessary to stipulate that the officer would be prohibited from practicing his profession either publicly or privately. He was inclined to think the section would clash with the subsequent section of the bill.

Mr. McGrath said that he did not think that a man just out of medical college and with no experience would be a success as district health officer.

Mr. Campbell thought that official should be under the control of the district board of health and not under the district medical officer.

Mr. Tilley said he noticed that the district health officers were to devote the whole time to their duties. He would like to know if the honorable minister expected to devote his whole time to the administration of the act.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that if the

matter was left to his supervision he would probably be able to give a demonstration as to what would be done.

Mr. Campbell said that St. John now had five inspectors who were carrying on their work in an efficient manner.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said that what would apply to St. John might not be applicable to other counties of the province. He would accept an amendment that would exempt St. John from that provision of the act.

Mr. Taylor wanted to know what salary a district medical officer would receive.

Hon. Mr. Roberts said it would be determined by the governor in council.

Mr. Baxter agreed with Mr. McGrath that a district medical officer should be a man with some experience as a practitioner.

Mr. Campbell spoke of the good work accomplished by the St. John board of health. In the past it had been headed by such men as Judge Waters, Dr. Bayard and James Reynolds, who had been most attentive in carrying out their duties. He thought the work of that board should be imitated with as little as possible.

Mr. Hall in his report had spoken well of the St. John board of health.

### Mr. Michaud.

Mr. Michaud said that what might be applicable to St. John might not apply to country districts. Boards of health in those districts were composed of men who knew little about sanitation.

He thought a special clause might be inserted in the bill to meet the case of St. John, and allow the section to become applicable to the rest of the province.

Mr. Campbell moved an amendment to the effect that in the sub-district which may include the City of St. (Continued on Page 7)

### "HER UNBORN CHILD"

Strongly Endorsed by Montreal's Play Censor—Opens at Lyric Next Monday Evening—A Play, Not a Picture.

So highly pleased were the playgoers of Chatham, N. B., with the performance of Howard McKen Barnes' propaganda play, "Her Unborn Child," which was presented there on Wednesday that the manager of the Opera House immediately requested a return engagement. The play comes to St. John for a stay of two weeks, starting next Monday evening.

Mr. John C. Roberts, official play censor of the city of Montreal, will arrive in St. John tomorrow morning. Mr. Roberts has promised those interested in the success of the play that he would recommend the drama to his friends here as one of the best of the season.

Mr. Roberts' like many other thinking men and women, found much to his liking in "Her Unborn Child." He appreciated the purpose of the author, and the big human side of the story with its great moral lesson, appealed to him.

Mr. Roberts, while here, has promised to endorse the decision of the play censor of western Canada that "Her Unborn Child" is a play that every adult should see.

"Her Unborn Child" will be presented at the Lyric Theatre, under the direction of Mr. George F. Driscoll of His Majesty's Theatre, Montreal, who secured the Canadian rights to the play after learning of its wonderful reception by press and public in the United States. "Her Unborn Child" has been played before over a million people.

One of the unique features of the engagement at the Lyric will be that the daily matinee performance, which will be given after the opening day of the engagement, will be reserved exclusively for the ladies. As these matinee performances are an essay on "Motherhood" is delivered by Miss Orpha Allen, the leading lady of the company. This portion of the programme is omitted at the evening performance.



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