

HYDRO PROBE ASKED BY COUNTY ORANGEMEN

Toronto Commission Accused of Mismanagement

Board of Control Asked to Order Investigation of Affairs on Strength of Serious Charges Laid by Former Employees of the System.

Not content with the statement issued by General Manager H. H. Couzens, in answer to the charge laid by Mr. Wm. Crawford and several members of the Orange Order, that the Hydro System was employing **alien enemies**, in which Mr. Couzens proved to the apparent satisfaction of the city that the charges were without foundation, a committee from the County Orange Lodge appeared before the Board of Control yesterday, demanding an investigation of the affairs of the Commission. Mr. A. R. Hassard, solicitor for the order, headed the deputation, which claimed mismanagement, favoritism and waste on the part of the Commissioners.

The many complaints submitted were referred to the City Solicitor, with a view to deciding whether an investigation is in order, or whether the matter should be referred to the Provincial Hydro-electric Commission for consideration.

Former Employees Complain.

Along with his complaints Mr. Hassard produced affidavits of former employees, who complain of unfair treatment and petty persecution. One man, Mr. Wm. Hooley, swears that he was discharged after having cut the costs of building manholes, etc., and further states that Mr. Charles Schwenger, the tester of transformers, was appointed after having insufficient experience, obtained at the Commission's expense. He further claims that the Commission owns a plant to carry on construction work, but that the work is being let out to contractors, who carry it out at much greater cost than the Commission could complete it. Hooley, who was at one time general foreman for the system, claims that "reliable and experienced men, including Messrs. Orr, McCrea, Darrell, Totten, Hopper, Major, and others, were discharged without reason, and men of less experience put in their places.

Mr. George J. Soucy claims that "Mr. P. W. Ellis got into difficulty with one of the men, and, to extricate himself, allowed Mr. J. C. Smith to place the blame on me, and, in consequence, I was wrongly discharged."

"I charge the Commission systematically with having exceeded the cost for construction of work, and this was due to the over-staffing, inefficiency and bad management from 1910 to 1913," reads Soucy's affidavit. "I also charge that there was no satisfactory audit of the stores account made in 1912, when there was an alleged shortage of about \$100,000, and I believe that there was a very great shortage at that time.

Makes Charges Against Chairman.

"I also charge Mr. Ellis, Chairman of the Commission, with being responsible for many cases of injustice done to employees, who were reduced in position because of petty grievances. I also charge that in the spring of 1912 Mr. Ellis told the City Council that a proper system of unit cost accounting had been installed when it had not been.

"I charge that the purchase was made of \$10,000 worth of electric cookers against my advice, and that these became obsolete and were scrapped. I also charge that electric transformers were badly needed and not bought. This was contrary to my advice and a source of loss.

"I charge that the underground work was let out by contract when the system had both equipment and staff to perform the same, and this caused great loss also."

Up to Provincial Commission.

Mayor Church took the stand that there can be no judicial investigation unless the Provincial Commission orders it, while Controller O'Neill was not ready to take up the complaints of "discharged employees." "We cannot interfere with the discipline of the department," he declared.

"Are you ready to back your charges?" asked Mayor Church of Mr. Hassard.

"I am not going into the witness box, but I am instructed that I can back them up," declared Mr. Hassard.

Controller O'Neill—If these gentlemen had come along with charges of misappropriation of funds their case would have been strong, but they come along with charges regarding discipline and that makes them weak.

The matter was then referred to the City Solicitor.

When seen by The Globe yesterday, General Manager H. H. Couzens had nothing to say.