

ROAD SCHEME OBJECTED TO

Deputation of Farmers Lays
Grievances Before Provin-
cial Ministers

WANT OLD PLAN AGAIN

Present Resolution Said to
Have Been Signed by
10,000

Opposition to the Government policy of building a Provincial highway has been voiced at various U. F. O. meetings in different parts of the Province of late. Yesterday the opposition took on official form, when a deputation claiming to represent 10,000 farmers placed their objections before the Minister of Public Works, Hon. Finlay G. Macdiarmid, and the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. George S. Henry. The conference lasted for more than two hours, the Ministers taking a large part in the discussion. At the conclusion of the meeting there was no evidence that the objections had made any impression on the Ministers. Mr. Macdiarmid declared that the Government was not building speedways for joy-riders, and he pointed out that many associations had adopted resolutions favoring the Windsor to Ottawa and Montreal highway.

The deputation was introduced jointly by the two U. F. O. members of the Legislature, Mr. Beniah Bowman and Mr. J. W. Widdifield. Mr. R. H. Halbert, President of the U. F. O., introduced the various speakers. He claimed that the highway would not be for the benefit of the people, but for the motor interests.

It was stated by the various speakers that what the farmers required was not a few specially good trunk roads, but rather a system of useful roads. Good roads as a whole were not opposed. When reference was made to the large urban deputation that waited on the Government recently asking for a second trunk road through Western Ontario, members of the deputation said it was manipulated by the cities and did not represent the farmers. It was claimed that the building of the road would result in decreased agricultural production because it would take labor from the farms.

Opposition to Kingston Road.

Mr. E. C. Drury, the Vice-President, said he had no objection to the highway, but he thought this highway should not run parallel to existing railway lines. He was questioned closely by Mr. Macdiarmid, and admitted that he would not object to the Toronto-Hamilton section or the Hamilton to Niagara Falls link. "You are picking on the most defensible parts of the system," he said, adding that he was against the construction of the Kingston road as a Provincial highway.

Mr. Saunders of Huron county advocated going back to the old system. He was told by the Minister of Public Works that if he could get 90 per cent. of the ratepayers to favor going back to the old system the necessary legislation would be passed.

Mr. Drury asked if it were the intention of the Government to forbid a farmer from taking his cattle to market along the Provincial highway.

"Do you think any Government would be so absolutely insane as to make such a regulation?" asked Mr. Macdiarmid, hotly. "No such thought ever entered the mind of any member of the Legislature on either side of the House."

Not All Concrete.

Replying to the deputation, Mr. Macdiarmid pointed out the difficulties the Government had to contend with in framing a policy that would be beyond criticism. He told of the many associations that had adopted resolutions favoring the Provincial highway. Nearly all cities were in favor of it, too. Good roads, he believed, would increase production on the farms and vastly improve conditions in the rural sections. County Councils had favored the scheme. The Minister also took the opportunity to correct the impression that it was the idea to construct an all-concrete highway. This was not the intention, he declared. The type of road would depend entirely upon local conditions as to material and traffic.

Members of the deputation included Mr. R. H. Halbert, Mr. E. C. Drury, Mr. J. J. Morrison (Secretary), Mr. H. Currie (Middlesex), Mr. Alex. McKillop (Elgin), Mr. D. M. Ross (Oxford), Mr. Alex. Noble (Ontario), Mr. Saunders (Huron), Mr. Menard (Russell), and Mr. H. J. Pettypiece (Lambton).

The resolution which they presented to the Ministers, and which they said had been signed by 10,000, pointed out the necessity for economy. It argued that the proposed highway would not help production in any manner commensurate with the cost. It objected to the power conferred whereby the removal of timber, buildings, and the regulation of traffic might lead to serious abuses. It also asked for the repeal of the Provincial Highways Act.