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DRURY KEEN TO LEARN FERGUSON CURE-ALL FOR "ILLS" OF O.T.A.

Premier Challenges Conservative Leader to Relieve Electorate of Suspense, and Hon. Howard Challenges Government Leader to an Election Under Same Conditions as Four Years Ago

TORY CHIEF MARKS RANEY FOR "HIDING"

Challenging Hon. G. H. Ferguson, Leader of the Provincial Conservatives, to make known to the electorate his stand upon the issue of prohibition, Premier Drury, speaking in the Legislature yesterday, declared in ringing tones that Mr. Ferguson owed to the people of the Province an announcement of his position with respect to Ontario's dry law.

"The country has a right to know," emphasized the Premier, "where my honorable friend stands. The country can stand an announcement against prohibition, an announcement for modification of the present prohibitory law. It cannot stand for hints; it cannot stand for silence on this important question. It cannot stand for a policy which says to the 'drys': 'I am not touching the law,' and gives the wink to the wets, which means, 'I will enforce it slackly if I come into power.'"

Two Leaders Have the Floor.

The Premier and Hon. Mr. Ferguson occupied the whole of the afternoon in their speeches on the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, and, although they had all the incentive which crowded galleries give, neither gave the House anything new in the way of administrative ideas. Their omissions were more notable, perhaps, than any statements that were made—Hon. G. H. Ferguson concluded his speech without making his long-awaited declaration on O.T.A., and Premier Drury gave redistribution matters a wide berth.

After the Conservative Leader had concluded an address critical of the Government for its timber policy, its commission-appointing proclivities, its "extravagance" all along the line, and particularly in road building, and what he termed the tendency on the part of the Attor-

ney-General to treat the petty judiciary of Ontario as civil servants, the Premier came on with a detailed resume of the accomplishments of the Government, incidentally defending the much-discussed "Backus deal."

Challenged to an Election.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson issued a brief challenge to the Premier to appeal in the general election to the same electorate in the same manner that returned him to power four years ago, but the Premier let pass his reference to proportional representation and the transferable vote without answering it.

In response to criticism that the present had been a destructive, rather than a constructive, Administration, the Premier detailed a dozen and one items of social legislation which had been enacted, and asked if that record looked "destructive." He ventured the opinion that the Government's record in respect of beneficial legislation would stand favorable comparison with that of any previous Administration.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson in his address had charged the Government with not having the courage of its convictions.

"Three years ago," declared Premier Drury in reply, "my honorable friends left us a radial situation

... We appointed a commission to investigate, because we thought the people of Ontario ought to have in their possession facts regarding a project which would ultimately cost \$200,000,000. The commission made its report; the Government took its stand in the face of fierce opposition; the Government took its life in its hands to do that.

Claims Endorsation.

"It is interesting to note that the people on the most favored of these lines during their recent vote endorsed the position of the Government taken on that question. It is interesting to note that the new Chairman of the National lines, as a practical railwayman, has sized up the situation, and that he announced a policy, and that that policy coincided exactly with the policy laid down by this Government in August of the year before and retained by this Government ever since.

"Is that a question of a Government shirking responsibility in leadership? Is that a question of a Government not having the courage of its convictions? It required political courage and it showed leadership, and the march of events has shown that the Government in its announced position was correct. Time will yet further show it."

From Hydro-radials the Premier went on to twit Hon. G. H. Ferguson upon his as yet unannounced temperance policy discovery, picturing him as a political chemist, bending one night over his test tubes, pouring in his mixtures, and at last exclaiming, "Eureka! I have got it." But the Conservative Leader must have buried his discovery in an iceberg in Alaska," commented Premier Drury amid laughter, "because the Province had heard nothing of it since."

Pays Respects to Currie.

From the Conservative Leader he passed on to Hon. Mr. Ferguson's latest recruit in the ranks of his Legislative following, John A. Currie, Southeast Toronto, and the latter's first utterance in the Legislature came in the midst of the Premier's references to himself and his election platform, Mr. Currie asking if it were not correct that the electorate of the riding had endorsed that platform.

Continuing on O.T.A. matters, the Premier declared that what Ontario now needed was stability in the administration of temperance laws. "Let us admit it is a great experiment," he said. "It is an experiment whose success or failure depends on the stability of enforcement."

The Premier hoped that the people of the Province would settle down to a fair trial of prohibition, rather than restlessly hoping for a change. He hoped that there would be no indication from the people of a desire for a change. Then, as he launched into his call upon the Conservative Leader to make known his temperance stand, Hon. Mr. Ferguson interrupted, laughingly, "I will tell them; don't you worry."

The Premier concluded by reading and answering a sheaf of recess platform utterances by W. F. Nickle, K.C., Kingston; Hon. T. Crawford, Northwest Toronto; Hon. Mr. Ferguson, and others of the Conservative party, declaring his belief that for