

DRURY'S 4-UNIT PLAN DISCARDS 'REP. BY POP.' DECLARES FERGUSON

Conservative Leader Attacks Prime Minister's Proposal as Abandoning "Fundamental Principle on Which Our System of Representation Is Based," and Violating Spirit of B.N.A. Act

TIME INSUFFICIENT TO EFFECT REFORMS

At 2 o'clock this (Tuesday) morning J. A. Currie, Conservative, Southeast Toronto, was still speaking, and indications pointed to an all-night session. Mr. Ferguson said that if it were a question of an endurance test, "we'll have to accept the challenge."

Characterizing as "vicious and erroneous" Premier Drury's redistribution suggestion for a differentiation in units of representation between urban, rural and newer Ontario, Hon. G. H. Ferguson, Conservative Leader, in the Legislature last night delivered a fair intimation that the Conservatives would fight to the last ditch any redistribution along the lines of the Prime Minister's proposals.

The Conservative chieftain declared himself as willing to accept a reasonable allowance for compactness of population in Ontario cities, but professed to be utterly unable to see why Toronto should be discriminated against with a unit of representation higher than all other cities. If the Premier argued "metropolitan Press" Mr. Ferguson was willing to take him to other cities—Ottawa, Hamilton and London—with Press facilities comparable to those of Toronto.

So far as special consideration of newer Ontario's claims to representation was concerned, however, Mr. Ferguson was agreed that they should have a lower unit of representation than the rest of the Province.

Along with W. E. N. Sinclair, K.C., Liberal, South Ontario, and A. C. Lewis, Conservative, Northeast Toronto, Mr. Ferguson argued the principle of "representation by population," which, he declared, was the fundamental principle underlying representative institutions.

Must Start at Right End.

The Redistribution Committee must start out on the broad basis of securing equalization of units of representation, and from there work toward a reasonable allowance for older Ontario, rather than start at the other end, as the Premier suggested, argued the Opposition.

Mr. Sinclair, and, indeed, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Lewis, were frank in expressing the opinion that redistribution, along with other electoral reforms, could not pass the House in the three weeks allotted, and upon the Government's shoulders they threw all the responsibility. Each Oppositionists agreed that the Government was remiss in leaving introduction of the measures to the twelfth week of the session.

Forsakes "Rep by Pop."

In opening the discussion at 10.30 p.m. Hon. G. H. Ferguson, accepting Premier Drury's statement that his suggestions on Friday were mere suggestions, declared that the Government's views were usually accepted with some weight by the Redistribution Committee. In that connection he reminded that, although the committee was all pow-

erful, the Government had to accept responsibility.

The Prime Minister's suggestion of four unit classifications, with Toronto having the highest unit, Mr. Ferguson said, was "not based on the fundamental principle on which our system of representation is based, and that is the system or principle of representation by population."

"I think," he said, "that the Prime Minister in his suggestion goes a long way further than any discussion I have been able to find or any view expressed by any eminent public man I have been able to run across in dealing with that phase of the subject."

Advances Toronto's Claim.

Toronto, said Mr. Ferguson, was not the Washington of the north that the Premier appeared to think it. Toronto, with one-fifth the population of Ontario, and bearing more than that fraction of the taxation, was entitled to have her citizens on a basis of equal voting strength with citizens of any other centre. Mr. Ferguson went on to refer to Toronto's municipal problems, her judicial system, and complexity of interests, all of which demanded adequate representation.

"For these reasons," Mr. Ferguson went on, "I say there cannot be very strong or cogent reason why the citizen of Toronto should not have the same voice in legislative matters and public questions as the citizens of Kemptville, if you like."

So far as the considerations of transportation and communication in urban and rural communities were concerned, the Conservative Leader reminded that conditions today were entirely different from those prevailing 15 or 20 years ago. Telephones, highway improvements and rural mail deliveries, he said, had utterly changed the situation in rural Ontario.

"I venture to say," he added, "that the people in the village in which I live are quite as well informed and as closely in touch with what is going on in the city of Toronto as are citizens of Toronto."

Arguing that the Premier's assumptions and suggestions were "vicious and erroneous," Hon. Mr. Ferguson went on to say that the Premier's declarations as to an all-powerful metropolitan Press were not well founded.

"If there is any distinction there should be only one broad distinction of difference between rural and urban areas. Where are you going to end if you are going to put Toronto by herself?"

Motive in Proposal?

The Conservative Leader went on to attribute motives to the Premier for his suggestion to cut down Toronto's representation. In any event, he said, the effect would be to cut down representation in a community which would not "accord my honorable friend very much comfort or satisfaction when election comes along."

Every Redistribution Committee that ever sat, proceeded Mr. Ferguson, started out on the basis of principle that "the unit of population should be equalized in all constituencies." On the contrary, he said, this Government would start out in the opposite direction — of deliberate differentiation in units of representation in not only urban and rural constituencies, but between urban centres.

The Conservative Leader expressed his entire accord, however, with the Premier's proposal to give special recognition to newer Ontario's claims to representation, because there wide distances had to be taken into consideration.

Upsetting Precedents.

After reading extensively from the Hansard statements Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Robert Borden and other Federal authorities had made on the principle of redistribution, Mr. Ferguson noted that every authority "laid down that the committee starts out with a basis of equality of population for all constituencies."