

The OBSERVER IN QUEEN'S PARK



Premier Drury evidently has been forced to drop the broadening-out policy, but the great gulf fixed between him and J. J. Morrison has been at least temporarily bridged. That is the conclusion reached by most followers of politics after hearing the results of the conferences between the U.F.O. Executive and the Premier and Hon. Manning Doherty. Mr. Drury has promised, in the event of returning with a minority group, to consult with the elected candidates, the defeated candidates and the executives of the U.F.O. and affiliated organizations and "accept the wishes of the conference as a guide to his future course."

The quotations are from an official statement from the U.F.O., which also contains the text of a resolution claiming that representation for agriculture in the Legislature is as vitally necessary now as it was in 1919, and the U.F.O. also state their belief in the preservation of a strong Farmers' representation.

It was known several days ago that determined efforts were being made to effect a reconciliation between the Premier and Mr. Morrison. Political disaster was prophesied unless the warring elements got together, because the Farmer vote would be split between Druryites and Morrisonites. Then, too, the decisions reached at the big Liberal gatherings on Wednesday had their effect. Plenty of shrewd U.F.O. politicians had been convinced that arrangements could be made in many ridings whereby there would be no Liberal candidates. The Liberals' conclusion to run candidates in all 111 ridings, if possible, dashed these U.F.O. hopes of compromises and saw-offs. Their only way out was to make the Premier and J. J. join hands across the chasm, and this has been accomplished.

Some Fog Cleared Away.

The renewal of U.F.O. friendship clears away a little more of this political fog, which is still thicker than any which has heretofore settled over Ontario. The two older parties, Liberals and Conservatives, now know exactly whom they are fighting, which, after all, is the important thing in all elections. But the question is being asked, Will Premier Drury remain tied to the chariot of "J. J." and the other U.F.O. leaders who use the offices in George street? Mr. Drury has ever been of an independent frame of mind, and in the excitement of speaking he is liable to forget all agreements, arrangements, bargains or anything else in his zeal to impress his audience with his point of view. People in Queen's Park feel that Premier Drury is just as sincere in broadening out as he was before he and Mr. Doherty sat in at the U.F.O. conference, and the chances are he will say so. In other words, the general impression is that the reconciliation will be of short duration; it will be a miracle if it lasts until election time. One can easily picture the Premier on the stump making one of his famous jocular references, which are understood by those who hear them, but which look quite different in cold print the next day. The same thing has happened many times before, and possibly may happen again in a few weeks.

In any event Ontario goes into the fight with four distinct parties: Liberals, Conservatives, U.F.O. and Labor. To that extent the air is cleared.

Mr. Hicks at It Again.

To use an expressive slang phrase, Andy Hicks has spilled the beans again. The former Whip says the Premier at one time proposed to make R. J. Fleming of Toronto, Provincial Treasurer; Mr. N. W. Rowell, Attorney-General, or give him some other post, and Sir William Hearst, Provincial Secretary. These tentative propositions, Mr. Hicks says, were aired last summer, and at that time, as everybody knows, Mr. Fleming was still with Mackenzie and Mann as Manager of the Toronto Street Railway. On several previous occasions Mr. Hicks' charges have turned out to be more or less duds, and some amusement was caused among the legislators last night by this latest explosion, because any revelation of party plans is always a political explosion. Many U.F.O. members were plainly angry with the ex-Whip. They stated emphatically that a denial would be forthcoming right away. However, other members wondered what chance Hydro and public ownership would have had if such a proposition had been carried through.

In all probability this latest charge by Mr. Hicks will end his chances of coming back as a U.F.O. member if Premier Drury continues to lead that party.

Capt. Ramsden's Opponent.

Capt. Jack Ramsden (Liberal, Seat "B", Southwest Toronto) will have to face opposition from Controller Singer at the party convention, the Controller having abruptly intimated his political ambitions. Few Liberal members have been so assiduous in their attendance upon public duties as Capt. Ramsden. Even though suffering acutely last winter as the result of war wounds, he hardly missed a day, and took an active and intelligent part in House debates and in committees. His speech on the Budget, while brief, was one of the most constructive the House listened to. Capt. Ramsden loyally stuck to the Liberal platform, and has always helped to advance legislation in that direction. Why the Liberals of Southwest Toronto should want to replace him with Controller Singer is beyond the comprehension of Queen's Park. It is recognized, of course, that Mr. Singer has a strong following in Southwest Toronto, but his Liberalism has not yet reached the standard set by Capt. Ramsden during the latter's four years of public life at home and his service overseas.

Will They Get a Bonus?

Naturally, most members of the Legislature think another bonus should be coming their way. Last session the bonus amounted to \$600 in addition to the \$1,400 indemnity, but last session was of 81 days' duration. So far, this session has run 64 working days. In other years the length of the session was: 1921, 64 days; 1920, 56 days; 1919, 37 days; 1918, 33 days; 1917, 39 days, and 1916, 36 days. The party Whips were sent to sound out the Premier yesterday concerning this question. None of the Whips

would say much about the reception the idea received, but it was quite noticeable last night that no members were very keen to stake any credit on the presumption that \$600 more salary would be forthcoming. It was pointed out that a bonus before an election might provide quite a talking point for candidates seeking office for the first time.

The Dreary Grind.

The House yesterday went through another of those dreary grinds so essential to law-making. Notwithstanding the general dullness of debate, the galleries remained almost crowded, because people think some excitement may break out at any time. The members, however, are more intent on finishing business by next Wednesday or Thursday than on creating red-hot debates. The Legislature has had more than its share of acrimony for one session, and few now seem disposed to add anything to an already historical three months.

Election rumors fill the lobbies, talk of Mr. So and So having strong opposition, or none at all. Occasionally the wildest reports are given circulation, indicating the general tension, which will be increased as election day draws near. Among the U.F.O. much uncertainty prevailed until last night, as it was not known how the conferences between the Premier and the U.F.O. Executive would terminate. Hardly had that matter been settled before the newest Andy Hicks incident, with its many political possibilities, was thrust into the limelight, all of which kept the Agrarian members in a sort of turmoil.

There is no doubt that the Conservatives, too, are seriously perturbed over the wet planks being advanced by some of their followers and prospective nominees. Of late some Conservatives have been hearing that the electors will surely hammer that party hard if the wet element is allowed much more rope. The Conservatives are far from being the happy family which entered the session.