

# Centralizing of Hydro Opposed by A. H. Acres; Three Boards Favored

## Tory Member, While Affirming Loyalty to Party, Calls for Several Reforms — Additional Currency, Nearer Par With Britain's, Is Advocated

Declaring that something "drastic" must be done to restore the Province to prosperity, and action should be taken here similar to that of President Roosevelt in the United States, A. H. Acres (Conservative, Carleton) yesterday, while taking part in the Budget debate in the Legislature, stated that Canada, by injecting additional currency into circulation, should put her currency more on a par with that of Britain. The Province should recommend this to the Federal authorities, he suggested.

Speaking of the Hydro, he declared: "The Government has taken over the wonderful power project in Northern Ontario. I am saying nothing of the cost. But it is too far from a central board or from the Hydro here to do justice to this country. There should be a separate Commission up there, and one of its members should be one of the Northern Ontario members, to look after it and to give service at the lowest possible price to the people of the North.

### Closer Touch Necessary.

"It is well known that in the past I have been opposed to Government ownership. I do know that the people want to be in closer touch with the administration. I believe that the Hydro has got to come closer to the people. With between \$350,000,000 and \$400,000,000 invested in it, no one centralized office here can properly look after the needs of Northern Ontario, Eastern Ontario and South-western Ontario," he said, advocating separate Commissions, or branches of the Commission, for these parts.

Great injustice has been done to the pulp, mining and industrial development of the country by watered stock, he said. "There has been too much watered stock. They are asking the consumers to pay too much dividends on watered stock." If all the "water" were taken out of the "watered stock" and high-pressure salesmanship abolished, there would not be so many pulp mills closed, he contended.

Mr. Acres believed that all Commissions appointed by the Government should have one representative from the Legislature who would be responsible to the people. He attacked combines, mergers, chain stores, packing houses, watered stock and high interest rates.

Mr. Acres emphasized that he was still a Conservative and had confidence in the Conservative Leader, Government and party. "I might say again, and repeat what I said yesterday," he declared, "that I am a supporter of the Government, of its task and of the party, and will continue to be a supporter of it. I offer in the way, not of criticism, but of suggestion, what I have to say."

While the unemployment situation was serious, Mr. Acres said that he, personally, was opposed to direct relief. "I believe in honest work for those who want it."

Industry could not be successful and good times could not return if agriculture were not made successful, he said. Because of the low price of produce and the high taxes, he asked how the farmers could be expected to meet their obligations. "Something has to be done in adjusting the financial structure, that agriculture may be helped."

### Problems of the Farmer.

Mergers, combines, chain stores and public and Government ownership had taken from the farmer any say he might have with respect to the price he could obtain for his produce, Mr. Acres continued. "There has been a great deal said as to what should be done. I regret that the member from Grey South (Mr. Oliver) said that there should be a reduction in the expenditures of the Department of Agriculture. That is one department in which I do not feel that the Government can afford to cut down. There might be an increase in it."

"There is an investigation taking place into milk prices at Ottawa today. I consider that all farmers should have the same treatment as those who are producing milk for consumption in the large centres. These have got to have their herds tested and their buildings in proper condition.

"What is wrong with the cheese industry and with butter? Why are there so many grades of butter? I say that the department should step in and that the ordinary farmer should be encouraged to keep his buildings under the same inspection as those producing for the dairies."

### Would End Agitation.

"The farmers of this Province have been interfered with. For thirty-five years agitators have been going through the country tampering with farmers," he said. The first of these had been the Patrons of Industry, then the U.F.O., and now the C.C.F., he stated. "If I were Leader of this Government, or any other Government, and if there were no legislation for it, the first legislation I would pass would be that there would be only one Opposition, and that would be either Liberal or Conservative. We have had good Liberal Governments."

"Some say that the present condition is the after-effects of the war. Yes, that is one reason, but there are lots of others. I am absolutely opposed to chain stores," said Mr. Acres. They attempted to get the public to buy by advertising some one thing cheap. They were not helping the ordinary citizen who had to buy on time, and if he had anything to do with it they would not get one relief order, Mr. Acres asserted.

"Then there are the mergers in the packing industries. Probably for export trade a large packing-house is necessary. But I do say that the Department of Agriculture should encourage the smaller packing-house."

### Heavy Trucking Opposed.

Another thing the Carleton member did not believe in was the allowing of trucks to transport heavy materials. This injured the railways. Secondary education was a big drain on the taxpayer, and those who wanted it should have to pay for it, he said.

While the Minister of Education

was doing all that he could to help agriculture, and the Marketing Board had done good work in connection with certain products, he felt that there should be a man of practical experience in producing and marketing on it. There should also be a member of the Legislature on it, he said.

Mr. Acres said that there should be more responsible government, and that on every Commission there should be at least one man responsible to the Government and to the electors of the Province.

### Problem of the Unemployed.

Referring to financial matters, he said: "I ask any sane man, at the present high rate of interest, can we pay our indebtedness? No Government can be expected to balance its Budget in these times." He did not favor the cutting of expenses by letting out too many employees and thus adding to the unemployment.

"Pity the mothers in their homes. The children look them in the face. What future have these children when there are about 800,000 out of work in this country? And it is not the fault of this Government," he added. He thought it better if some arrangement were made with respect to wages, and referred to Hon. Peter Heenan speaking on the wage question: "It is time that men of that calibre should be closed up."

He advocated that the Premier should call into conference the building trades to see if they would not reduce their prices so that buildings and improvements might be gone on with.

"We hear a great deal about inflation of currency. Things are drifting along too much. I endorse Premier Bennett this much: that it is not wise to endanger the banks. But it is also not wise that the homes and property of a large percentage of the people should be endangered."

### Britain's System Cited.

Mr. Acres referred to the conversion of loans in England. "The Government has got to arrange something to inject more currency into circulation," he maintained, stating that during the war years more than \$227,000,000 had been put into circulation, and that since then this amount had been decreased by about \$99,000,000.

He asked if any country in the world had any more backing to inject currency into circulation than had Canada, and referred to the vast amounts of grain in the elevators. Such an addition to the currency would help agriculture especially, he said.

"I think that a recommendation should go from this Province," he added, suggesting that since Britain had gone off the gold standard a sufficient addition be made to the currency here to make up for the difference in value of the pound sterling, so that exports would not be affected. England had reduced the interest paid by banks on deposits of those which were not materially aiding in good work to one-half of 1 per cent., while small borrowings could be made at 3 per cent. and larger ones at 2 1-2 per cent. He thought this was a proper adjustment.

### Minimum Price for Wheat.

Mr. Acres also suggested that a minimum price might be set at \$1 a bushel for wheat. "Something drastic must be done," he said, referring to what Mr. Roosevelt had done. Many people were on the verge of losing their equity in their farms, and while he congratulated the Government on its moratorium bill, he thought something else might be done. He then stated that he was doubtful as to the merits of the Agricultural Development Board.

While he had faith in the present Cabinet, he thought that there should be more "practical outstanding business men" in public affairs, pointing to the fact that the first Cabinet in Ontario had been made up 92 per cent. farmers. Mr. Acres also took a rap at lawyers. "With all due respect to the legal and other professions, we do not want too many of them at the head of affairs," he said.