

March 18

WOULD LOWER RURAL HYDRO REQUIREMENT

Farquhar Oliver Asks That
Only Two Contracts Per
Mile Be Necessary

FARMERS FAVOR MOVE

Labelling the clause which called for three Hydro contracts to the mile in rural communities as the chief stumbling block confronting farmers throughout the Province, Farquhar R. Oliver (U.F.O., Grey South) yesterday appealed to the Ontario Government to take steps in establishing a policy whereby Hydro-Electric power would be made available to farmers on the basis of only two contracts per mile.

"If you can see fit to do that, Mr. Prime Minister," he said, "you will have the support and gratitude of every farmer in this Province. You will have done a truly great deed in a social, political and economic way, and you will find that you have builded better than you knew."

He offered assurance that farmers were unanimously in favor of such legislation, quoting the results of a survey conducted in Grey County immediately after the Provincial election of Oct. 6.

Canvassed Farmers.

"As soon as the ballot boxes were closed the member from North Grey (Roland Patterson) and I sent letters to every farmer in the county, asking them what legislation, in their opinion, would be of greatest benefit to the agricultural industry," he said. "Without exception, they replied: 'Reduce the number of consumers from three per mile to two.'"

Mr. Oliver reiterated his approval of the Government's action, both in cancelling the original Quebec power contracts and in negotiating new ones.

"I was never more sincere in my life than when I voted for their cancellation," he said. "But I recognize the problem the Government was up against. It would have been gambling too much to take a chance on bringing the case before the Privy Council, because if we had failed it would have spelled the ruin of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Circumstances made it impossible to do anything else."

Wants Ontario Development.

But while approving the action of the Government under the circumstances, he warned the House that provision should be made to see that such a course would not be necessary again. He urged the Hydro Commission to begin a program of power development in Ontario so that power would be available for use when the Quebec supply had been absorbed.

In stating his position in the House on legislative matters, he referred to a question earlier in the session by Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Leader of the Opposition, who had asked him where he sat.

"At least I know where I stand in this House," he declared, "but you don't know whether you're Roweing or being Rowed."

Mr. Oliver rose to the defense of Hon. P. M. Dewan, Minister of Agriculture, in answering criticism levelled Wednesday by A. H. Acres (Cons., Carleton).

"My voluble friend from Carleton," he said, "was with us yesterday, hammer and tongs, in his usual auctioneer's style, but I do not believe it was fair of him to launch such a bitter attack against a Minister who hasn't had time to familiarize himself with his department. They can say what they want about him, but I know that no Minister of Agriculture in recent years ever had greater support from the farmers than the man who holds that position in this Government today.

"If we could bring up the prices for farm produce," he said, "our unemployment problem would be at an end. The farmer will buy when he can, and he is anxious to start buying as soon as possible."

Says Budget Has Sunshine

The first formal action in bringing down the Ontario Budget in the Legislature today occurred at 12:15 this a.m. when Premier Hepburn presented Hon. Leopold Macaulay, Conservative House Leader, with a copy of the address, which will not be delivered until the members are convened again at 3 p.m.

"As an act of courtesy," said the Premier, a broad smile on his face, "I am sending a copy of the Budget address across to the Honorable Leader of the Opposition. I am sure he will hold it in confidence. I might warn my honorable friend that it is another sunshine Budget, and I suggest he do not read it tonight or he won't sleep well."

With that the Premier summoned a page boy and send the document across to Mr. Macaulay.

The Premier, after consultation with the Opposition Leader, announced the Budget debate would be opened Tuesday, after he returned from the East Lambton byelection speaking tour.