

# 'Goat in Canada Today' Is Farmer of Ontario, Hepburn Says to House

**'Discriminatory Burdens' Are Placed Upon Eastern Grower by Ottawa, States Premier, Supporting Resolution Asking for Same Freight Rates as Those Paid by Prairies on Agricultural Products**

## DREW DENIES CHARGE OF UNFAIR CRITICISM

Naming the Ontario farmer the "goat in Canada today" as he recited the heavy tax imposts and "discriminatory burdens" placed upon him by Ottawa, Premier Hepburn was in a belligerent mood yesterday before the Legislature as he charged the Conservative Opposition with having accused the government with fomenting disunity when its spokesmen complained of the treatment.

For an instant there appeared before the House every likelihood that the debate over the question of the preferential wheat freight rates accorded to Western farmers, as compared with those paid by Ontario's, would flare into a feud between the two Leaders.

Col. George A. Drew, early in the discussion of a resolution, urging that Ontario growers be granted the same freight rates for wheat and wheat products and other grains and their products as were Western farmers, declared wholehearted support for the resolution.

Premier Hepburn asserted that he saw a change coming over the Opposition Leader, and added: "I want to tell him that if ever he wants to become Premier of this Province he must stand up for the interests of the people of this Province."

His face flushed with anger, Colonel Drew half rose from his seat, subsided and then he snapped in reply: "I always have."

### Says Mills Close.

The resolution was sponsored by F. R. Oliver (U.F.O., Grey South). He claimed Ontario wheat did not conflict with Western wheat, so there could not be any question of an issue of the East against the West. He said that of an 18,000,000-bushel crop, only 6,000,000 bushels were consumed at home. In recent years markets had been lost in England, the British West Indies and in Newfoundland, and he attributed the loss directly to the heavy freight rates.

In his resolution, he stated, in part: "Wheat growers of Ontario have practically lost access to the export market for wheat owing to the preferential rates accorded to western Canada and United States wheat shipped ex-lake in carload lots, as compared with the carload rates on Ontario wheat, namely, approximately 10.34 cents per cwt., and 7.08 cents per cwt., on Western wheat, as compared with 20 cents per cwt., on Ontario wheat." It said, because of the discriminatory rates many flour mills in Ontario have been forced to discontinue operations.

The motion was supported by Hon. P. M. Dewan, Minister of Agriculture, who read data which asserted that Australian grains

were carried at a lower rate from the seaboard into Ontario than Ontario grains were carried the same distance to the seaboard.

### Sees Ontario Penalized.

"Surely our farmers are not going to be the victims of all these devices," he said. "They have bonused Western wheat and on top of that have placed these discriminatory freight rates."

T. L. Kennedy (Con., Peel), former Minister of Agriculture, argued that feeding wheat to hogs was economically sound and he advocated that the best way of getting the wheat out of Ontario was in bacon. He backed the resolution and charged that Manitob barley was supplanting Ontario barley in the Montreal brewery market because of the difference in rates.

Premier Hepburn said he was disappointed in Mr. Kennedy's attitude. "He advocates the Ontario farmers carry the swill pail to hogs. Why doesn't he ask the Western farmer to do the same?"

"I would, I would," broke in the Peel member.

"But he won't," went on the Premier.

"I said I was in favor of this motion," added Mr. Kennedy.

"But you qualified it."

"No I didn't," claimed Mr. Kennedy.

"It is the principle of things which I am complaining about most, because the Ontario farmer is penalized by helping to subsidize the Western wheat farmer."

"I agree with that," broke in Mr. Kennedy.

The premier pointed out there would be changes in the corporations tax. Some held, he said, that the corporations paid the tax.

"But they don't," he added. "They pass it on in their products. It is passed on largely to the farmer and he isn't able to pass it on unless it is to the hired man, and goodness knows he isn't paid too much."

### Thinks Premier Mistaken.

Ottawa estimated, he continued, that they would lose between \$40,000,000 and \$50,000,000 on the guaranteed wheat price plan of last year. He estimated it would be nearer \$70,000,000. "And," he added, "Ontario is paying one-third of that and the Ontario farmer will have to pay the bulk of that. And not content with losing that, they go ahead the other day and announce another wheat bonusing plan. The Ontario farmer is the goat in the country and when we complain about it, my honorable friend charges us with fomenting disunity."

Colonel Drew claimed the Premier's speech must be one he had intended to make at another time. It was not relevant to the debate, he claimed, inasmuch as the Oppo-

sition had declared itself to be in accord with the resolution.

"I have said I was heartily in favor of the motion. Others have said they were in favor. If the Premier wishes to go ahead and start discussing something not associated with the subject, it is all right," said Colonel Drew.

The Premier, with heat, charged that Ontario's delegates had repeatedly gone to Ottawa and had come back with empty hands. But on the other hand, he said, there was the wheat bonus for Western farmers, the preferential freight rates, the coal subsidies for Nova Scotia, all matters, which he said, came back onto the Ontario public in the way of increased taxation and charges on products.

Colonel Kennedy, in protest, said he would not let the Premier try to put words in his mouth, as he emphasized that he had backed the resolution and urged that for clarification purposes it included all Ontario grains.

"The Ontario farmers have never got a fair deal from the Dominion

Government," he said. "I could go on, just like the Prime Minister."

Last word in the debate was given by William Duckworth (Cons., Toronto-Dovercourt), who declared that while in London in 1937, he made a two-days' tour of butcher and bakery shops and did not find one bakery that used Canadian flour and only one butcher shop which stocked Canadian butter.

"There is something wrong," declared the member as the House applauded.

Directly the resolution was passed by unanimous vote, Hon. Harry Nixon, provincial secretary, ordered that it be wired to the Transport Board, which, he said, was sitting in conference on freight rates.