

September 21

DREW DEMANDS OTTAWA ACCEPT ONUS OF GUARD

Urges House Protest
as New Minister Says
Position Is Unchanged

CONANT GETS WIRE

Persistent refusal of Ottawa to assume through the Defense Department the responsibility of guarding utilities and industries essential to war production again yesterday invoked sharp criticism in the Ontario Legislature and brought from Colonel George Drew, Conservative Leader, demand that the House make formal protest to Defense Minister Norman Rogers.

The debate ended only after Colonel Fraser Hunter (Lib., St. Patrick), in a heated assertion that it was not incumbent upon members to cease criticism of administrative policies when criticism was due, demanded that "men in charge of defense carry out their duties. And, if I am doing anything wrong, let the Minister of Defense arrest me at my seat."

The only person who had any real authority in wartime duty, he said, was the man who wore the uniform of his country. He turned to Mr. Rogers' statement. "He speaks," he said, "of commitments, of sending a couple of divisions overseas. I will tell the Minister of Defense that, before the war ends, we will be sending half a million men."

Hon. Gordon Conant, Attorney-General, revealed that Tuesday's shake-up in the Federal Cabinet and the transfer of Mr. Rogers from the Department of Labor to the defense post had failed to bring with it a change of policy in the home defense issue.

Wires New Minister.

Mr. Conant stated he had wired immediately to the new Defense Minister. His wire and Mr. Rogers' reply follows:

To Mr. Rogers: "Please advise by wire whether your Government still declines protection of vital Hydro plants and other public works as indicated in Hon. Mr. Mackenzie's last telegram to me of the eighteenth instant and in previous communication. Matter most urgent on account of organization and plans necessary to meet impending weather conditions."

To Mr. Conant: "Statement made by Mr. Mackenzie in telegram of eighteenth instant was made with authority of Government and position has not been changed. I feel sure you will accept division of responsibility for protection previously stated as fair and reasonable, in view of large commitments assumed by Dominion Government in

announcement made this morning."

Mr. Conant said no person representing the Ontario Government had ever suggested to Ottawa that the division of responsibility cited by Mr. Rogers was "fair and reasonable." "I state once more," he added, "if it is necessary to do so, that this Government has done everything it could to have these duties performed by the proper authority."

Says Issue Paramount.

Colonel Drew, who at Tuesday's opening sitting of the special session, led off the attack against the Federal policy, commended Mr. Conant for having expressed so promptly to Mr. Rogers the feeling of the Legislature. The Defense Minister's reply, he said, was one which could not be passed over without comment, and he declared that the cost to the Province, estimated at upwards of \$2,000,000 for the first year, not counting cost to municipalities and to private enterprise, was secondary to the main constitutional issue raised by the necessity of the Province to raise a private army for internal defense.

"The question," he declared, "is whether or not there are to be nine separate sovereignties with separate armies or one defense force prepared to wage war inside as well as outside Canada's borders. There

should be a clear expression of a formal character from this House. The issue must not be left where it is at the present time. Every day that is passing must of necessity show an increase in our irregular armed forces."

Colonel Drew stressed that he did not mean to convey the impression that the veterans, who were serving as guards, were irresponsible. He said he had confidence in the Government's action and knew that the men were under the control of an "extremely able officer, Major C. B. Lindsey."