

# CONANT MEETS STIFF CRITICISM OVER JURY BILL

**Drew Asks Why He Did  
Not Correct Statement  
Law Society in Favor**

**REFERS TO LETTER**

The bill to abolish the grand jury system, and its sponsor, Attorney-General Conant, encountered stiff Opposition criticism in the Legislature yesterday. Although the entire session was taken up with the amendment to the Jurors' Act, Conservative Leader Drew still had the floor when the House adjourned without giving it second reading.

Immediately Attorney-General Conant finished a ninety-minute outline of the jury system in Canada and other countries, Colonel Drew arose and launched his attack. He singled out the Attorney-General as the subject of his criticism, demanding to know why Mr. Conant had not corrected the impression that the Law Society of Upper Canada favored the abolition of grand juries.

Pointing to a copy of the Barlow report on the administration of justice, Colonel Drew declared that enclosed with the report was a copy of a letter from Mr. Barlow, stating that the Law Society agreed with his recommendations.

"Is it true the Attorney-General has a letter from the society asking that this be corrected?" queried Colonel Drew.

### **Admits Letter Incorrect.**

"There was some misunderstanding," replied Mr. Conant. "The benchers of the Law Society set up a committee to confer with Mr. Barlow, and some of them may have expressed views in favor of the recommendation, but it is true that the official committee did not do so. The letter to which my honorable friend refers is an incorrect one."

"This seems to me to be a matter of considerable importance," declared Colonel Drew. "We are asked to adopt certain legislation, and it is given added strength by a letter which says it has been approved by the Law Society of Upper Canada. The Attorney-General has in his possession a letter which the society wrote him, asking that this wrong statement be corrected."

"I don't remember the exact contents, but I will be glad to table the letter and my honorable friend can make what he likes of it," retorted Mr. Conant.

Colonel Drew refused to let the matter drop and scored "the casual way" in which the Attorney-General treated it. He declared the Attorney-General had recommended bills to the Legislature which the Law Society approved. It did not seem consistent that one day he should attach considerable importance to a society which was the governing body, and another day to forget the contents of a letter he had received from the society asking that a false impression be corrected, said Colonel Drew.

### **Asked to Table Letter.**

"Why don't you table the letter?" demanded George Henry (Con., East York).

"I will, but I am not obliged to do it now," answered Mr. Conant.

"I believe we should have it before us now before we go ahead," said Colonel Drew.

"The letter doesn't add or detract one iota from the report," declared the Attorney-General with some heat.

"It's no use for the honorable Minister to get so touchy," observed Colonel Drew.

"Surely the Leader of the Opposition doesn't rule this House?" exclaimed Mr. Conant.

Colonel Drew cautioned the Attorney-General against getting "his blood pressure up over what he considers a trivial matter." If the Attorney-General had a letter asking him to correct misinformation, he should have corrected it before the report was sent out to the members, claimed Colonel Drew.

The Attorney-General withdrew behind a newspaper and the Opposition Leader commented on this as he proceeded to attack the bill.

### **Charge Protested.**

Colonel Drew aroused a chorus of protest when he charged the bill was an "encroachment of fascism in this Legislature." Liberal members called upon the Speaker to demand this be retracted, but Speaker Clark upheld the right of a member to express his opinion of a piece of proposed legislation. He was interrupted a short time later when he declared: "This House has already passed a piece of legislation that is as iniquitous as any passed in a Nazi State." (He referred to the Succession Duty Act amendments.)

The chief objection made by Colonel Drew to the bill before the House was that it removed the protection given the individual and allowed the Attorney-General or any officer he might instruct to prefer an indictment.

# DEFER DECISION ON GAS METERS

Private Bills Committee of the Legislature heard lengthy argument yesterday for and against abolition of the 50 cents per month service charge levied on all gas meters by the Consumers' Gas Company, and it was decided to postpone action until the next meeting of the committee.

Members of the Toronto Housewives' Association, who have been waging a determined fight to have the meter charge abolished, filled the committee room. They presented a brief outlining their position. C. M. Colquhoun, City Solicitor, presented the case for those favoring removal of the charge, and E. J. Tucker represented the Consumers' Gas Company.

Hon. Eric Cross, Minister of Municipal Affairs, said at the close of the discussion that he did not think the committee should be asked to shoulder the responsibility of setting a rate schedule for any company. No suggestion had been made as to what should take the place of the meter charge. He asked that the matter be laid over until the next meeting.