

COURT REFORM BILL ADVANCED IN LEGISLATURE

See Saving in Limiting
Interchange of Judges;
Leaders to Speak Today

PREPARE POLICIES

Initial legislation in the administration of justice reform program sponsored by Attorney-General Conant was advanced yesterday by the Legislature through second reading stages in a session as calm as today's "Leaders' Day" meeting may be stormy.

Premier Hepburn, his colleagues announced, remained home with a cold, and, at the same time, polished up his address for the Throne Speech debate. Forecasts suggest that he will explain the stand taken by him at the Dominion-Provincial Conference, outline the Government's continued support of the war effort as expressed actively through Labor, Health, Education, Attorney-General's and Highways departments, and lay particular stress upon tubercular, milk pasteurization and venereal disease phases of the health program under Hon. Harold J. Kirby.

While it is believed unlikely that election may be mentioned directly, it is held certain that both Leaders in their addresses will lay down the foundation for party policies when an election is called. Colonel Drew, in recent speeches, has indicated his belief that the cause of national unity was not strengthened by the attitude of the Ontario delegation at the Ottawa conference last month, irrespective of the merits or otherwise of the Royal Commission report on the investigation into Dominion-Provincial relations.

In compliance with the inquiry committee's recommendations on the administration of justice, the House gave second reading to an amendment to the County Judges Act. The effect of the amendment is to limit the interchange of judges in a county court district to county courts, courts of general sessions of peace, and county court judges' criminal courts.

Attorney-General Conant advised that in the fiscal year ending March 31, 1939, fifty-one county court judges had expenses totalling \$28,049.89—that the maximum individual expense account was \$1,895.66 and the minimum \$15.20. The amendment will effect a drastic saving in expenses, the House was told, by limiting the interchange of judges.

An amendment to the Registry Act arises out of war conditions when the husband is on active service, said Mr. Conant. Where a man makes a conveyance and his wife joins to bar her dower, he is required to take an affidavit as to the marriage. The amendment permits the wife to take the affidavit.

On the objection of Leopold Macaulay, Con., York South, a proposed amendment to the Devolution of Estates Act was held in first-reading stage pending receipt of further reaction to its proposals. Under the present act, when a man dies without a will, the widow is allowed the first \$1,000 and the balance is divided equally between the widow and the next of kin. The amendment proposes to give the widow two-thirds of the balance.

DREW SUGGESTS CLOSED PARLEY

Urges Closed Session
on St. Lawrence Scheme

WATERWAYS PLAN

The suggestion of a secret session of the Provincial Legislature to consider the various details of the St. Lawrence waterways scheme was made yesterday by Col. George Drew, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislature. He referred to a news item to the effect that it was possible that the Ontario Legislature would be called upon to ratify certain agreements in connection with the scheme, during the present session, and commented that it would be in the best interests of the country that the Opposition be provided with all possible information regarding the scheme.

"I can assure the Government that they will find us willing to cooperate in every way," he said, "but I think that if there is any reason for the early acceptance of the proposal it would be wise to put all possible information into the hands of the Opposition. There may be some points that do not appear in the documents, owing to war and national reasons, and it would be better if we had the information and so were not forced to ask questions which might bring out information which might be better to remain private. A secret session might be advisable."

He was assured by Hon. Harry Nixon, acting leader in the absence of Premier Hepburn, that the negotiations have made satisfactory progress and that a draft will soon be tabled. Mr. Nixon promised to give the Opposition all available information.

Move for Abolition Of Court Criers

The cost of court criers in various courts of Ontario is about \$30,000 a year, Hon. Gordon Conant said yesterday in the Legislature in moving the second reading of a bill to abolish the position. The Attorney-General stated that his estimate was based on the figures of the courts in Toronto, which were \$7,500 last year. The bill was one of the recommendations brought forward by the special committee of the Legislature to inquire into possible reforms in the administrative of justice in the Province.

Hon. Leopold Macaulay indicated the Opposition would not oppose the bill by congratulating the committee for its work, but he intimated that, in his opinion, the committee had appeared somewhat timid in its recommendations.