

MARCH 6

DEBATE FRIDAY IN LEGISLATURE ON LOAN OF OAC

Hepburn Indicates Plan
Lets College Continue
Farm Study Courses

INSPECTIONS MADE

Final decision on the proposed transfer of Ontario Agriculture College Buildings to the Department of National Defense for Air Force training will be threshed out before the Legislature Friday, Premier Hepburn said yesterday in indicating there was every hope the college could continue its farm and study program.

The Premier's announcement came in the course of a heated clash with Col. George A. Drew, Conservative Leader and Guelph native, arising from the latter's request for additional information relating to the proposed deal. Colonel Drew, on Monday, filed a motion, seconded by T. L. Kennedy, the Conservative Whip, asking the Government to reconsider its decision.

The Premier revealed that officials of the Department of Agriculture and Public Works were at Guelph yesterday making a joint survey of the college in light of the Defense Department's request for buildings to accommodate a wireless training school with a 1,500 enrollment. Hon. P. M. Dewan, Minister of Agriculture, also was at the O.A.C. collaborating with Government, college and defense branch representatives.

It was learned the Defense Department requests cover the Administration Building, Macdonald Hall, Macdonald Institute, the Dining Hall and Mills Hall. The college would retain all the barns, the horticultural, chemistry, field husbandry, dairy and farm economics buildings and the Veterinary College.

While the Premier did not reveal details of the plan under the Conservative Leader's insistent questioning, holding that it would be given after the complete survey report is prepared, it was learned outside of the House that it is now felt that the college program can be continued although with admitted "terrible inconvenience."

Mr. Dewan, last week in the Legislature, suggested that the women students could be accommodated elsewhere. His greatest fears were for the male students. Dormitories are placed in the Administration Building and Mills Hall and the loss of these and of the huge dining-room would, in opinion of officials, hamper the work and could be excused only by the war emergency requirements which have been stressed by Hon. C. G. Power, Minister of Defense for Air, in asking the loan of the properties.

Premier Hepburn advised that the transfer had not been made and he said he would like to correct an impression that the Government was pressing the O.A.C. upon Ottawa. He cited Mr. Power's letter, which said the department's real estate representative reported the O.A.C. had the only group of buildings suitable for the wireless school. The matter was one of urgency, added the Minister, to the training program.

"I have my doubts if any loyal student of the O.A.C. has been shocked by the transfer. They would be much more shocked if a German bomb struck the school, and that may eventuate unless we give an all-out support in the war effort," he added.

Colonel Drew declared heatedly there was no question of the loyalty of the Guelph students. If there has been any misunderstanding about the situation it came from the action of the Premier in announcing the transfer before he was possessed of full details.

Charges of "bad temper" were tossed across the floor in a brief flurry that closed with the assurance that full details would be placed Friday before the House when Colonel Drew's motion is to be debated.