

# HOUSE REFUSES WITHDRAWAL OF CONANT BILL

'Don't Get Cold Feet,' Is  
Plea by L. M. Frost  
to Attorney-General

## JURY LEGISLATION

Government-sponsored jury legislation, bills to give women the right to sit on juries and to abolish grand juries for the duration of the war, last night again rested in a "no-man's land" between first and second reading when the House refused unanimous consent to their withdrawal.

Their fate within the next forty-eight hours, up to the time of prorogation, was hidden in indecision, and Government leaders forecast that they might be allowed to moulder away without further action by the House.

Ordinarily, in the House, a motion asking leave to withdraw is granted without question, and the failure to secure unanimous consent in the present instances was indicative of the widely divided opinion on the two bills.

Attorney-General Conant said he was aware that the women jurors bill had not the support of many members, "who are not yet ready for this step in the administration of justice. At some future time," he said, "and in accordance with the development of the status of women through the years, this or similar legislation may enlist more general support and approval."

Ian Strachan, Liberal Whip, and L. M. Frost (Con., Victoria), both members of the Administration of Justice Inquiry Committee, which recommended both jury bills, placed themselves on record as favoring the women's jury amendment.

### "Don't Get Cold Feet."

"I still think this bill will pass the House," said Mr. Frost. "Now that the members have time to think it over, there is not one who can have one reasonable objection to the bill. It is a mistake to withdraw a bill based on justice and common sense and I appeal to the Attorney-General not to get cold feet."

Both Colonel Fraser Hunter (Lib., St. Patrick) and J. J. Glass (Lib., St. Andrew) backed the bill, but agreed it was premature.

"I object very much to the withdrawal," declared George Dunbar (Con., Ottawa South), adding that the country was crying for leadership, and if the Attorney-General was right in introducing the bill he should support it to the end.

Of the grand juries bill, Mr. Conant said Ontario lagged far behind most jurisdictions in the British Empire in administration of justice reform. "In this Province tradition appears to hold first place in the minds and attitude of many people, particularly the members of the legal profession and the judiciary. But, whatever the reason for the opposition, I am satisfied there are not sufficient of our people in favor of the abolition of grand juries to justify proceeding with this bill."

### Bar Withdrawal Motion.

Then, for the second time in the sifting, members desiring to declare their views barred a withdrawal motion. Mr. Frost said at the beginning of the committee investigation that he was in favor of the total abolition of grand juries on the ground of economy and in the belief people's rights would not be prejudiced. The suggestion to abolish grand juries for the duration of the war was a mistake, he believed.

"The Attorney-General has taken advantage of his motion to withdraw to express his personal opinions, and I think opposing views should also be given. There is a very important principle involved, first by the introduction of the motion and then the withdrawal. A report with recommendations was made by the Legislature committee, and then the Attorney-General presented a minority report. He has apparently introduced a bill to assert his own personal opinion, and then later moves to to withdraw it."

Further discussion was halted by ruling of the Speaker that debate was not permitted as the second reading of the bill had not been called. The House then proceeded to the next order.