

DREW PLEA ON FORESTS IS REJECTED

House Is Prorogued
After Voting 46-22
Against Commission

COX BOLTS PARTY

Swiftly on the heels of a 46-22 Government rejection of a motion by Conservative Leader Drew, asking for a non-partisan commission administration of the Forests Department, the sixth session of the twentieth Legislature was prorogued last night shortly after 10 o'clock.

The move to prorogue caught the majority of the House by surprise as it was anticipated that the session would not conclude until the House had debated a Government motion, standing in the name of Works Minister F. R. Oliver, urging the appointment of a House committee to report on the feasibility of bringing in a Hydro flat rate system instead of a traditional rate at cost basis.

Government leaders late in the sitting, it was learned, decided to defer action on the motion until a special session is called to ratify the Dominion-Ontario St. Lawrence power project. The proposal is linked inseparably to the St. Lawrence proposal, under which 1,100,000 horsepower will be developed ultimately, if and when it receives the assent of the major contracting parties, the Dominion Parliament and the Congress of United States, Provincial Secretary H. C. Nixon explained.

"Any Change Better."

Colonel Drew's motion supplemented the minority recommendation in the timber investigation report tabled Tuesday in the House. The Conservative report asked for the appointment of an Ontario Forest Resources Commission, with similar powers to those of the Hydro Commission. Charles W. Cox (Liberal, Port Arthur), who in debate on the motion declared "any kind of a change would be better than the system we have," voted with the Conservatives.

The final act of the House was a unanimous vote on a motion to pay the full sessional indemnity to the wives of the two members on active service, Major Colin Campbell, Minister without portfolio, and Lieut. David A. Croll, Liberal member for Windsor-Walkerville.

Two members from the far northwest ridings of Ontario expressed disagreement yesterday with the administration of Hon. Peter Heenan, Minister of Lands and Forests, who represents Kenora in the Legislature.

Mr. Cox and Frank Spence (Con., Fort William), both spoke in support of a motion presented by Opposition Leader Drew.

Colonel Drew's motion embodies the first of twelve recommendations in the minority report of the committee which investigated the timber situation in the Province.

Mr. Cox, who has long opposed the policy of the department as it is at present, said: "I am of the

opinion that any kind of a change could be better than the system we have. I cannot conceive that an independent body of business men handling our resources could mishandle them as they have been mishandled in the past."

The Port Arthur member repeated an earlier offer that he would put up \$25,000 of his own money to take up a committee of the House to investigate first hand the conditions at the Lake Head.

In speaking to his motion Colonel Drew said that it was done for the purpose of putting the Province's most valuable continuing asset on a basis that would be the best for the years to come. In speaking of the minority report in connection with the timber investigation he said that the twelve recommendations were accompanied by good grounds for their being presented and stated that all but the one embodied in his motion were such that it made no difference what plan of administration is adopted.

"I feel that a very great change in the method of administration is necessary," he said. "The present system is open to very serious cases of abuse and there is a strong necessity for drastic and radical changes. Conditions must be improved a great deal if these resources are to be protected for the future generations."

He pointed out that there was considerable similarity between the electric power situation before the formation of the Hydro-Electric Commission and that which exists today in connection with timber resources. As a result of the formation of the Hydro-Electric Commission the system in Ontario is the best method of controlling electric power that can be found in the world.

"We should be prepared to end this continual argument," he continued, "as to which Government was wrong and which was worse. All the Royal Commissions and special committees which have considered this matter have agreed that these extremely valuable areas must not be divorced from public control and should only be sold by open competition.

"During a period of just over six months in 1937 eight private companies were given areas consisting of a total of 15,000,000 acres of forest lands by means of private negotiations. That area is just under the total forest area in the whole of Norway—one of the greatest forest resources countries of the world.

Organized Like Hydro.

"If a commission were appointed under the ablest business men in the Province—with salaries high enough to attract the best business men—then we need not debate in this Legislature about fire protection, conservation and reforestation. The commission would be a fact-finding body able to secure all the information about the industry. The committee found that there was no central co-ordinating body with information at hand. The Department of Lands and Forests did not have it and we had to go elsewhere to get it.

"Such a commission would be organized the same as the Hydro Commission with operating, legal, purchasing, technical and research departments, and all contracts made would have terms most favorable for the people of the Province."

The Opposition Leader said he was speaking as a confirmed optimist as far as these resources are concerned. Since 1913 the news pulp exports from Canada had grown from 256,661 tons to 2,424,000 tons in 1938.

"I am thoroughly convinced that within five or ten years we can increase by five, ten or twenty times the products and exports of all those things which we make from