

ASKS OTTAWA HELP MAINTAIN WAR HIGHWAYS

**Demand for Economy
Is Voiced by Drew
During Budget Debate**

Charging the Ontario Government with false economy in its policy of slashing maintenance subsidies for county and township roads, Conservative Leader Drew, in the budget debate yesterday, pressed Highways Minister T. B. McQuesten to seek Federal co-operation in securing funds for the upkeep of such roads as are subject to damage through the allocation of war industries.

Specifically, he suggested that the Hepburn Minister should set up some consultation body in co-operation with the Dominion "to make specific allocation of funds for maintaining those highways which may be designated as war highways. That being a war job," stressed Lieutenant-Colonel Drew, "the special maintenance for war purposes should come from a general war fund."

The Opposition Leader's address opened on a demand for economy. "I believe the most important thing that the Province can do is to practice economy itself and demonstrate that economy in its own relations with the public."

In spite of the fact that taxing and other authorities were transferred to the Dominion in the agreement ratified recently, "still we have the same appearance of Government authority as we have before." Practically every duty of the Provincial Department of Labor falls under the control of the Dominion Government, he said in example. He suggested Provincial labor supervision might be merged with another department.

"There is no justification for so many Ministers, all dressed up and no place to go," said Colonel Drew.

"It would be an inspiration to the public if Governments decreased staffs and did not increase them as they are increasing, especially at Ottawa, at this time.

"I am inclined to think that many things could be done here and in other Provincial capitals that are not being done in Ottawa," added the speaker, stating that one of the most impressive features of the administrative system in Britain was the decentralization of administrative staffs.

Of roads subsidies he said, "There have been drastic cuts this year which I do not believe have been made in the interests of economy and may seriously endanger the financial situation of our communities." He cited one township which last year spent \$18,200 in road maintenance which this year has been cut to \$5,200. "That looks like economy at the moment, but it will be reflected back on the municipalities. The counties will have to either go ahead and maintain the roads or allow the roads to deteriorate."

Colonel Drew applauded the Highway Minister for having withdrawn that section of a bill to amend the Department of Municipal Affairs Act which would place wide supervisory powers over municipalities with the department.

The threat to road maintenance and, indirectly, to municipal finances, was deplored also by W. L. Miller (Lib., Algoma) and E. A. MacGillivray (Lib., Glengarry). "It is to be hoped devoutly," said the latter, "that the Province's highway system will not be allowed to suffer."

"They are the essential arteries in the nation's war production program," he said, "and neglect to maintain them might prove a bottleneck in the war effort, by endangering human life and impeding the transportation of essential supplies."

It is the duty of the Government and the employers of labor to get together and prepare plans for the immediate postwar years, as there will be a great demand for employment as soon as the war is over. William Duckworth (Cons., Toronto Dovercourt) stated upon resuming the budget debate at the evening session.

He said that plans should be made for developing the large natural resources of Canada, including timber, coal, oil and many kinds of minerals, and for which there will be a keen demand.

Another matter which needs consideration and action, he said, is the export of farm produce after the war. With British farmers cultivating much more land now than before the war, there will be a lesser demand for Canadian farm products in England.