

Objections Are Voiced To 'Precipitate Passing' Of Development Bill

Col. Drew Would Have Experts Give Complete Information to House

Voicing strenuous objection to any precipitate passing of the Ontario Government's Ottawa River power development bill, Lieut.-Col. George Drew and members of his Opposition group renewed in the Legislature yesterday afternoon an appeal for prior consideration by a special committee. Col. Drew supported his plea for more complete information on the Ontario-Quebec agreement by suggesting that power and engineering experts, and Dr. T. H. Hogg, chairman of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission, might even be called on the floor of the House itself to clarify the issue.

The debate was resumed at the night session and it was featured by former Premier Hepburn's first major contribution to the present session. He defended his Administration in a reply to charges made by George S. Henry (Prog. Con., East York). Mr. Hepburn adjourned the debate at 10:30 p.m. The debate will continue today and there is a possibility of another night session.

The afternoon session was marked, too, by the session's first bit of verbal fencing by the former Prime Minister, Hon. Mitchell F. Hepburn, who engaged in a brief parry and riposte with G. H. Challies (Prog. Con., Grenville Dundas).

Mr. Hepburn demanded what Mr. Challies meant by his statement about being "brought here under false pretenses." Mr. Challies replied that he had not referred to the bill, but the members.

"You may think you are. Probably you always were," Mr. Hepburn glibed.

"You came down last time and tried to beat me," countered Mr. Challies, saying he would invite the "self-demoted leader" down again.

"Well, I'm here and you're over there," shot back Mr. Hepburn.

"And I'll still be here when you're not over there," said Mr. Challies.

Urging avoidance of delay in consideration of the power bill in view of the wartime emergency, Premier Conant offered the recent advice of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, that members "stamp their feet on mischief-makers and sowers of discord." The power pact with Quebec, he insisted, was "a business measure, pure and simple."

"Don't quote Churchill to avoid your duty to this Legislature," said Col. Drew.

To Mr. Hepburn's statement in answer to a remark by G. H. Dunbar (Prog. Con., Ottawa South) that he had been "on the best of terms" with Premier Adelard Godbout of Quebec when he was Prime Minister, Col. Drew quoted a remark by Mr. Hepburn at Port Arthur, Aug. 24 that "our power negotiations with Quebec in the past were about as successful as if we were dealing with Mackenzie King himself."

Drew Quotes Dr. Hogg.

Col. Drew objected that labor and material shortages might hold up the Ottawa River project and quoted Dr. Hogg, Hydro chairman, as saying as recently as December that he did not feel a new power development could be undertaken at this time for this reason, and that it would take two years to build a new power plant. Col. Drew

held it was reasonable to ask for experts' opinion to learn the facts. It was a pity, he said, the power need "was not recognized some time ago when adequate preparations could have been made."

He said he was convinced there were other ways of obtaining power very quickly, and insisted that there should be some assurance in writing from Ottawa about priorities on materials. The St. Lawrence development had been postponed till after the war by the United States because neither material nor manpower was available. Was it reasonable to suppose the U.S. would give priority to materials for a Canadian plant? To which Hon. W. L. Houck, Hydro vice-chairman, replied that no priority assurance could be asked until the House authorized the project.

Col. Drew maintained that Carillon, in the Quebec half of the proposed joint development of the Ottawa, could be developed more quickly than any other site, and that Dr. Hogg had said Carillon was the cheapest and best site. Mr. Hepburn took issue on the statement and, after phoning Dr. Hogg, later produced a letter from him denying any recollection of making such a statement and declaring that he never felt that way about it nor did he now.

A. H. Acres (Prog. Con., Carlton) challenged Dr. Hogg to say that Des Joachims, chief Ontario site in the Ottawa power plan, could be

developed as cheaply as Carillon. "I prophesy he won't do it — no engineer would," said Mr. Acres. **East Is By-Passed.**

Mr. Challies, in a lengthy argument, held that Eastern Ontario was not getting fair treatment in regard to power and replied to Hydro Vice-Chairman Hon. W. L. Houck's assurance that Eastern Ontario was being fairly dealt with by insisting that that section was being "by-passed" and was losing taxing rights and its most valuable power sites on the lower Ottawa. He charged the Government was trying to "rush this thing through in 24 hours, perpetuating all the blunders since 1934."

"Let us cut out party politics in this," was Mr. Acres' advice, speaking after Mr. Challies, and he added: "Let every man vote as he wishes—and if he does this bill will never pass at all!"

L. M. Frost (Prog. Con., Victoria) warned of reaction from "rushing" the bill, and told the Government: "You've made so many bad guesses and been wrong so often, I wonder why I should accept your judgment on this."

Henry Makes Attack.

Premier Conant's "guileless" presentation of the Ottawa River power agreement to the Legislature, coupled with the Government's record on Hydro during its eight years of office, came in for scathing criticism last night from George S. Henry (Prog. Cons., York East), former Premier.

"If the Prime Minister attempts to force this bill through, and I say it to him candidly, he will rue the day," warned Mr. Henry. "If he has anything to hide—I do not say he has—then let this bill be sent to a special committee and let us examine all the facts."

"It should be realized that we are swapping power rights for ever," reminded Mr. Henry, referring to the 999 years of the lease. "And it is possible that this is not the best way of handling it."

He challenged Mr. Conant's statements about vanishing Hydro power reserves, and cited figures to show that reserves had grown steadily from 18,000,000 h.p. in 1926 to 58,000,000 in 1935. The troubles of Hydro began when the former Premier took office, he said. His henchmen had led him far afield.

Before entering on a review of Hydro, Mr. Henry twitted the three remaining members of the original Hepburn Cabinet—Hon. M. F. Hepburn, Hon. T. B. McQuesten and Hon. Peter Heenan, as well as other members of the present Cabinet.

"I've lost all desire to keep track of the Ministers," he said, referring to changes.

Mr. Hepburn had said a few years ago, Mr. Henry recalled, that "I was on the way out. I would like to return the compliment to him."

Referring to the Minister of Highways' close association with A. W. Roebuck, K.C., when Mr. Roebuck was on the Hydro Commission, he suggested that "Arthur was trying to set up control of the Liberal Party."

"No one controls the Liberal Party," countered Mr. McQuesten.

"Probably it has got beyond it," Mr. Henry returned.

Mr. Henry wondered why H. C. Nixon, former Provincial Secretary, had left the "charmed circle" and suggested he was out on a farm in Brant County "seeking to forget." Rumor said he might be called to the Red Chamber at Ottawa. He welcomed the Minister of Mines, Hon. R. Laurier (Lib., Ottawa East), back to his seat—"he rather disappeared for a time last year." Rumor, too, said he would like to follow his predecessor "to a more comfortable seat."

He criticized failure to proceed with the 1931 agreement by which Ontario was to receive 75 per cent of power from Carillon and condemned the Government's cancellation of Quebec power contracts.

If all the facts on the Ottawa plan were to come out, he thought a committee should be appointed before which Dr. Hogg, Hydro chairman, might state his case. "We may find some sides that are not all apparent and we're not apt to get them from the Premier," he said.