

Drew Says Less Power Will Be Needed Soon, With Stress on Ships

Says Less Power Will Be Required Within Three Months

Reported decision from Ottawa to change Canada's war production and concentrate on building ships was referred to in the Ontario Legislature yesterday by Opposition Leader Lieut.-Col. George Drew in the power bill debate. He advanced it as one of the reasons why the agreement should be considered with the help of experts on the power situation in Ontario.

"A situation has developed within the past few weeks," Col. Drew said, "which this Legislature should understand before it deals with this bill. I cannot believe that the Hydro Commission is not aware that there is going to be a very considerable change in power requirements in the next few months on decision from Ottawa to change our type of war production. It has been decided that Canada should concentrate on the production of ships."

He added that with steel absorbed to a greater degree into shipbuilding it was going to slow down industries that are at present among the heaviest consumers of electrical power and would result in a heavy reduction of power consumption in many war industries when the plan goes into effect. This, he said, "will probably be within the next three months."

Hydro, he said, should know to what extent power will then be released, and the whole situation should be considered in relation to the power agreement before the House.

There had been some such suggestion. Hon. W. L. Houck, Hydro-vice-chairman, replied. But Hydro took the position that its chief concern was providing adequate reserves of power for what needs might arise.

Protection Guaranteed.

Discussion in committee of the power bill yesterday turned principally on the probable "fate" of perhaps half the citizens of Hawkesbury, in regard to civil rights, since the municipality is affected extensively by the proposed leasing to Quebec of lands needed for the Carillon power development.

Col. Drew pointed out that the agreement calls for a 999-year lease to Quebec of property representing approximately half the assessed value of Hawkesbury and adjoining territory, and expressed concern over whether persons now living on the land would be citizens of Quebec or Ontario; where they would vote, since they would no longer be on the Hawkesbury assessment rolls, and what their position would be with regard to taxes and compensation for loss.

Hon. Mitchell Hepburn declared the legal status of the people would be protected, property values would go before a special board for settlement, and that, though leased, Ontario would still own the property and residents would be in the same position as those living on property held in perpetuity by the Dominion Government. Their status as citizens would not be altered.

Mr. Hepburn defended the Ottawa River development as being the only place to turn to for power. To Col. Drew's suggestion that the agreement was "repudiating the principle of public ownership on the lower Ottawa" since there was every reason to expect Quebec would develop leased sites through private ownership, Mr. Hepburn replied there was no concession to any private interests in the sites Ontario would control.

Col. Drew insisted that the agreement was "an iniquitous contract" (though with no suggestion of dishonesty) alienating for all time the sites on the Ottawa concerned, not knowing whether surplus Quebec power would be used in Canada or not. "Why doesn't the Power Controller say this is a war necessity and the Dominion Government develop it as a war enterprise?" he asked.

Alleges Casual Treatment.

The Opposition, too, questioned the estimated value of the property involved, some \$2,462,000, according to the figure given by the Hydro Commission.

To the suggestion of Lt.-Col. George Drew, Opposition Leader, that Mr. Conant table the complete report containing the estimates of values involved, in addition to the summary given, Mr. Conant said the material from which the summation was made—a four-volume report—was "rather stupendous — I haven't read it myself." Col. Drew held that there could be no stronger reason for putting the matter before a committee of experts which he had asked for repeatedly.

"This Legislature is being dealt with in a most casual manner. We are asked to act on a report that the Premier himself hasn't read," declared Col. Drew. He pointed out that approximately half the assessed value of Hawkesbury was concerned in the 999-year lease to Quebec proposed in the bill, as well as \$455,000 worth of Provincial highways, \$166,000 waterworks, \$195,000 sewerage. Was there any suggestion the plan did not involve half the population of Hawkesbury?

Relies On Commission.

Mr. Conant felt the House could rely on the judgment of the Hydro Commission as to whether the valuations were adequate, and that this was not a matter for first concern. Whatever dispositions were made of properties, the owner, he said, would be fully compensated. He represented the suggestion that he didn't

know the facts and said the Hydro was in as good a position as any one to make valuations.

Hydro had estimated \$2,462,000 as required to take care of the cost of acquisition of lands needed here. "There is nothing to be gained by further discussion unless we ignore Hydro estimates and say this House is in a better position to decide. The House, he said, might sit for months to determine whether the valuations were excessive or not.

Hon. T. B. McQuesten thought it would be very unusual to disclose amounts to be paid to individuals when they were a matter of negotiation. Hon. N. O. Hipel explained, in answer to a question by G. H. Dunbar (Prog. Con., Ottawa South), who asked "What of school taxes?" that the Commission would make good losses of taxation sustained by the municipality.

George S. Henry (Prog. Con., York East) observed, regarding compensation of owners for property required in the development that "Hydro has never been disposed to treat private owners generously," and cited "difficulties" over easements on the Chats Falls-Leaside line.

Criticism by Col. Drew of the drafting of one of the sections of the bill brought from Mr. Hepburn agreement that the section, dealing with compensation to Hawkesbury for taxes lost by reason of the power agreement, should be clarified.

The House will continue consideration of the bill in committee this afternoon. Two other bills, the Steep Rock bill and a bill to authorize suspension of the Natural Gas Conservation Act "for the duration" passed the committee stage without alteration.