

DREW REFUSES TO CO-OPERATE ON COMMITTEE

Conant to Name Labor Body for Hearings During House Recess

Opposition Leader Col. George Drew, yesterday in the Legislature, refused flatly Premier Conant's invitation to name three Opposition members to the Government's select committee which will inquire during the two-week House recess into collective bargaining between employers and employees in Ontario.

Col. Drew repeated his recommendation that a conference be held composed equally of House members, employers and employees, and his wish that employers and employees be brought into the picture in any discussions. He insisted there was no necessity for the Government's resolution to name a select committee. But since the Government had brought in the resolution instead of the promised bill, it was the Government's responsibility.

Faced with this refusal, Premier Conant announced that he would give the names of the appointees to the committee in a few days and enter them formally when the session resumed. The body would sit under the chairmanship of the Speaker, James H. Clark, K.C.

Col. Drew said he stood shoulder to shoulder with John Bracken, new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and subscribed to the labor program as clearly and unequivocally laid down at the Winnipeg convention of the party, sections of which he read, and which, he pointed out, set forth that "collective bargaining is desirable and necessary in the interests of labor, industry and the social welfare of the people."

The platform, he said, "leaves no doubt where we stand on collective bargaining, its incidence, or the method of putting it into effect." And legislation would be put into effect along those lines, he said, as soon as opportunity offered.

Every time labor legislation was brought about, said Col. Drew, it was after the three great agencies of the people—Government, employers and employees—were brought together for discussion on it.

He characterized the Government's committee resolution as "a device to evade responsibility," and "an attempt to carry its promise for legislation into a morgue and embalm it there under some excuse that hasn't yet made itself apparent."

"An Outright Fraud."

He challenged the Government's statement that unions are illegal in Ontario and cited provisions in the Criminal Code for punishment for actions against union members. In want of a reason for the committee's appointment, he said he could only conclude that the promised collective bargaining bill, drawn under the advice of J. L. Cohen, K.C., labor lawyer, had not been acceptable to the members of the Government which was now not prepared to present it. He termed the whole proceeding "an outright fraud."

Labor Minister Peter Heenan voiced his surprise at the Opposition's refusal to name members of the committee. Despite other Orders-in-Council, he said, the Dominion Government had left collective bargaining as the field of Provincial Parliaments, since Orders-in-Council passed as war measures in labor matters would be repealed after the war and collective bargain-

ing legislation should last long after. He referred to the Winnipeg strike of 1919, "in the face of Orders-in-Council," and the bloodshed and armed forces which accompanied it.

"Remember the barbed wire in front of these Parliament Buildings a few years ago," remarked G. H. Challies (Prog. Con., Grenville-Dundas).

"No one was murdered in cold blood," retorted Mr. Heenan, and declared, "This is not going to be sidetracked whether you appoint a committee or not." He charged the Opposition's refusal to name members was because "they don't want to recognize unions and tried to sidetrack it." This Col. Drew emphatically denied and said the Opposition was perfectly willing to act on such a committee if members, employers and employees were equally represented. "We are committed to the principle of collective bargaining and prepared to implement it," he said. "We want to bring capital and labor together as a fighting team in peace as in war." Concluding, Col. Drew stated: "If this Government won't take the responsibility, it should resign and give way to another."

Col. Drew then moved a one-month delay in giving the resolution third reading, but the motion was defeated 35 to 16 on a recorded straight party vote.

Col. Drew's reintroduction of his Thursday protest against enemy aliens released from internment camps being permitted to attend University of Toronto without any responsibility to the State to aid in the war effort precipitated a sharp clash between himself and J. J. Glass (Liberal, Toronto St. Andrew).

Col. Drew hotly denied Mr. Glass' charge that he was presenting "garbled information." He objected to these alien students, who could not be attested and had taken no oath of allegiance, wearing the uniform of the C.O.T.C. University Military Training Corps. They did not belong to any particular group or creed in Germany, Col. Drew said, but they were German citizens.

"No one can accuse me of sympathy with Nazi Germany," said Mr. Glass, who declared he opposed injustice and that if there was no proof the young men were loyal they would not have been released from internment camps. All but about five per cent of them, he said, were of the Jewish race and the Hebrew faith.