

ACT AT ONCE IN FARM CRISIS, DREW APPEALS

Says if Ontario Goes Hungry It Will Be Due to Lack of Planning

If the people of Ontario go hungry, it would be due to the "disastrous lack of planning for agricultural production," Opposition Leader Lt.-Col. George Drew told the Legislature yesterday, in the course of an attack on the agricultural policies of the Ontario Government. There was not the slightest excuse for the failure of the Government to introduce effective measures to meet the food production problem, he declared.

Speaking on the motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne, Col. Drew urged the Government to take immediate steps to meet the crisis in agriculture that had developed due to lack of farm labor.

"Bonuses are helpful for a short time, but they are only a poultice and do not get to the root of the disease," said Col. Drew. "In many cases it is clear they only aggravate the disease."

Action Urgent.

"Immediate action is necessary if we are to re-establish confidence in the hearts of the farmers and show ourselves worthy of the obligations each one of us owes to those who supply the essential food requirements of life itself."

The Opposition Leader chided the Liberal membership in the House for showing no desire to become acquainted with the Ontario-Quebec power legislation, one of the most important pieces of legislation to come before the House in a long time, he declared. Not a single Liberal member outside of the Cabinet spoke on the bill when it came before the House three weeks ago, he said.

"Disaster" Possible.

Most of Col. Drew's prepared address dealt with the problems of agriculture, and he warned that uncertainty about prices and the shortage of manpower were combining to threaten food production this year to an extent that "may reach the proportions of a national disaster." Farmers did not know what they could safely grow and what animals they could safely breed and care for unless they were given some assurances of help, he went on.

"Dairy farmers are going out of business because of the lack of manpower now and uncertainty regarding the future," said Col. Drew. "Farmers simply can't go blindly ahead without knowing that they will have help and what they will be paid."

Fair Return.

He continued: "The simple truth is that our farmers cannot risk their savings unless they have some assurance of a fair return. They cannot be expected to produce our vital requirements if they have no assurance against heavy financial loss. Let no one charge them with lack of patriotism."

"It is the duty of this Government to act without a further day's delay," said Col. Drew. "The most important job facing the Government of Ontario is to find some way to assure the farmers that they will get a fair return for the food they produce. If the Government is not prepared to tackle the job, then it should resign immediately. If it cannot act now it never will."

CONANT SEEKS SOCIAL SERVICE COST SURVEY

Premier Calls for Committee to Study Postwar Problems

Immediate consideration by Ontario of the problems of postwar rehabilitation not only for the armed forces but for the forces manning war industry was announced in the Legislature yesterday by Premier Conant, who said he would ask for a committee of the House to consider the whole question.

On the question of social services and social security, Mr. Conant disclosed that he had made an offer on March 8 in a letter to Premier King to co-operate with a Federal committee set up March 3 to consider social security and all related matters.

Ottawa Aid Necessary.

He reviewed the financial problems involved in extension of social services, and declared that Ontario could not go much further along this line without monetary assistance from Ottawa. Ontario already had provided considerable in the way of social services, such as mothers' allowances, and last year 38 per cent of Provincial revenue had been devoted to them—\$31,650,000 of a total revenue of \$111,500,000.

Mr. Conant discussed the Beveridge Report, and said its provisions might mean an expenditure of \$800,000,000 in the Dominion. Other Provinces would benefit more than Ontario, in view of greater social services Ontario already enjoyed, and it would be important to Ontario financially to see that the cost was divided proportionately. It had been estimated that health insurance would cost Ontario \$27,000,000, and Ontario's combined outlay on services "might conceivably equal our present revenue, which would mean double taxation."

Seeks to Avoid New Taxes.

"Increased taxation is just what this Government has endeavored to avoid," said Mr. Conant, "and has succeeded in avoiding. Its policy is to avoid new taxation."

But rehabilitation and extension of social services in the Province, he felt, is vital, and should be considered by a House committee. He enumerated as additions to present social services that should be explored and planned for: Health insurance, retirement allowances, marriage and maternity allowances, funeral allowances, and social insurance.