

MEMBERS GIVE VIEWS ABOUT CHRISTIE BLAST

Dewan Brings 'Get-Out-of-Kitchen' Speech to Notice of Legislature

Recent reported admonition to Ontario farmers by Dr. G. I. Christie, head of the Ontario Agricultural College, to "get out of the kitchen," avoid "lengthy, worthless chats they were used to in peace time" and realize they have the 1943 food problem on their hands was aired in the Ontario Legislature yesterday. It was introduced by Minister of Agriculture P. M. Dewan, because of "a good deal of criticism in the press." It brought an interchange of views from both sides of the House on what was said and what was meant by Dr. Christie.

Dr. Christie's reported remarks were made in an address Feb. 23 in Toronto before the Ontario Association of Rural Municipalities which was reported in Toronto newspapers. The reported remarks and resultant criticism of Dr. Christie had provoked letters from the warden of Wentworth, the Reeves of Saltfleet and Binbrook and others. Mr. Dewan said an official stenographic report of the meeting had convinced him that "there were no words spoken which should call forth criticism. He did not cast any slurs on the farmers." Mr. Dewan regretted the criticism, he said, as nothing had been said to offend the farmers.

Nixon Defends Report.

Speaking for the first time this session, H. C. Nixon (Lib., Brant), former Provincial Secretary, defended the newspaper report as having been written by "one of the most reliable reporters of a very reliable newspaper. I took the trouble to check with the paper and the reporter reading from his notes showed the report was correct."

R. A. McEwing (Lib., Wellington North), who declared he was at the meeting and that he was probably the only member of the House who had been there, said: "I think Dr. Christie made a mistake in making that statement. I don't think he meant it. The farmers are working longer hours than perhaps he knows of and they resent it."

Mr. Nixon prefaced his remarks by saying: "I was one of those farmers guilty of being in my wife's kitchen at the time I read the account in The Globe and Mail. The farmers of this Province felt that a most uncalled-for and insulting blast was delivered on that occasion by the head of the O.A.C." Dr. Christie had denied at a subsequent meeting remarks attributed to him at the Toronto meeting.

"Refuge of Speakers."

"I am dubious of this refuge of public speakers that they were misquoted by the press," said Mr. Nixon. "In my 25 years in public life I have never yet claimed I was misquoted by the press. I admit that sometimes I have seen words in the press which I wish I hadn't said. I would have thought better of Dr. Christie if he had sent in an apology to be read by the Minister of Agriculture."

A sharp exchange followed between G. H. Challies (Prog. Con., Grenville-Dundas) and Mr. Nixon when Mr. Challies, defending Dr. Christie, who, he said, had nothing but the good-will of the farmers, charged: "The former Provincial Secretary always seems at ease and to enjoy it when he can take a rap at the O.A.C."

"I'm not going to stand for that, Mr. Speaker," retorted Mr. Nixon, thoroughly roused. "I'm a graduate of O.A.C. and I sent my son there." But Mr. Challies insisted that in some years Mr. Nixon had "never paid any compliments to O.A.C."

Quotes Passages.

Mr. Dewan read excerpts from the press report of Dr. Christie's address when he introduced the matter, quoting such passages as: "He exhorted Canadian farmers to get off the cracker barrel at the village store and begin to realize they have the 1943 food program on their hands."

"Admonished hog raisers, dairy-men and potato growers to 'get out of the kitchen' and avoid 'lengthy, worthless chats they were used to in peacetime.'"

"If farmers will not see to it that their pigs are kept warm and dry, if they have no time to put down bedding, if they permit hogs to grow so cold that they cannot eat, the farmer might make better use of his time by digging graves."