

DREW OBJECTS TO SYMINGTON 'INTERFERENCE'

Says Power Controller
Connected With Large
Quebec Corporations

Opposition Leader George Drew in the Legislature yesterday voiced strong objection to interference in Ontario Hydro Power affairs by the Federal Power Controller, H. J. Symington, who, Col. Drew charged, "is himself connected with some of the largest power corporations which themselves compete with Hydro."

Support for Col. Drew's charge came from Leopold Macaulay (Prog. Con., South York), who accused Mr. Symington of being "the brains of the power trust of Quebec." Mr. Macaulay urged the Government to take a firm stand in seeing that Ontario obtained "a square deal" in the matter of power. The charge came in debate over inability of farmers to get much-needed Hydro power because, according to Hydro Vice-Chairman W. L. Houck, the Hydro "couldn't get to first base" with the Power and Metals controllers at Ottawa, though Metals Controller Bateman had just recently reduced restrictions to permit some services. Hydro's hands were tied, Mr. Houck said, and he called the situation "an injustice."

Class Discrimination.

"I don't think Ottawa has the right to tie our hands—it's class discrimination," said Mr. Houck. "If we are allowed extensions we can squeeze out the power for the farmers." Mr. Houck said the equipment was available, and Hydro would do its part if its hands were untied.

"Hydro has wide powers," declared Col. Drew, "and should not have to hide behind the skirts of the Power and Metals controllers. The time has come to talk with complete frankness about the interference in our affairs of the Power and Metals controllers."

Declaring that Hydro was in the position of a "beggar to the Power Controller," Col. Drew said: "It is a question whether the man who holds the position of Power Controller should have any right over the allocation of power in Ontario. Such absolute authority should not be held by a man who is himself connected with some of the largest power corporations which themselves compete with Hydro. They're not short of power, and yet he's placing his hand on what Hydro can and cannot do."

'Brains of Power Trust.'

Col. Drew repeated that Ontario power was under control of a man who is himself connected with private power corporations, and moved the adjournment of the House "to discuss a matter of public importance."

Protesting at "the situation that has developed between private interests in Quebec and publicly-owned Hydro in Ontario," Mr. Macaulay said: "Let's deal with Symington. Let's put up the blinds. Let's bring this out into the open and see what's going on. Symington is the brains of the power trust of Quebec."

Mr. Macaulay went on: "And he's the power controller for Canada. If he could divorce himself from his connections—well, he'd be a superman if he could. Today we find Quebec with a surplus of power attracting industry right past Ontario's front door, away from Toronto and other Ontario cities. If the power controller wants to hold the balance even, he'll not impose restrictions in Ontario and not in Quebec. And I defy him to show that he is doing that today either to urban or rural Hydro consumers. If there's a power surplus in Quebec, why doesn't the power controller make it available to Ontario farmers? We're not satisfied with the way Symington is rationing power. Agriculture Minister Gardiner got control of agricultural prices and took them away from Donald Gordon. Ontario should take a firm stand and see that it gets a square deal."

Farmer Got Refund.

"This seems to me one of the most remarkable events since I have been in this House," commented G. H. Challies (Prog. Con., Grenville-Dundas). He said he knew of a farmer who had paid service charges for his wired property since 1941 and couldn't get power. But Hydro had returned the money, and he urged others in the same fix to ask for a refund.

Premier Conant said that when it was considered Hydro was the largest organization of its kind in Canada, "it looks much like the tail wagging the dog when Hydro has to be subject to control of a person appointed by Ottawa or any other jurisdiction. The whole question of wartime controls of many kinds is most objectionable. We are, in effect, rewriting the British North America Act under wartime emergency acts."

"We all have done our best in the wartime emergency, subject to these controls."

The whole debate finally was declared out of order by Speaker Clark since notice had not been given by Mr. Houck of his intention to introduce the Hydro matter.