

MARCH 24

## PROPOSE SOCIAL SECURITY BODY IN LEGISLATURE

### Premier Conant Lists Twenty-three Members for New Committee

Proposed composition of the committee to be formed under Ontario's Social Security and Rehabilitation Bill was disclosed in the Legislature yesterday as Premier Conant spoke to the second reading of the bill. Though the bill calls for 25 members, Mr. Conant listed only 23, explaining that leeway would be permitted to add to that number. The committee will be composed of 13 members of the House — seven of them Cabinet Ministers — and 10 others, two representatives from each of employers, labor, servicemen, agriculture and education. Cabinet Ministers would represent the Departments of Education, Health, Lands and Forests, Agriculture, Highways, Labor and Mines. Douglas R. Oliver is named as permanent secretary of the committee.

The financial aspect of the social security plan depends on Dominion co-operation and support "or new taxation" and it is proposed to repeal the present Mobilization of Resources Act. This Opposition Leader George Drew did not approve.

Constitutional aspects involved in the security setup "undoubtedly will require consideration," the Premier said.

Premier Conant said he did not think he "should endeavor to lay down any hard and fast rule at this time as to Ontario's attitude toward constitutional amendments to permit of additional social security measures in Canada. There is no definite or concrete proposal before us at present, and a pronouncement at this time would be a prejudgment."

The committee's duties will include examination of "methods of organizing, conserving and utilizing the resources of Ontario for the successful prosecution of the war, for the rehabilitation of members of the armed forces and other persons who will require employment at the conclusion of the war, and generally for the development and improvement of the Province of Ontario for the benefit of its people."

Generally, there could be no division of opinion on the measure, Col. Drew agreed, but pointed out that with all its professions of good intentions the Government had refused the principle when offered by the Opposition two years ago. Action was belated, he felt.

Premier Conant remarked that the social security bill "comes squarely and neatly within the formula set out by Mr. Churchill in his recent speech."

## MACAULAY SEES CARELESSNESS IN BUDGETING

### Net Debt Reduction Should Have Been Twenty-nine Millions

With careful budgeting Ontario's net debt reduction should have been 29 millions instead of 3.8 millions, Leopold Macaulay (Prog. Con., South York) asserted in the Legislature yesterday. The chief financial critic claimed the Government "is trying to sell us a bill of goods." Instead of reducing the Provincial debt the Liberal Government since 1934 had increased the net debt from 358 millions in that year to 503 millions in 1943, or 17 millions a year, he said.

"In the last three years alone, the Treasurer has announced huge ordinary surpluses totalling 40 millions, but the net debt has been reduced only four millions in those three years," said Mr. Macaulay. "Not satisfied with those bookkeeping figures of 'ordinary' surpluses intended to induce the groaning taxpayer to view with admiration the operations of the Treasury, it has originated a new species of surplus called an 'overall' surplus. This overall surplus is adapted only for years like the present one when loans and repayments from commissions and boards exceed advances to them. If applied to the whole period of the Government's regime, instead of to this year alone, there would be an overall deficit for the whole period of 68.6 millions."

### Turns to Revenue Figures.

Mr. Macaulay turned to revenue figures, and contrasted the 30 millions of expenditure with which the Henry Government got along, other than relief. This was described at the time by the opponents of the Henry Government as a "staggering sum." Mr. Macaulay continued.

"Well, how would you describe the present tax burden of 115 millions annually?" he asked. "And if Ontario was staggering under six million liquor revenue in 1934, what is Ontario doing under 17 million liquor revenue in 1943?"

Dealing with public welfare, Mr. Macaulay expressed the opinion that old-age pensions should be increased five dollars monthly, and the age reduced from 70 to 65. He suggested that the Government could extend health and public welfare expenditures without increasing taxes.

"I think we should establish thousands of scholarships for deserving but needy students who, without such help, could not proceed to our arts, medical, dental and engineering colleges," said Mr. Macaulay, amid applause.

"But in other departments there are opportunities for economies and retrenchment," continued the speaker. "The huge expenditure on car rentals and mileage allowances, about \$900,000 last year, is largely unnecessary. Instead of a decrease of about 50 per cent, we have an increase of about 100 per cent."

Mr. Macaulay devoted attention to the costs of operating the Provincial police system, pointing out that in 1937 the salary bill of the Ontario Provincial Police was \$619,292 and in 1940 it was \$1,288,837. In 1942 it rose to \$1,110,928.

Mr. Macaulay said that the Province, before and since the war, had budgeted for increasing ordinary outlay. This money was needed for war, he asserted.

"This Province has benefited from war-created revenues," he continued. "Little of this benefit has been reflected in the budgeting position. No betterment of that position is the result of economy."