

MARCH 27

ONTARIO PLANS LABOR MEASURE THIS SESSION

Report Cabinet Agrees Collective Bargaining Bill to Be Drafted

The Ontario Government is prepared to implement the labor committee's report on collective bargaining by bringing in a bill incorporating all its major recommendations, it was learned on good authority yesterday at Queen's Park.

The committee's report was discussed at a special two-hour Cabinet Council yesterday and it is reported that the Ministers were in agreement on the "absolute necessity" of collective bargaining legislation this session. There was some difference of opinion on the wisdom of adopting some of the recommendations, but the view was expressed, it is understood, that the Government must bring in a bill and let the Legislature examine it.

The section of the report which says there is no appeal from the judgment of the Labor Court may be eliminated.

A special caucus of the Liberal members of the House will be held Monday night, and at that time Premier Conant will place the report before the M.P.P.'s, explain the Cabinet's attitude, and ask for their judgment. In view of all that has happened in connection with collective bargaining legislation, it is held most unlikely there will be widespread opposition to a bill.

At this caucus the Premier is expected to discuss the question of a Provincial election.

Premier Conant's revelation in the Legislature Thursday that the Government was not certain whether a bill would be brought down this session, is reported to have aroused the wrath not only of the labor committee members but of the Cabinet Ministers as well. It is understood further that Premier Conant was told in plain language yesterday just what would be involved in a Government refusal to bring in a collective bargaining act. The chances of re-election at the polls would be virtually extinguished by any attempt to dodge the issue, the Ministers are said to have told the Premier.

The section of the report dealing

with creation of a labor division of the Supreme Court of Ontario found ready favor with the Cabinet, it is reported. Some minor changes were suggested and these will be embodied in a bill to be drawn up by the legislative law clerks today.

Premier Conant is said to have told his colleagues he favored a collective bargaining bill and that his statement in the Legislature had been misconstrued.

Labor Minister Peter Heenan, under steady fire because of the Cabinet split over the famous "Bill No. 11," is reported to have taken a leading part in the discussion. It was Mr. Heenan who promised organized labor a "Magna Carta" of rights and later found he could not persuade his colleagues to his way of thinking.

The atmosphere at yesterday's Cabinet Council was harmonious for the most part, in striking contrast to the session some weeks ago when the Cabinet was rocked by strong differences of opinion over the merits of the bill which J. L. Cohen, then counsel for the C.I.O., and now a member of the National War Labor Board, helped to prepare.

May Alter Proposals.

There is a possibility that the Government will remove part of Section 28, which provides for Labor Court sessions in camera, at the discretion of the court. Other likely changes concern the phrasing of certain sections, but do not alter the character of those sections to any marked degree.

The Liberal members of the Legislature are reported to be far from enthusiastic about a collective bargaining bill, but realize that the political disadvantages of not having any kind of bill would be worse than a bill itself.

There is little doubt that the Opposition will attack some of the major provisions of the bill if the latter is based on the report presented to the Legislature.

The Progressive Conservatives declined to name any of their group to the labor committee on the ground that it was the Government's responsibility to bring in a bill. The fact that the committee was an all-Liberal one frees the Opposition from the restraint which would have been imposed had Progressive Conservatives formed part of it and not brought in a minority report.

Organized labor's reaction to the collective bargaining report appeared to be one of disappointment over some of the provisions, and there is a chance the Government may move to overcome the objections. C. H. Millard, national director of the United Steelworkers of America, and an executive board member of the Canadian Congress of Labor, telegraphed Premier Conant yesterday and expressed resentment over the uncertainty of the Government's policy. He added that the provisions of the proposed bill would increase rather than lessen present industrial unrest and friction.