

ONTARIO PLANS MILLION MORE FOR PENSIONS

**Horizontal Increase
Is Not Contemplated,
Says Premier Conant**

The Ontario Government plans an additional expenditure of \$1,000,000 on old-age pensions in the Province in 1943-44, Premier Gordon Conant revealed in closing the Budget debate in the Legislature yesterday afternoon. The Budget was adopted on a straight party vote, 48 to 16.

A "horizontal increase" similar to the recently announced 20 per cent increase in mothers' allowances was not contemplated, Premier Conant explained, since mothers' allowances are Provincial and old-age pensions a Federal responsibility, he told the House. "A survey is being made and allowances will be increased where investigation indicates need for increased allowance on the basis of an approved budget and considering other income," he said.

It would apply with regard to what other sources of income the pensioner might or might not enjoy. The mothers' allowances increase already announced will cost \$800,000 additional.

To Examine Cases.

The Government, the Premier said, proposes to examine all the 59,000 cases on its files and increase grants according to need. Meanwhile, the Dominion was considering lower age limits and increasing maximum pensions from \$20 to \$30 monthly.

At the outset of his speech, the Premier objected to the term "puppet Government" applied to his administration because of the wartime usurpation of some Provincial powers by Ottawa. He declared that "in its business with Ottawa, this Government is not going to resort to abuse, vilification or re-primination, but will do business on merits and circumstances. From his Ottawa phobia, the Leader of the Opposition is disposed to believe that all these powers may not be exercised honestly in the best interests of the war effort. I take the opposite view."

Mr. Conant pointed out that the Budget revealed the largest net debt decrease, \$3,853,000, the largest gross debt decrease and largest overall surplus, \$20,000,000, in the history of Ontario.

The Premier aroused Opposition laughter when, on an interruption, he remarked: "You've been juggling figures for the past week or so. Let me have a chance awhile."

Compares Budgets.

With his Government's Budget, he compared the 1934 Budget before the Liberals came to power, showing ordinary revenue of \$50,067,000 and ordinary expenditures of \$80,667,000, a deficit of \$30,600,000, "the greatest deficit in Ontario's history."

Increase in the Province's net debt from 1930 to 1934, he said, averaged \$36,000,000 a year, while from 1934 to 1943 it averaged only \$16,000,000. But, he said, with the net debt increase of \$144,000,000 since 1934 the Government has "created tangible assets of \$182,500,000 in highways, public buildings and lands and forests." True, ordinary expenditures were \$103,000,000 for 1943 as against \$80,000,000 in 1934 but in the face of \$23,000,000 increase there had been expended \$38,100,000 in these services; social services, \$16,000,000; education, \$3,000,000; agriculture, \$4,000,000; highway maintenance, \$10,000,000; municipal subsidies, \$3,000,000; lands and forests, \$1,600,000, and Provincial police, largely for enlarged war policing needs, \$500,000. In addition the Province had saved municipalities \$12,700,000 on mothers' allowances and \$7,100,000 on pensions to aged and blind.