

C.C.F. Will Co-operate If Legislative Program In Right Form: Jolliffe

Defeat of the Government on division of the House would not, so far as the C.C.F. is concerned, constitute a vote of no confidence in the Administration. C.C.F. Leader E. B. Jolliffe declared in the Legislature yesterday.

Making his maiden effort in formal House debate, the Opposition Leader spoke for nearly two hours, covering many fields of activity in considerable detail. Speaking on the motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Jolliffe said the Speech contained the promise of considerable progressive legislation. But he declared his party reserved judgment with respect to most of it, as it would be impossible to form a conclusion until there was opportunity to see the legislation itself. To the extent that it actually represented progress and reform, the C.C.F. would support it, he said.

The C.C.F. Leader said his party was prepared to co-operate with the Government in enacting the legislative program into law if the legislation was brought into the House in satisfactory form. Full opportunity would be given the Government to implement its program, he said.

He reminded the Premier that the present Government was a minority one, almost as many voters having given their support to the C.C.F. as to the Progressive Conservative Party. Mr. Jolliffe said he did not ask the Government to accept any dictation or direction from any

group, but suggested that it would be "common-sense democracy" to pay more attention to the views of Opposition members and to pay more respect to legislative processes and the importance of the House.

Put Rumors at Rest.

"The Prime Minister has it in his power to put an end to the rumors which have circulated ever since last summer that his Government plans a snap election at the earliest opportunity," Mr. Jolliffe continued. "Personally, I have not been as disturbed by such rumors as some people. In any event, we are prepared to fight elections whenever they are brought about by other groups, and we shall have no regrets, because we believe it is urgently necessary that our own program should be implemented as soon as possible. However, there are limits to the number of election rabbits the public will tolerate and I question the desirability, from any point of view, of holding elections every few months while we are engaged in the present war. This is no time for fast plays and smart political tricks, and the public knows it."

The C.C.F. Party was prepared to abolish the patronage system in the civil service, but the Progressive Conservative Party had not done so, Mr. Jolliffe asserted. He quoted

from the London Free Press of Jan. 21 a report of an address made to a Progressive Conservative Association in London by the member for Huron, R. Hobbs Taylor (P.C.). In this report Mr. Taylor was quoted as saying that party workers should be recognized by being given jobs wherever possible. In Huron eight out of nine applications for jobs were granted, the newspaper quoted the Huron member as saying. The ninth was something new and had not been decided.

"Good Batting Average."

"A pretty good batting average," remarked Mr. Jolliffe. "Eight out of nine jobs. Is that what the Progressive Conservatives were elected to do? If not, the Government ought to repudiate the statement of the honorable member for Huron."

Mr. Jolliffe credited the Government with not duplicating the "disgraceful scenes" which he charged took place after other Administrations took office in Ontario.

"The Opposition is not here for the purpose of opposing or criticizing every step taken by the Government," continued the Opposition Leader. "We shall not hesitate to criticize whatever we believe to be wrong, and, in common with most of the electors, we believe the patronage system to be wrong. However, we shall co-operate in every constructive and progressive measure."

Mr. Jolliffe reviewed the social legislation placed on the statute books of Ontario in the past several decades and gave credit to the Farmer Government of 1919-23 for most of these progressive measures. None of these steps, however, put an end to the fundamental evils in society. They all represented definite steps, however imperfect they might be, toward a more civilized organization of affairs.

Could Not Meet Crisis.

"These measures were utterly inadequate to meet the crisis which came upon us, a crisis which is certain to recur upon a much larger and more devastating scale unless the people of this Dominion and particularly this Province decide to master their own social and economic destiny," declared Mr. Jolliffe. "There are those who think that the next crisis can be met by another instalment of social legislation. A few admirable reforms here and there, the removal of some obvious injustices, correction of inequities in taxation, with a dash of more social insurance thrown in, and more hospital beds for the victims of the system."

"Generally speaking, the measures described in the 22-point program of the Government fall into precisely the same category as the worthy social legislation we already find on our statute books," said the speaker. "For what they are worth we commend them."

Mr. Jolliffe was critical of Premier Drew's statement that the Government would stand or fall on the program of legislation mapped out; that it would not permit the lack of an overall majority to sway its course.

"If the Prime Minister means that the Government intends to keep its promises, that is all very well and his statement is not objectionable," declared Mr. Jolliffe. "But if he means that the Government intends to present us with a batch of legislation and a take-it-or-leave-it; if his position is that the executive is to have first and last word about all legislation, or that the members of this House have no contribution to make; or if he means that the Government will hold office only on condition that we say 'yes, yes' to any and every proposal, then his statement was an improper one and smacks very strongly of dictatorship, and not at all of British democracy."

Word for Farmers.

Mr. Jolliffe commended the Government for appointing an agricultural committee of inquiry, declaring that the trials and tribulations through which the farmers had passed in recent years could not continue indefinitely. He advocated a floor under farm prices; refinancing of farm mortgages; a national marketing act with proper machinery; more tangible encouragement of co-operative organization among both producers and consumers and international arrangement for the distribution of foodstuffs.

Dealing with labor, Mr. Jolliffe said the most immediate problem of labor was one of organization. The free enterprisers had placed every obstacle in the way of free trade union organization in Canada, he asserted. The Collective Bargaining Act of 1943 aroused high hopes that at last the workers of Ontario were going to be emancipated from the fear of intimidation and discrimination, he said.

"As many of us anticipated, there was a long, long gap between the original promise of compulsory collective bargaining and the legislation which went into effect last June," declared the C.C.F. Leader. "Now, for the umpteenth time in recent months, the law with respect to relations between employers and labor is changed once again. It is hardly reasonable for the Government or employers to expect labor relations to be stable when labor legislation, Government policy and the administration thereof are all in such chaotic condition."

Criticizes Prominent Men.

Mr. Jolliffe was critical of prominent men who, he said, were "self-sacrificingly defending the individualism that had been trodden down for years by the great corporations they control." Democracy was in danger, he said, "when a large part of political propaganda does not issue from responsible political leaders but from people unwilling to submit their qualifications at the polls and whose whole claim to a hearing is that they have some millions of dollars to obtain a hearing."

He mentioned Bladstone Murray, who, he declared, was "a complete failure as a public servant and left the BBC only after his removal had been recommended," and asked: "Who are his sponsors?"

Notable among them, he said, were "those great friends of democracy, Arthur Schmon, president of

the Ontario Paper Co. Ltd., which is the chief money-maker in this country for the most anti-British publisher in the United States, who produced so many pro-Fascist pronouncements before Pearl Harbor that his name stank in the nostrils of decent people"; and Lord Barnby, member of the British House of Commons, "Conservative, of course, in 1937-39 one of the principal sponsors of Anglo-German fellowship."

In defense of free enterprise, too, he said, were the presidents of Massey-Harris, Imperial Oil, Imperial Tobacco Co., "and others of the same stripe."