

Drew, Leavens Clash Over Farm Reference

A brief clash with Premier George Drew enlivened the opening remarks of B. E. Leavens (C.C.F., Toronto Woodbine) in the Legislature yesterday when the Opposition member denied that he had ever said the C.C.F. would take the farms away from the farmer. Mr. Leavens was reported in the Orillia Packet and Times as having made this statement in an Orillia address.

"Before entering upon the subject I intend to discuss today I wish to answer a statement made by the Prime Minister on Nov. 17 of last year," said Mr. Leavens when he rose to take part in the Throne Speech debate. "I wish to state emphatically on the floor of this House that I did not say that the C.C.F. would take the farm away from the farmer."

Premier Drew was on his feet immediately.

"In the speech referred to I said it was made at Orillia and quoted from the Orillia Packet and Times," said the Premier. "That newspaper carried these words," continued the Premier, reading from a copy of the Times: 'Farmers could stay on their farms as long as they wished, but could not will them to any one else.' That statement stood uncorrected in the Packet and Times," concluded the Premier.

Family Ownership.

"I still deny the truth of that report," retorted Mr. Leavens, "no matter where it appeared. What I did say was that under security of tenure the C.C.F. would not only not take the farmer's land, but would also make sure that no one else would take it either. I also said that security of tenure under a C.C.F. Government would automatically pass on from one generation to another on the family farm.

"It is strange that the Prime Minister and those on the Government benches and the Liberals in this House have suddenly become so concerned about the security of the farmer and his farm," remarked Mr. Leavens. "They were all strangely silent when, during those horrible ten years of depression, thousands of farmers and homeowners lost their farms and homes, which in most cases represented the labors of a lifetime."

"Haven't you heard of the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act and the Farm Loan Adjustment Act?" asked Provincial Treasurer Leslie Frost.

"I have, but they have nothing to do with it," replied Mr. Leavens. "The acts did not operate in a great many cases, and thousands of farmers lost their farms."

Social Security.

Dealing with social security, Mr. Leavens said the Province should give courageous and intelligent leadership to all municipalities in raising and maintaining standards of services and their administration in all branches of the welfare program. He advocated the setting up of an adequate floor under wages under which no employer shall be allowed to go. Children's allowances should be paid to correct the evil of poverty in the home, he declared. Mothers' allowances, old-age pensions and pensions for the blind should be raised in keeping with modern conditions, Mr. Leavens told the House.

"Distressed" at the state of agriculture, W. A. Goodfellow (P.C., Northumberland) blamed it on absence of a manpower policy in Canada. He predicted that farm production would drop this year through help shortage and urged the Government to register all available help for allocation where needed.

He advocated decentralization of government and return of more control to local councils. Also, he felt, so many Wartime Prices Board officials would not have been needed if the public had been properly educated through newspapers and in other ways of the need for rationing. He advised against too much social legislation as likely to interfere with private initiative and, while praising the work of the Federation of Agriculture, counselled that body to "keep out of politics," a mistake, he said, which proved costly to the farmers in the U.F.O. movement.

Attacks Packing Plants.

Farmers are not the individualists some claimed, George Lockhart (C.C.F., Rainy River) told the House, stating 450,000 out of 675,000 belonged to some agricultural or co-operative organization. He attacked packing plants as a monopoly and urged they be taken over. However, taking over the stockyards by the farmers, he believed, "doesn't look like a healthy idea at the moment."

He made a plea for aid for the tourist industry in the northwest through highway improvement, and claimed 25 million tourists are within one day's travel of Fort Frances. He commended the Government on its Agricultural Committee of Inquiry and suggested a similar body should operate across Canada. He was sharply critical of the Federal Government asking farmers to increase stock production, then permitting glutted home

markets through reduced quotas for Britain.

Farmers would better aid the war effort by running their farms than operating the stockyards, was the opinion expressed by Roy Downie (Lib., Lambton), who commended much of the Government's legislation. Farm labor camps for high school pupils, he said, had proved helpful in Southwestern Ontario in providing farm help and he urged their continuance this year.

Song of Governments.

Critical of what he termed the theme song of Governments, "We have no money today," George Bennett (C.C.F., Windsor-Sandwich) declared: "So long as a man is out of a job, a child hungry, a farmer in need of machinery, just so long must budgets go unbalanced. If we can unbalance our budgets to meet the emergency of war, we can do it to meet the emergency of peace. You can't have the gold standard and the Golden Rule at the same time."

Governments, he said, must give first consideration to human betterment, and added: "For that reason we have opened up a second front in this House and we will open as many in this country as are needed, so that when free enterprise fails again, as it will and always has, we will be in a position to make an economy of abundance and sufficiency for all."

Traditional type of governments must go as outmoded, he declared, and labelled the Drew Government's "22 points," so far as security was concerned, "a presentation of half-measures, half-solutions—a panty-waist production."