

Best Family Aid Plan Is Objective, Drew Tells House

Premier George A. Drew told the Legislature yesterday that it was the purpose of his Government to have in Ontario the very best system of family allowances that can be worked out on the basis of accumulated experience of every other jurisdiction which has adopted this measure.

To tense and expectant members who earlier had heard corridor rumors that the Opposition groups might combine to defeat the Government on this issue, the Premier made clear that his Government believes in sound provisions for family allowances and social security, but is of the opinion firmly that the Provinces should have been consulted by the Dominion.

Debate on family allowances ended as far as the motion to adjourn the House on a matter of "urgent public importance" was concerned, but the Throne Speech debate, which will be resumed this afternoon, may throw the issue back into the spotlight. Labor-Progressive Leader A. A. MacLeod, who sponsored the motion, said he believed the discussion had served a useful purpose, but that the House should proceed with other business.

Issue May Recur

If the Drew Government actually stood in danger of defeat in the House yesterday, as the rumors indicated, then the same set of circumstances is likely to be created in the course of the wide-open Throne Speech debate, it is believed. E. B. Jolliffe, C.C.F. Leader, will resume his adjourned address this afternoon.

Premier Drew reiterated the stand of his Government on the Family Allowances Act. He recalled his definite statement that his Government favored every proper step being taken to encourage large and healthy families, and that the Administration believed in sound provisions for family allowances and social security.

It was not the Government's intention, nor had it ever been its intention, to take legal steps to prevent the Dominion act going into effect, Mr. Drew told the House. He added: "I have said in this Legislature and elsewhere many times that I do not believe that the Dominion and Provincial Governments should get involved in legal difficulties, but rather they should meet around the council table to work out their problems. . . ." The Province wished to join hands to combine its legislative power with that of the Do-

minion Government to assure the best social services which can be devised, he declared.

"In spite of our position having been stated so clearly, statements are still made that we are opposed to family allowances," the Premier said. "I referred in an earlier speech to the iniquitous principle involved in the measure which has been adopted by the Dominion Government. My speech quite clearly was not referring to any opposition to family allowances. It was referring to the principle in the Dominion act that family allowances are not part of social security and that they should be regarded as a mere economic question. We also believe it is an iniquitous principle that very large sums of money should be taken from the taxpayers of this or any other Province to be paid for something which falls within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Governments, without consulting those Provincial Governments and establishing a proper basis of taxation and payment right across Canada.

"At the time I said that we would oppose the course being followed by the Dominion Government, we had the unqualified assurance of the Prime Minister of Canada that there was going to be a Dominion-Provincial conference to discuss matters of this kind," continued the Premier. "It was our intention at this conference to do everything within our power to assure that we have a proper system of family allowances and also that the rights of the people of Ontario be protected.

Says Act Falls Short

"I believe it is an iniquitous principle that payments should be a mere baby bonus based merely upon the fact that a baby is born," said the Premier. "I believe that our people want real family allowances, in the clearly accepted meaning of that term, for the maintenance, care, training and upbringing of children, in a way that will assure the welfare of the children them-

selves. That is not accomplished by the present Dominion act. We have the clear words of the Prime Minister of Canada: "The act does not attempt in any way to legislate in respect of family life."

"If it has nothing to do with family life, then how is it family allowances?" demanded the Premier. "How can it possibly assure the welfare of the children in those families which receive the money?"

"The situation, then, is simply this," said Mr. Drew. "We can only wait now until after the next Dominion election, when a new Government at Ottawa which recognizes its constitutional obligations will join with us and the other Provinces in establishing the very best measures possible in the field of social security, and in other fields of legislation where the Governments have joint responsibilities. When that conference does take place, we believe it will be possible to reach agreement upon this and every other problem which we face. In the case of family allowances and all other similar measures, our one object as a Government is to bring into operation the very best social and other measures which it is within the power of this country to provide."