Liberals, CCF Unite Against Government

At 12:05 this (Friday) morning the Administration of Premier George Drew was defeated in a history-making vote which the Government Leader has anticipated and which he demanded be "forthright and direct—a motion of confidence or want-of-confidence—and I assure you we will abide by the consequences."

In those words the Premier indicated that his Government would accept endorsation of a C.C.F. amendment to his Throne Speech motion. That endorsation was accomplished only by a solid alliance of the Hepburn-led Liberals, the C.C.F., the two Labor-Progressives and two Independent Laborites.

Desk-thumping and jubilant, members of the Government and their supporters welcomed the vote as a release from the effort to govern against an antagonistic majority and the consequent opportunity to appeal to the electors in an early election.

Dissolution Likely

Though no announcement to this effect was made, and the Premier said no statement would be forthcoming until after a Cabinet council today, it was strongly believed that the 51-to-36 vote — with Government members voting against a solid Opposition — would result in Premier Drew advising Lieut.-Gov. Albert Matthews to dissolve the Legislature.

The vote came just as the midnight hour was striking, and before galleries from which not one spectator had stirred, though they had been waiting from long before 8 o'clock. It was followed promptly by a motion by C.C.F. Leader E. B. Jolliffe that the House adjourn until Tuesday afternoon, a motion which was accepted by the Premier without division.

Government Applauded

There was a hush as the assistant clerk of the House called the last C.C.F. member's name, and then turned toward the Liberal benches.

"Mr. Hepburn, Elgin." he called, and as the Liberal House Leader rose in his place there was a tremendous outburst of desk-thumping from the Government Ministers and the rank and file of the party. The response of Mr. Hepburn to the call signified the defeat of the Drew Government.

The rising thunder of desk-thumping drowned out the assistant clerk's voice. The Premier, a broad smile on his face, led his party in expressing their acceptance of the challenge. The calling of the Liberal members was halted until the noise subsided.

The deciding vote followed an earlier vote two minutes before, on a Liberal subamendment to the C.C.F. amendment, and the major of whose two sections assailed the Government's introduction of Bible instruction in Ontario schools. In a vigorous attack on this amendment, Premier Drew had first challenged the Opposition to "vote want of confidence," demanding that those members record themselves as "wishing to take this course from our schools in the face of overwhelming evidence that it is desired by the great majority of our people, our teachers, our parents, our clergy."

Given caucus permission to break party lines, the C.C.F. membership divided almost evenly in voting on the Liberal subamendment. Led by Mr. Jolliffe, almost half the C.C.F. members supported the subamendment. On this subamendment, too, the Labor-Progressives voted with the Administration.

But when the nays were called, C.C.F. member after member rose to vote with the Government, upholding the Drew religious teaching program and giving Premier Drew an endorsation which recorded 52 votes in his favor as against 35 opposed. As this vote was announced, Premier Drew smilingly called, "Bring on the next one," and his Cabinet supporters hammered their desks. The second vote was recorded within two minutes.

Tension which had existed for days, and which charged the chamber and even the galleries with an electric suspense reflected by many short, sharp exchanges, cracked toward the approach of the voting when Premier Drew, concluding the debate, followed C.C.F. Leader Jolliffe. The latter, speaking carefully, had outlined his decision to vote against the principle of religious teaching, claiming it tended to create a political issue of a personal matter, and stating that his followers would "vote according to their consciences."

Then, Mr. Jolliffe added, this was an issue on which a Provincial convention of his party had not decided a policy, and it was, therefore, a matter in which each member must decide alone.

"Incredible Admission"

"Here, Mr. Speaker, has been made an incredible admission," said Premier Drew. "I hope Ontario realizes the significance of it. If this vote forces an election, let every one in Ontario understand that the C.C.F. members who are sent here are bound by some one outside this House, that they are unable to vote except to the line."

Truly Democratic

"That is truly democratic," said Mr. Jolliffe. "The policy is determined by a truly democratic organization."

"Never was there a greater misconception of democracy," retorted Premier Drew. "Is this democracy when members elected to come into this Assembly are unable to do the business of this Province from day to day without receiving instruction from outside this House? We don't have to wait for any conference to say how we will vote."

In addition to defense of religious instruction in schools, the Premier dealt with only one other issue, one that had been introduced by earlier speakers—immigration. So that the record would be clear, he said, he read excerpts again from his earlier remarks.

Premier Applauded

There was a tremendous burst of desk-thumping by Government supporters when the Premier rose to speak as Mr. Jolliffe resumed his seat.

"We are now in the position where all those charges we have heard for the past five weeks, all the expressions of criticism either mean something or they don't," began Mr. Drew. "When we assumed the responsibility of Government on Aug. 17 two years ago, we did so and stated clearly what our stated policy was. And we have proceeded to carry out that stated policy.

"Any vote of any member of this House which is not in support of the Government motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne is obviously a want of confidence vote and we shall accept it as such," declared the Premier. Government supporters again banged their desks vigorously.

The Premier said that before he dealt with the serious phases of the situation, he wished to deal with what he described as the "more humorous aspects." He quoted the member for Brant, H. C. Nixon, who, a short time before, had said that the chief reason why the Liberal group had decided not to further extend its co-operation was because of his (the Premier's, Aug. 9 radio address.

"Shut the Door"

"He has recalled that I said that my one ambition was to contribute in such a way as I could in seeing an end of the leadership of Mackenzie King and put in his place John Bracken," the Premier continued.

"By such remarks, the member for Brant said—and I quote his own words—'Mr. Drew shut the door in the face of further co-operation,'" the Premier went on. "Well, I want to ask the member for Brant to go back over the record and see what the member for Elgin (Mr. Hepburn) was saying at about the same time. He said, in fact, that John Bracken was going to be the next Prime Minister of Canada."

There was a roar of laughter at this point, and then the Premier added: "At least I never called the Prime Minister of Canada a mudturtle. Now we have sweet amity over there on the front benches. The member for Brant, who resigned twice because he could not get along with the member for Elgin, and the members who sit on either side of the member for Elgin (Farquhar Oliver, South Grey, and Robert Laurier, Ottawa East), who also resigned from the Cabinet because they could not get along with the member for Elgin, are all together again."

The words of the main amendment moved by the C.C.F. meant a straight want of confidence in the Government, the Premier continued.

"Now, I want to deal with one thing said by the Leader of the Opposition." said Mr. Drew. "I believe it should not go unnoticed. He said that on this occasion the C.C.F. membership in the Legislature is free to vote on the Liberal amendment to the amendment according to their conscience, because no conference of the C.C.F. has