

House Dissolved; Drew Criticizes His Opponents

Dissolution of the Legislature was announced Saturday by Premier George A. Drew, following his second visit within 24 hours to Lieutenant-Governor Albert Matthews, and an election will be brought on "as soon as possible."

It is believed the Government will fix election day in the second week of June, one Government official admitting "that is a pretty close guess."

Charging the Opposition groups with impeding the business of the Legislature by every possible device, the Premier told a press conference in his Queen's Park office that the Legislative Chamber was not the place for the holding of a political campaign. The Opposition groups had voted for an election, and the only question for decision was whether "two political campaigns should be conducted, one in the Legislature and one on the hustings."

Jolliffe Objects

Strong exception to dissolution before holding further sittings to vote supply and deal with bills was taken by Opposition Leader E. B. Jolliffe. He charged the Premier with "high-handed and improper" conduct. Mr. Jolliffe said Mr. Drew had followed the unconstitutional precedent adopted by Laurier in 1911.

Eighty-one bills before the House are automatically wiped out by dissolution, including the City of Toronto measures. The Premier said these bills could be reintroduced at the first session of the new Legislature, which may take place a month after the election. Satisfactory arrangements for financing the Province until the House meets again had been made, Mr. Drew disclosed. Expenditures will be made under warrants of the Lieutenant-Governor.

The Premier was unable to say when the election would take place, pointing out that fixing of the date would depend on the length of time necessary to assure members of the armed forces overseas an opportunity to cast their ballots.

Laws Independent

Asked if there was any tie-up between the Active Service Election Act, which is now law, and the new Election Act and Voters' List Act, which were not passed, Mr. Drew said the active service legislation is independent of the others.

"The election will take place under the provisions of the legislation now on the statutes," the Premier said.

The Premier emphasized that it was not the wish of his Government to hold an election in wartime. Such a step had been forced on the Administration by the tactics of the Opposition groups. Although

there many bills in various stages before the Legislature, no useful purpose could possibly be served by making any attempt to deal with them, in view of the openly declared course of the Opposition groups, he said.

Text of Statement

The text of the Premier's statement follows:

"The Government had advised the Lieutenant-Governor that the 21st Legislature should be dissolved as a result of the vote at the termination of the debate on the Speech from the Throne on Thursday night. The Lieutenant-Governor had accepted this advice and the Legislature has been dissolved by proclamation bearing today's date. The date of the election will be fixed as soon as it is possible to be sure of the time within which arrangements can be made to assure a vote for every member of the armed forces overseas.

"The Government has carried on under the most difficult circumstances and under the most severe provocation. We have sought to give the people of Ontario good government and to avoid the necessity for a Provincial election while our lads at the front are locked in mortal combat with a desperate enemy. I would like to recall what I said in the Legislature as recently as March 6th.

Conduct of War First

"The course which is being followed by some members in this Legislature suggests the desirability of stating our position once again. We believe that nothing should divert public attention from the conduct of the war which can possibly be avoided. We believe that it is not the wish of the people of Ontario to have an election when the main concern of every thoughtful person is the welfare of our fighting men and women, and the hope of early victory which will bring them back to us . . ."

"We assumed office and have continued to govern for more than a year and a half with less than a majority of the Legislature because we believed that it was the wish of the people of this Province to avoid another wartime election in Ontario if possible. By the majority vote we received on every division last year, that appeared also to be the opinion of a substantial majority of the members of this Legislature.

"We still believe that is the wish of the people of this Province, and we believe that we have governed in the way that meets with the approval of the great majority of the people of this Province. Because we accept the supremacy of the Legislature, unless we have the support of the majority of this Legislature we will have no choice but to follow the usual constitution-

al procedure. Any other course would be contrary to our established institutions and would be contrary to the best interests of the people of Ontario.

"It was in the face of that clear statement of the position of the Government that the combined Opposition groups voted for an election. It would be contrary to constitutional practice for the Government to seek any further support from a Legislature which has said by a majority vote that it has no confidence in its actions. By every possible device, each of the Opposition groups impeded the business of the Legislature, and made it impossible to proceed with important Government business. The debate on the Budget and the subsequent debate on the estimates for the coming year could not be dealt with until the debate on the Speech from the Throne had been concluded.

"It was in those debates on the Budget and on the estimates that the Ministers heading the different departments would have presented their legislative and administrative program for the coming year. Not only were those debates held up, but it was impossible to deal with important Government bills because of the constant interjection of irrelevant discussions and the airing of political theories which had no place in the Legislative Chamber.

"The clear purpose of the resolutions supported by all groups of the Opposition was to start a political campaign while the Legislature was still sitting. It is more than evident from what took place in the Legislature and from the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition since adjournment, that an election campaign is already under way.

Expense to Taxpayers

"It is not in the public interest that the Legislative Chamber of Ontario should become the forum for such a political campaign at great expense to the taxpayers of this Province. The sort of speeches we have been hearing for the past five weeks, and the sort of speeches that would be heard at any further meetings of the present Legislature, should be made before public political gatherings or over the radio. The Opposition groups have voted for an election, and the only question for decision was whether two political campaigns should be conducted, one in the Legislature and one on the hustings as well. The Legislature is not the place for political speeches such as we have been hearing. It is a place where the discussions should be directed to the business of the Province. That being so, the sooner new members are elected who recognize the real purpose of the Legislature of this Province, the better it will be for all the people of Ontario and for the members of the armed forces whose future depends so largely upon strong constitutional government.

"Now that there must be an election, our main concern is to bring it on as soon as possible, while at the same time assuring to the members of our armed forces overseas an opportunity to cast their ballots. There will be no repetition of what happened in 1943, when the Government led by Mr. Nixon denied to