

March 14

Valuable Service in Job Creation By Planning Department, House Told

After five speakers had delivered addresses on subjects ranging from social legislation to soil erosion, and from northern roads to labor codes, the Throne Speech debate had not ended last night in the Ontario Legislature, a Progressive Conservative adjournment indicating resumption of the talks by a member of that party today.

Hon. Dana Porter, Planning Minister, was the only Cabinet Minister to speak yesterday, with his address an exposition of his department's position as an all-over planning organization devoted to such varied tasks as outlining technical courses for veterans to seeking industries from abroad to establish plants in Ontario. It was not, as accepted by Opposition members a handout centre for municipalities seeking aid in local projects; rather it was an advisory office for such bodies, he said.

Joseph Meinzinger (L., Waterloo North) assailed communism and urged more lenient administration of labor and social laws; Robert Carlin (C.C.F., Sudbury) voiced an appeal for an honest labor code to give workers democratic rights; Goldwin Elgie (P.C., Greenwood) voiced a Government member's support of demands for good labor laws, a shorter work week and two weeks' vacation with pay for all labor, and J. Newman (L., Rainy River) appealed for greater Government aid in clearing land and carrying out drainage projects in the richest potato-growing area of Canada.

Wage Standards

Mr. Meinzinger warned the Government that unless adequate minimum wages were provided in Ontario the way was being opened to Communist inroads. "Unless we can assure a decent minimum wage, so a man can live respectably, we are certainly playing into the hands of the Communist element which your own Premier detests," he said.

He was particularly critical of the low wage standards for women in Ontario, and claimed many are being unlawfully retained on an unskilled help basis at \$6 to \$8 a week despite the higher minimum set in the act. Payment of "starvation wages" to women, he declared, was forcing some of them into prostitution. There should be legislation to overcome exploitation of poor working people, he urged.

Mr. Meinzinger also advocated better provision for the aged, and said many, who had been taxpayers for years, had been forced to go in their later years to homes for the aged which already were overcrowded with not only the aged but the insane.

"When the Germans were reported liquidating the aged and infirm," he said, "the democracies were shocked. In Ontario they don't liquidate them; they starve them to death." He pleaded for a rectification of the situation as soon as possible.

Mr. Meinzinger called for the closing of Ontario House in London as a duplication of the work of Canada House and an extravagance costing some \$114,000 a year, including allowances of over \$16,000 to the agent-general in charge.

"If Premier Drew is so pro-British that he is leaning over backwards in developing institutions overseas, he shouldn't ask the taxpayers of Ontario to pay for pillows to assure him a safe landing," he declared.

Opening a two-hour speech, Mr. Meinzinger said the Communists had tried to disparage and crucify him. As a Catholic, his religion and Communism "just don't jibe," and he added: "No one, including Premier Drew, has fought Communism as I have during six years as mayor of Kitchener."

Labor and Housing

He criticized Labor Minister Daley for attending the World Labor Conference in Paris, France, during the Ford motor strike at Windsor, and said that pleas to keep Mr. Daley in Ontario while the strike was on had been ignored. "The Government sent Provincial Police to Windsor and sent the Minister of Labor to France. What a fine way to solve a labor problem!" he commented.

Calling for the appointment of a Provincial housing commission, Mr. Meinzinger was definite in his assertion that municipalities should not enter the building business.

Called to order a dozen times or more by the Speaker for naming members, referring to them as "gentlemen" instead of "honorable gentlemen" and other minor infractions of House rules, Kitchener's former mayor proved to be easily the most colorful speaker heard in the Throne Speech debate this session.

Champions Bingo

Interest in the galleries reached a peak when he finally came out as a champion of bingo games. Criticism of Attorney-General Leslie Blackwell, who was not in the House, for banning bingo when horse racing was legal got him into difficulties again when Provincial Treasurer Leslie Frost rose to point out that the laws in both cases were Dominion laws and that the Province was simply enforcing Federal statutes. Any amendment of existing laws must be made at Ottawa, Mr. Frost observed.

"How about enforcement of the Canada Temperance Act?" asked Harry Nixon (Lib., Brant).

"We're doing a lot better than when the Liberals were in power," Mr. Frost retorted.

Mr. Meinzinger concluded the exchange by declaring that, since Premier Drew had been reported some years ago—when in the Opposition—as advocating defiance by the Province of Federal power restrictions, "the Government should have the courage now to tell the

people that they can engage in an innocent game like bingo."

Criticism voiced by Garfield Anderson (C.C.F., Fort William) of the booklets and bulletins released by the Department of Planning and Development boomeranged when Mr. Porter spoke on the debate. He read a letter from the clerk of Fort William, in response to a departmental request, stating that the mayor desired to be kept on the mailing list for bulletins and booklets, which "he finds very useful and instructional."

Mr. Anderson, M.P.P., and Mayor Anderson were the same man, Mr. Porter pointed out, amid laughter from the House. When Mr. Anderson said he had never heard of the letter and that the clerk had just "gone through a formality" in writing it, Mr. Porter asked: "Then what help are you giving your Government and the department which you criticize?"

On the files of his department now, he continued, were "live" requests for advice from 125 firms planning industrial establishments, some large and some small, but all bona fide. When Liberal Leader Farquhar Oliver had criticized the department for not sending more industries to smaller communities, and Ross MacEwing (L., Wellington North) said municipalities were sent away empty-handed, Mr. Porter said they were not judging the functions of the department fairly.

The Government did not feel that industry could be legislated into locating any place, but advice could be offered which would lead to plants being located to the general benefit of Ontario. Nor did it finance local undertakings of municipalities, but offered them the services and advice of experts in creating their plans, he said.

Led by service clubs and chambers of commerce, municipalities were providing a volume of advice about their communities which was being consulted daily by industries seeking locations, advised Mr. Porter. This, plus the leads followed by the department in Britain and the United States, was providing valuable service in creating lasting jobs, he said.

Problems of Planning

Mr. Porter explained that planning covered many problems. It involved study of flooded areas, of vanishing underground water sources, of soil erosion and watersheds. Specialists in these fields had to be retained and these men visited projects in the United States so that flood control and conservation of resources could be planned intelligently.

Measurement of water flow in Southern Ontario had necessitated establishing 16-gauge testing stations. Hydraulic, soil, wild life and forestry surveys had been done. Aerial photographs were taken of various areas as basis for studies.

Rehabilitation of returned men had involved planning by the department when courses had to be defined in technical training. Similarly, because the tourist industry would benefit from better skilled