

April 2.

Hour for Gathering Subject of Exchange

An Ontario Temperance Federation delegation and Premier George Drew were still at odds last night on the question of a mutually convenient hour for an appointment which the delegation seeks with the Premier today.

Premier Drew offered the delegation an appointment for 9 o'clock this morning—an hour rejected by the Federation as unsuitable because it conflicts with a temperance group meeting to be held at 10 o'clock this morning at Metropolitan United Church. Rev. Albert Johnson, acting general secretary of the federation, countered with a statement that the temperance federation would call on Premier Drew at noon today.

Late last night, Mr. Johnson said he received a telegram from Premier Drew acknowledging the federation's letter and regretting that in view of Government business, he would be unable to see the delegation at noon. The Premier suggested an appointment for Wednesday or Thursday, Mr. Johnson said.

Meeting as Scheduled

At midnight Mr. Johnson said that he was unable to say what would be done. "But in my judgment the plans for the noon meeting today will carry forward as planned," he said. Mr. Johnson added that the meeting at Metropolitan Church would also be held this morning as scheduled.

Yesterday in the Legislature, the Premier read to the House a letter which he had sent to Mr. Johnson, in which he denied the latter's reported statements that the federation had been refused an appointment late last week to discuss the liquor legislation now before the House. Attorney-General Blackwell, he said, had talked to Mr. Johnson, had explained that a requested appointment for next Wednesday was unsuitable because the bill would be up for second reading before then, and had offered an appointment for Saturday last. On reading Mr. Johnson's statement that an appointment had been refused, he said, the second offer for today had been sent forward.

When he tabled a copy of his letter to Mr. Johnson yesterday in the House, the Premier explained that his wish was to record that, despite what criticism might be as to legislation, he did not refuse to see delegations from the federation or any other organization. In the letter he had stated that press reports of Mr. Johnson's statements might not be complete but that, in any event, he wished to make clear his willingness to see the federation on any subject "they wished to discuss." So that no mistake would be made, he said, the letter had been delivered to Mr. Johnson in plenty of time for arrangements to be made for the meeting.

Two Weeks Ago

"As a matter of fact," he continued, "I would say that when Mr. Johnson spoke to my secretary he was told that there was every probability that I would be able to be present at the meeting which they then arranged with the Attorney-General. I'd like the press, if possible, to mention something else so that the record might be clear. The Attorney-General had an appointment with the Temperance Federation two weeks ago. He met with them from 11 o'clock until 1:45, nearly three hours. He listened attentively to their submission and went over their brief carefully with them.

"I mention this to make clear that a great deal of time has been devoted to the Temperance Federation, that every effort has been made to hear their representations from time to time, that they had an opportunity to meet us on Saturday last, and they have an offer extended even again for Tuesday."

A few minutes later, when the Labor-Progressive Leader, A. A. MacLeod, asked, during consideration of education estimates, if a \$1,000 grant to the Temperance Education Association was "all the Government does in this work," the Premier replied:

"Certainly not. This grant deals with a particular organization. Lessons on temperance form an important part, during the most important period of life, in all our schools under health and physical education. If this could be construed in financial cost, it would be a sizeable sum. It represents a big undertaking.

"May I say here, however, that I feel a great gain would be made if those who talk so intemperately about temperance in the press and elsewhere would devote some of that time and energy to teaching true temperance."