

POOR DOCUMENT

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DRURY GOVERNMENT UNDER HEAVY FIRE

Its Hydro-Electric Policy
Arouses Storm of Criticism in Ontario

Denies That It Opposes Public Ownership, But in This Case Insists Upon Being Shown.

(Canadian Press.)
Toronto, July 28.—(By mail).—Ontario's farmer-labor government is under heavy fire, and its narrow majority in the Ontario legislature seriously threatened by the "economically safety first" policy adopted by the premier, Hon. E. C. Drury, and his colleagues, in regard to the acquisition and extension of a government owned system of three hundred miles of privately owned, or to be constructed electric radial lines throughout the province—principally in the south-western part of the province.

The storm of criticism has become quite pronounced, since the government announced that it will withhold further guarantees of the bonds of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission, issued for the proposed radial projects, until a royal commission of enquiry, just appointed, has inquired into the advisability, financially and otherwise, of proceeding with the scheme. The critics insist that the farmer-labor government is eighty per cent farmer—opposed to the principle of public ownership. The members of the government, as represented by the premier, deny that they take that ground, but declare that they will not be a "rubber stamp" for any former government, and want to assure themselves that the radical scheme is sound, as foreseen.

Under the former provincial government's regime, the scheme to utilize the unlimited power available in the Niagara peninsula in the operation of such electric railways was fostered in every way. One hundred and sixty miles of road

have already been taken over by the Hydro-Electric Commission, in trust for the government. The municipalities affected have voted in favor of the acquisition of further roads by the commission acting for the municipalities at a total cost of \$7,000,000. Of this sum the provincial government must provide about ten per cent and endorse the commission's bonds for the balance payable in fifty years.

When the Conservative government of Sir William Hearst was succeeded less than a year ago by the "Agrarian" government under Hon. E. C. Drury, there was considerable speculation about the attitude of the new government to the municipal railway scheme. During the last session of the legislature several orders-in-council were issued by the Drury government guaranteeing the bonds for certain transactions in public ownership, to which the former government had promised provincial support. The proposed extensions to the system, on which municipalities had voted very favorably, were not endorsed at once by the new government, and finally it announced a few days ago that it would not give its guarantee of the bonds, which is necessary to the taking over of the railways from private ownership, until a commission of five experts had investigated and reported on the advisability of the furtherance of municipal railways under the Hydro-Electric Commission.

The government bases its decision on the necessity for economy and the protection of provincial credit. It fails to find any guarantee of the correctness of the estimates of costs, etc., furnished the commission, or that the railways under public ownership will earn sufficient revenues to make them self-supporting. For these and general reasons the government declines to permit the immediate taking over of the roads under provincial guarantee. Advances to the Hydro-Electric Commission, the government pointed out, comprised \$65,000,000 in twelve years, and a halt must be called to public expenditure on this account.

The newspapers of Western Ontario are naturally unanimous in protest. Editorial condemnation of the government's policy is outspoken and the newspapers give prominence to statements by Sir Adam Beck, chairman of the Hydro-Electric Commission and others, asserting that the government stands committed to support the municipal railways so far projected. C. A. Maguire, vice-president of the Hydro Radial Association of Ontario, stated publicly that he believed the Canadian Pacific Railway

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Drastic Reductions on Braces, Belts, Hats, Caps, Hosiery, Ties, Collars, Carters, Gloves, Underwaists.

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GIRLS' COATS
\$17.75
Formerly priced \$23.25 to \$25.50.
Beautiful Tweeds and Black and White Checks

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was back of the government's opposition. The radial railways have become the chief competitor of the Canadian Pacific in Ontario. Other references to the influence of "vested interests," opposed to public ownership, are not wanting, and at the end of a successful first session in the legislature, the first farmer government in Canada faces its first real stumbling block.

The district served by the commission's lines is probably the most densely populated, and is certainly the most prosperous in Canada, and the municipalities affected have invariably supported the system of railways under municipal ownership, operated in trust by a central commission, in the plebiscites which have been taken on the question.

The Hydro-Electric Commission was formed a dozen years ago when twelve municipalities contracted to take their light and power from that commission. In the development of power by the commission at Niagara Falls, a long power of 90,729 has been reached, making it possible to expand its activities to radial railways. Since 1914 the commission has been adding to its lines in western Ontario. These are owned and controlled by the commission in trust for the municipalities. Except where they publish through rates in conjunction with another year, they are outside the jurisdiction of the Dominion Railway Commission. The municipalities can dictate rates and policies of their own roads, and the scheme so far has proved very successful.

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WON'T SAIL AGAIN ON THIS ROUTE
The Eastern Steamship Lines, Inc., announces that the well known steamship Governor Cobb, which was especially built for the St. John-Boston route fourteen years ago, has been sold to the Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company. This means that the Governor Cobb, which for years ran to this port, will not be seen here any more, but will carry thousands of the thirty to a land of plenty. It was thought early in the summer that she would go on this route again, but it is now learned that the company had other plans. It received a good offer for the boat and, although she was useful in the summer season, it was decided to let her go. She returns to the route between Key West and Havana, and will run there the year round instead of only in the winter season. For the last few years she had been chartered by her new owners, com-

ing to St. John in the summer season until last year. The Governor Cobb is now at Bath (Me.), receiving some repairs to her machinery. She will go south about September 15, and will engage in a passenger trade that has enormously increased this year.

The Cobb was built at Chester (Pa.), and is a steel propelled oil burning vessel of 1,556 net tonnage.

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