

Henry Amendment

For beverage-room administration and for Civil Service dismissals—Hon. George S. Henry yesterday took the Hepburn Government to task.

"Beverage room conditions," the Conservative Leader maintained, "are due to lax administration." Assuming responsibility for the beer amendments he assailed the subsequent Liberal Government regulations and the single permit.

"The people of this Province are saying, Shame on you! Shame on you!" he charged, as he castigated the Government for Civil Service dismissals.

The former Prime Minister did not limit himself to this subject matter, but chose it as ground for his detailed attack. Of two other major subjects—financial figures and the school system survey—he admitted ignorance, but suggested questions.

Into his speech Mr. Henry wove briefly most of the Conservative political charges of 1934. The beer bill division of the last session culminated his chronicle. Hon. Harry C. Nixon stepped into the breach when the political review touched him most closely.

"He (D. J. Taylor, long time Nixon's right hand and present Deputy Minister of Game and Fisheries), was unfaithful," Mr. Henry charged, "to those who sent him to this Legislature."

"What did North Grey say in election?" Mr. Nixon answered angrily. "He was elected by the largest majority ever polled. The Province never had a better man in Game and Fisheries."

"Mr. Taylor did not represent the temperance views of his riding," the Conservative Leader continued.

"I deny that."

"I say that. You (Mr. Nixon) might not have either."

"I was elected," the Provincial Secretary returned, "by a small majority of some 5,000."

Attacks Hutchinson.

Mr. Henry transferred his attention to Earl Hutchinson, one-time member for Kenora and now member of the Workmen's Compensation Board.

"He voted right and he resigned right," the former Prime Minister maintained. Those who did right were well treated—"those who did not were left out in the cold."

"Where are the members that voted with you on that occasion?" Prime Minister Mitchell F. Hepburn put the query, and the recurrent laughter and thumping of desks reached a climax.

"We are prepared to co-operate and approve of all that is brought forward that in our view may be of value to the Province," Mr. Henry said; as he opened his speech. The Opposition's responsible position, he held, demanded a very critical view, but—"we do not propose captious criticism."

The Government heralded many changes. "Change is valuable, but change is not always an improvement. We will be critical of any change unless reason is behind it."

The Government, Mr. Henry hinted, had not always lived up to these press-announced plans. "Some one," he said, "has suggested that this Government has a habit of speaking on Monday and thinking it over on Tuesday."

"The Administration that was defeated last June," the former Prime Minister maintained, though amid loud laughter, "was not defeated on its record. I don't stand to assert that we didn't make errors in judgment. But while our judgment may have been faulty—there was no criticism of our honesty, integrity, and intent to serve efficiently. That cannot be questioned."

Praise for Whitney.

With a revival of 1905 charges the Conservative Leader swung into his

Civil Service indictment. In that year, he said, the Civil Service was made up of ardent supporters of the Liberal Government. "When we came into power Sir James Whitney would not listen to ward-heelers."

"My honorable friend (Premier Hepburn) is not strong enough to say the service shall continue. My honorable friend," the Conservative Leader alleged, "is not strong enough to shut the doors on these applicants."

"We have a Prime Minister who is seeking to set up something even worse than the spoils system in the United States." His regime and the preceding one, Mr. Henry held, had worked for an efficient Civil Service—and no politics.

"The order changeth—the man in favor with this Government seems to be the man who has been in political activity."

Dismissals without notice or by press notice, and without appeal, were, in Mr. Henry's opinion, an unheard-of and callous treatment of men and women. Veterans' dismissals also were touched on with a word.

"I think it is time," the former Prime Minister said, "that this Government not only study the situation, but reinstate them in their positions, right away. There was no mandate for the Government to dismiss these people" — when Governments were pressing for private re-employment.

The "Speech" drew from the Conservative Leader questions and suggestions. It was not so capacious as might have been expected; there was no forecast of tax reductions and there was an unofficial whisper of possible new taxes. The survey under the Minister of Education aroused the ex-Premier's curiosity.

Temperance Stays in Politics.

"The temperance question is perpetual," Mr. Henry said when he opened the subject. "I know my friend, the Prime Minister, tried to take it out of politics. It is always in politics—for the liquor question is largely a matter of administration and the responsibility rests finally with the Government."

The former Premier traced liquor control history, although not without Government objection, when he re-chronicled the "strong man" of 1927. At that time, he said, beer by the glass had been considered but shelved. A cardinal point of the 1927 system had been the permit—not individual, but as a record of purchases throughout the year.

Freer distribution of beer had been always considered. "We are responsible for the amendments of last year, but the present Government is equally responsible. I take no responsibility for the regulations passed by this Government."

Turning to what he termed present conditions, the Leader of the Opposition declared that there is ample accommodation for the travelling public. The Henry Administration, he said, had no thought of permitting "makeshift hotels" to receive beer and wine licenses.

"There was no thought in our minds that anything but standard hotels—operating for two years—would be licensed," Mr. Henry said.

"I throw it back into the teeth of the Government that I had anything to do with the present regulations. My responsibility ended with the passing of the act last year. Had we remained in power there would have been strict control."

"All these makeshift hotels have been set up," he continued, "merely for the farce of giving beverage-room permits to satisfy some of their friends."

Mr. Henry vigorously assailed the introduction of the single permit system, and termed this move a "grievous error."

Gates Opened Wide.

"The doing away with the old permit had opened the gates wide," the former Premier asserted. "There is no control under the single-permit system. In establishing the single permit the Government has departed from the cardinal principles of control. I suggest to the Government that the name of the act be changed, for there is no longer control."

"I understand," Mr. Henry went on, "that about 75 per cent. of sales are under single permits. A person can buy a number of cases on each, I understand."

"Only one case," Premier Hepburn put in.

"Well, I am not sure. I don't know," Mr. Henry replied.

"Then talk about something you know something about," the Premier suggested.

The Leader of the Opposition took some time to read extracts from The Toronto Globe dealing with the beverage-room situation. One excerpt from the issue of Aug. 24, 1934, was headed "Beverage Room Disgrace." Conditions, the newspaper declared, were not entirely desirable.

"I ask The Globe what was the matter with its principles when the Premier was out on the election tour in June advocating the return of beer by the glass," Mr. Henry declared. "I rather thought then that The Globe urged the stand taken by the Premier." He urged the Premier to study carefully The Globe editorials on this matter.

Regarding the closing hour of beverage rooms, Mr. Henry said nothing was in the regulations about Daylight Saving Time, and some rooms stayed open until 1 o'clock in the morning.

"Eleven o'clock now," the Premier declared.

"And I commend the Government for that, but you will have to amend the hours further than at present," Mr. Henry answered.

Concluding his address, the ex-Premier moved the following amendment to the motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne:

"That this House regrets that your advisers through the Liquor Control Board have failed to maintain the control of the distribution of liquor which has been such a marked feature during recent years."