

April 9

Croll Invites Libel Action By Dempster

Welfare Minister Offers to Repeat Charges Outside Legislature

\$7,000 IS IN DISPUTE

The charge that a former Government grant of \$7,000 to the Veterans' Salvage Corporation went into the "private accounts" of heads of the concern. Captain W. J. Dempster and C. Belk. was repeated in the Ontario Legislature yesterday by Hon. David A. Croll, Minister of Public Welfare.

At the same time the Minister declared he would make this same charge outside the Legislature, and invite Mr. Dempster "to slap a writ for libel at him." Mr. Dempster, in a newspaper interview recently, declared he would sue the Minister if he would make the charge outside the House. In the same interview Mr. Dempster denied the suggestion that the \$7,000 had gone into their private accounts.

Racial Issue.

The Minister of Welfare yesterday declared that John Willis, Salvage Corps Auditor, had reported to the Provincial Secretary that funds had been misused. Mr. Croll further stated that Mr. Willis's services had been dispensed with and that Mr. Dempster had placed his daughter and Mrs. Beck, his sister, in the employ of the corps, as auditors.

Mr. Dempster, in his newspaper statement, attempted to bring in a "racial issue," the Minister declared, when he (Dempster) stated a Government investigator by the name of Bozanki had been sent by Mr. Croll to investigate the corps' affairs. The name of the man was "Bosanquet," Mr. Croll said—a name of Normandy origin.

Dempster Replies.

Replying to Mr. Croll, Captain Dempster last night stated: "John Willis, of the firm of Willis & Willis, made his last audit of the books of the Veterans Salvage Corps up to Dec. 18, 1933. As the grant from the Government was \$1,000 per month from Dec. 1, 1933, no moneys had been received by the Veterans Salvage Corps from the Government until Dec. 27, or later. Department officials can attest this. As the grant was only on a month-to-month basis, the moneys had to be accounted for each month.

"The manager of the Imperial Bank of Canada will bear witness that all cheques received from the Government were deposited to the credit of the Veterans Salvage Corps," he said. "We have in our possession all the monthly reports of the firm of Willis

and Willis, and they are open for inspection to any member of the press, or any member of Parliament.

Investigator Welcomed.

"The other official of the Corps mentioned in connection with the corps severed his connection with the corps on March 19, 1934.

"As all cheques were countersigned by another director of the corps it is quite feasible to believe that it would be impossible for me, or any other director, to misappropriate any funds.

"The special Government Investigator named by Mr. Croll as Bosanquet was welcomed to the Salvage Corps Office," stated Captain Dempster, "but did not investigate or even ask to see the books, being more interested in our method of operation. accurate figures being already lodged with Mr. Croll. The statement that I endeavored to raise the race cry is entirely false, as many of my Jewish friends and well-wishers will testify that I am the last person in Toronto to wish to do so, having in mind my own personal service to Jewish residents in the City of Omsk, Siberia, in 1920, in preventing 'pogroms.'

"But, notwithstanding, the corps has evidence to prove that the statements made that we were 'boycotted' by the unscrupulous element of the Jewish race in St. Catharines, Windsor, Brantford and Toronto, are founded on fact," he maintained.

"Personally, I feel decidedly sorry for the Hon. D. A. Croll that in attempting to discredit the former Administration he should essay to besmirch my reputation as an officer on such flimsy and uncorroborated grounds.

"If Mr. Croll cares to send down a Government auditor to satisfy himself, our books are at his disposal," said Captain Dempster, "and I am perfectly sure that after auditing the books Mr. Croll will retract."