

Fifteen Cents "Bid" For George S. Henry

LETTERS written by an elderly woman in Petrolia became a warm issue for a few minutes in the Ontario Legislature yesterday, precipitating an exchange of bitter personalities between Government and Conservative front-benchers.

Withdrawal Demanded.

Climaxing the clash was an offer of Attorney-General Roebuck to "buy up" Hon. George S. Henry for 15 cents—a remark which led to a demand for a withdrawal and to a propitiatory ruling by the Speaker.

Mr. Henry, supplementing an offer which he made last week under challenge of Mr. Roebuck, produced a copy of a letter which he said was typical of many communications from citizens of Ontario to Government departments which were being allowed to go unanswered and unacknowledged. It was from an aged woman who sought information on overdue and unpaid New Toronto debentures. A later communication, asking an answer to the first letter, also went unanswered, the woman told Mr. Henry in an enclosing note.

The Attorney-General, after a visit to his office, returned with the information that his Deputy Minister, Mr. Cummings, assured him that neither letter had borne an address, and that an unavailing search of the Toronto Telephone and City Directories had been made for the writer.

"It is obvious," said Mr. Roebuck, "that the honorable member for East York, desiring to justify his complaint of last week, has gone 'fishing for to catch a whale.'

"This is a good example," Mr. Roebuck commented, "of how courtesy pays—for my honorable friend had

not the courtesy to give me notice of the letter which he produced here today.

"At this moment, I fancy," Mr. Roebuck went on, "I could buy up the honorable gentleman for 15 cents."

"Mr. Speaker," appealed Mr. Henry, "I submit that it is not parliamentary procedure to use such an expression."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Roebuck, "I'll raise the offer to 20 cents."

Again Mr. Henry appealed to Mr. Speaker, only to have the Prime Minister, Hon. Mitchell Hepburn, support his Attorney-General on the permissibility of the remark.

"I demand an unconditional withdrawal," persisted Mr. Henry.

"In that case I will cheerfully withdraw the 20 cents," offered Mr. Roebuck, amid a tumult of Liberal desk-thumping and laughter.

His Face Was Red.

Red in the face and obviously furious, Mr. Henry finally secured a ruling from Mr. Speaker that remarks should be confined to a minimum of facts.

Mr. Roebuck asserted that Mr. Henry's "bomb proved a dud."

The member for East York and former Premier, however, had the last word when he revealed that the envelopes of both letters from the aged woman were postmarked "Petrolia."

"Did it not occur to your staff," he asked Mr. Roebuck, "to examine the postmarks? I can hardly conceive of any person getting a letter postmarked 'Petrolia' and searching the Toronto City Directory for the writer's address.

"Furthermore," he added, as a parting shot, "I am informed that the second letter to your department was registered and signed for, so that it could not have been received without an opportunity being given your department to ascertain the address of the sender."

INCREASE ASKED ON ROAD WAGES

Charges Levelled at Henry Administration

Charges that a workman employed in Northern road work by the Mac-Namara Construction Company received \$15.40 for five and a half days' work and was charged \$13.40 for board, were made in the Legislature yesterday by Dr. A. D. Roberts.

Dr. Roberts, Liberal member for Sault Ste. Marie, made the charge after he praised Hon. Peter Heenan for insisting that Northern road contracts contain a clause requiring that laborers be paid at least 35 cents an hour. This rate, said Dr. Roberts, should, if possible, be raised to 40 or 45 cents an hour and maintenance work on the roads should be paid at the rate of 35 cents an hour.

A few moments after he laid the charge against the construction company, Dr. Roberts laid more serious charges against the former Government's highways administration.

"An official stole hundreds of dollars from the taxpayers of this Province," he charged. "He was investigated, but was he dismissed?"

Dr. Roberts charged that the official had made a private arrangement to pay off the obligation and had been kept in office. A few months after the advent of the Hepburn regime, the doctor alleged, the same official had again stolen—"and was, of course, immediately dismissed and prosecuted."

"If any man stole any money from the Department of Highways," Leopold Macaulay, former Minister of Highways, answered, "he didn't do it with my knowledge."

The former Minister demanded the man's name.

"The fellow's name was Macalister," Dr. Roberts said, "and he issued licenses in the Sault."

License issuers, Mr. Macaulay pointed out, were not in the Civil Service and were bonded.

"All I know," said the doctor, "was that he was responsible for Government money, was appointed by the Government, and he stole money and was retained in the service. I don't

know whether the Minister knew of this. I suggest if he had stayed a little more in his office and not gone to so many Sunday picnics he might have known."

Dr. Roberts proceeded to attack the former Henry Government Minister by reading in detail the "toll-gate" report references made to a liquor store lease in Mr. Macaulay's riding of South York.

The Sault member asked the Government for a ruling against net fishing in the vicinity of the Sault in the autumn months. He suggested that net fishing be prohibited from Corbell Point Light, Batchewana Bay, to the east end of "St. Joe's" Island, from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30.