

April 8

# TORY "HOPE" DEFINITE ON SCHOOL ISSUE

## Leadership Aspirant Makes Open Bid in Legislature

### MACAULAY CAUSTIC

"Holly" Acres last night told the Hepburn Government to tender their resignations to the Lieutenant-Governor, and go to the people and see if they would endorse their school bill.

"Every one of you should bow your heads in shame," he shouted at the Cabinet Ministers. "Go home and get on your knees and ask forgiveness."

First Tory to cast off arguments about statutes and legal rights, the doughty farm candidate for the Tory leadership tore into the Government at a 60-mile-an-hour pace.

"Sit down, sit down," he shouted at would-be interrupters. "No questions," he told Mr. Speaker.

The Liberals thought they had him in the early moments of his speech when they got him to state that, if he became Prime Minister the first bill he would repeal would be the new school bill.

The fiery Carleton County M.P.P. was back to tell them to resign.

"You will never be Prime Minister of this Province again if you let this bill go through," he shouted at Premier Hepburn.

From the Conservative members came only silence and a few sheepish grins.

#### Would Repeal Bill.

If Mr. Acres ever becomes Premier of Ontario, the first bill he'll repeal will be that now before the Legislature extending increased taxes to the separate schools.

Getting off to his usual vociferous start in his address, the burly Carleton member pledged himself to the repeal of the bill if ever the opportunity presented itself.

Boldly accepting the same challenge which had been carefully evaded by his Leader, Hon. George Henry, and by other Tory speakers, Mr. Acres gave a prompt and unequivocal answer when W. L. Houck, Liberal member for Niagara Falls, asked him what his attitude to the school-tax issue would be if he became Leader of the Opposition.

"I have no hesitation in answering that question," shot back Mr. Acres. "I'm glad the member for Niagara Falls has asked it. And here's my reply: If I have the good fortune to be elected Leader of the Conservative Party on May 28, it's a sure thing that before long I'll be Premier of this Province, and if that happens let me say regarding this school tax bill that it's the first act that I'll introduce legislation to repeal."

Delighted and triumphant roars of applause rose from the Liberal benches, attesting the jubilation of the Government at having got at least one aspirant for the Opposition leadership on record officially as pledged to the repeal of the School Tax Bill.

#### Legal Right Said Lacking.

The Ontario Legislature, holding no mandate from the people to extend further concession to the separate schools, was far exceeding its powers in amending the Assessment Act for that purpose. The House was solemnly warned by Leopold Macaulay, Conservative member for South York.

Not only did it lack the moral right

to take the step, he said, but it also lacked the legal right to repeal the concessions, once they were granted.

Measured debate had taken the place of outbursts and cross-fire of the preceding evening. The galleries were packed.

#### "Withdraw This Bill."

Before Premier Hepburn entered the House, Mr. Acres had charged that the legislation was implementing promises which the Premier had secretly made.

"The Honorable the Prime Minister made no promises whatever," broke in Morgan Baker.

"The honorable member doesn't know what he's talking about."

"I admire your oratory," Mr. Acres told the Premier when he came in. "You are a young man with a future before you. There isn't a thing wrong with your health—only your conscience. You'd be restored to health—withdraw this bill."

The Premier got off easy when Mr. Acres attacked the Cabinet because, "it's well for the people of the Province to know the history of this Cabinet so they won't be disappointed. There's no stability with them."

While the House roared with amusement, the member said he was "ashamed" of the Minister of Education; tore into Hon. Peter Heenan's labor record; and called Harry Nixon "an opportunist."

"The Prime Minister and the majority of his men are not old Liberals. They are not the type of Mowat, Blake, Laurier, Rowell or even the member for South Ontario (W. E. N. Sinclair, K.C.)."

From the Cabinet, Mr. Acres switched to the separate schools going at such a speed that the Liberals could not get in a protest and were laughing too hard to try.

"Why is our school to be considered a place of worship. I always considered our schools were a place of learning. Surely it's the clergymen's job to get them into the churches. Why do you want to have a separate school at all instead of being all united—although Mr. Acres said he would stand by the 1863 pact.

The charge that the Legislature had no right to offer further concessions to the Catholic schools climaxed a brilliant address by Mr. Macaulay in opposition to the bill.

#### Sees Party Politics.

"If the Prime Minister permitted this bill to go to the vote without the whips of his party controlling his members," declared Mr. Macaulay, "this House would defeat his bill overwhelmingly. It is being forced through by the iron rule of party politics.

"And if he were to appeal to the people on this whole question by plebiscite, the entire separate school structure would be swept away.

"Whether he knows it or not," warned the South York member, "the Prime Minister is dealing with a two-edged sword. He is dealing, and we are dealing here today, with an act that takes money from the pockets of public school supporters and puts it in the pockets of separate school supporters."

To the accompaniment of thunderous Conservative desk-thumping, Mr. Macaulay took the opportunity to pay a tribute to Opposition Leader Henry, whom he referred to as "the good old scout who sits here early and late, contributing his opinion and knowledge on so many issues, sometimes to his own political detriment, at an age when most men seek relaxation in retirement."

#### Says Letter "Scurrilous."

Mr. Macaulay read a letter of May 19, 1934, on the eve of the Provincial election, addressed by M. J. Quinn on the letterhead of the Catholic Taxpayers' Association to parish Chairmen, instructing them to urge Catholics to vote against Tory candidates, because Catholics had been treated "with contempt" and "with a flagrantly insulting attitude" by the Henry Government.

This letter Mr. Macaulay described as having been "got out by a partisan junket to further the interests of a political party," and he denied that any member of the Henry Government had ever treated any person or group with contempt.

"If Archbishop McNeil had been living," said Mr. Macaulay, "such a scurrilous letter would never have been written." He read from the letter the injunction: "It is your duty to see that all Catholics cast their votes—with those broad-minded Protestants who seek to see justice done."

The Conservative Party was standing today, he said, on the same ground upon which Sir Wilfrid Laurier stood to win the Dominion election in 1896, as a result of which Manitoba today has no separate schools.

The South York member replied to Attorney-General Roebuck's charge regarding the alleged disappearance of the Tilley file on the separate school question by asking "why would he find a file when there wasn't one?" The Prime Minister (Mr. Henry), he explained, had simply asked W. N. Tilley to confer with Senator Lynch-Staunton, who had been nominated by Martin Quinn, on the consideration of material in the event of the separate school issue being submitted to the Privy Council.

#### Pleads for Catholic Children.

A forthright plea for the Catholic children of Ontario was made by Aurelien Belanger, veteran French-Canadian M.P.P., and veteran fighter for the separate schools. The now grey-haired Liberal said the separate schools needed more revenue, were entitled to it under the rights of natural justice, and were an agency for good education.

After Mr. Macaulay's declaration, M. M. MacBride, Brantford Mayor and Brantford Independent Liberal, took over.

"Are we going to starve them out of existence, and if we are, are we prepared to pay the consequences in public controversy and dollars and cents?"

The whole separate school problem was summed up in that question, Mr. MacBride said.

"We hear a lot outside of the Legislature of what our duty is. There is some suggestion that this legislation should be postponed. What good could there be in postponing action?"

Nor could Mr. MacBride see any good in saying that the Catholics should not agitate for more revenues when they needed them to educate their children.

#### "Not Money, but Children."

"The money is not the question, but the children."

Aurelien Belanger used these words to put French Canada's plea for "the bill" before the Legislature last night. In the eyes of the law, he said, there was not equality of opportunity for the Province's children. The bill was a "courageous attempt" to bridge this gap of injustice.

If oratory could line up stubborn M.P.P.'s behind "the bill," the French-Canadian Ph.D. would have pushed it through by a unanimous vote last