

March 6

# Hepburn Reads Rebel From Liberal Party; Investigation Is Asked

**Dr. A. D. Roberts Will Not Resign Sault Seat as Result of Stormy Debate, He Says; Attempt at "Blackmail" Charged by Premier**

## UNPRECEDENTED SCENE

Dr. A. D. Roberts, member of the Legislature for Sault Ste. Marie since the Provincial general election of June, 1934, was read out of the Liberal Party by Premier Hepburn yesterday, under circumstances that know neither precedent nor parallel in the legislative history of this Province.

Accused by the Prime Minister of trying to "blackmail" the Algoma Steel Corporation into giving him a medical post on its payroll "in consideration for his support of the iron ore bill"—branded by the Premier as a man who had interfered continually in administrative and patronage matters in the North—and labelled as one who was "so unethical in his conduct" as to secure a contract for his own "personal gain" and then try to "farm it out"—Dr. Roberts has paid for his outburst on Thursday last against the head of the present Administration, and on Monday will be found sitting with the Opposition.

"I am going to purge the Liberal membership of this House from associating with one guilty of the charges I have levelled against him," cracked Mr. Hepburn, as he closed the party door definitely and determinedly against his once enthusiastic champion and supporter.

### Will Not Resign.

Dr. Roberts will not resign his seat, he told The Globe and Mail, last night.

"No, I'm not going to quit," he said, "and I may have more to say about this later."

Asked if he would now sit as an Independent Liberal, an Independent, or would seek affiliation with the Conservative Opposition, he replied: "I'm not in a position to answer that. I intend to seek advice."

The Conservatives, led by former Premier Henry, will move immediately, it was learned, to bring certain angles of the situation as already disclosed in the House, under scrutiny of some appropriate committee. This decision is said to have been reached at an informal caucus held by Mr. Henry and his followers immediately after the curtain fell on yesterday's stormy scene.

### Premier Emphatic.

Although Dr. Roberts's banishing had been generally expected, a few Liberal M.P.'s entertained hope up until noon yesterday that the Prime Minister might live up to his professed intention of Thursday night to ignore his subordinate's outburst. But the moment he arose to speak the House knew that the die had been cast. Backed by a resolution of support, voted unanimously in an informal noon caucus, the Prime Minister spared neither word nor gesture in making the "finis" he was writing to the Sault member's Liberal affiliations as emphatic as possible.

There was utter quiet in the crowded Chamber as the political axe fell, word by word, on Dr. Roberts's head. In a restrained voice, the later replied to the Prime Minister's accusations, denying he had at any time attacked the Algoma Steel Corporation as the Pre-

mier had charged against him, and contending that he never had an "actual contract" to farm out. Nor had he interfered with highways administration or patronage in his riding any more than any other member, in his constituency.

### Called Impersonal.

"And," he added, "I didn't criticize either the Prime Minister or Sir James Dunn. All I criticized in my speech of Thursday was the discourtesy they had shown to me."

It was quite true, said he, that he had told Sir James that he would like to be the physician to the Helen Mine. Could there be any objection to that? All mines, all lumber and road camps had their own doctors. He had approached the Algoma Steel head in the capacity of a private physician, not as a member of the Legislature. "If I had thought there was anything wrong—anything sinister about my actions, would I have asked for the position in front of so many witnesses?" he demanded.

### Start of Incident.

"It sometimes falls to the duty of a Leader to perform an unpleasant but necessary task," said Premier Hepburn. "I feel obligated to reprimand the honorable member for Sault Ste. Marie for an unwarranted and ungentlemanly attack on Sir James Dunn and myself. My secretary notified the honorable member of my intentions, so that he might have the opportunity of replying."

"It seems strange that I must publicly reprimand the member whom I defended last session against the attack of the honorable member for Parkdale," (Colonel W. H. Price), continued the Prime Minister. "It is an unpleasant task and I am sure the sympathy of the House goes out to a Leader in a case like this. I have been Leader of the Liberal Party for four years and during that time I have never known complete peace of mind. That is typical of Leaders of all political parties."

"There arises a time when one must take a definite course of action," continued the Premier. "It is obvious to all who listened to the honorable member for Sault Ste. Marie yesterday that there was something below the surface. It was more than a case of pique. The honorable member has a code of ethics which I can't admire. I have read the report of a speech which he made some weeks ago when he said: 'Don't call your opponent a gentleman. He may be one, but the people don't come to hear that.' Dr. Roberts, in the same speech, is reported to have said: 'What has the party done for me? To hell with the party.'"

After reading Dr. Roberts's telegram to him, the Premier said that the publicity given to the attack had caused an unfavorable reaction. In order to "square himself with his followers," he felt compelled to make a public statement of the facts.

### Liberals' Endorsation.

"And I might say the Liberal members of the House met today and passed a motion completely endorsing me," went on Mr. Hepburn. "In the main my relationship with them has been most pleasant."

"I met Sir James Dunn two years ago," continued the Government Leader. "His solicitor first came to me and suggested certain legislation to enable the Algoma Steel Corporation to reorganize. At that time we had desperate unemployment in the Sault, with hundreds of men seeking employment. We passed a bill and the result was that the steel mills reopened and

2,200 men were given employment.

"In order to extend a courtesy to the member for the Sault, I wired and asked him to attend a conference at Queen's Park to discuss matters in connection with the steel industry. I also wired the Federal member. They both came down and we went into the matter very carefully. I am not going into the merits of the iron ore bounty at this time. I said at the end of the conference that I would introduce a bill bonusing the iron ore industry two cents a unit. I suggested to Sir James Dunn and the two members that they go to Ottawa and inform the Department of Mines of our proposed action. I was not very hopeful, however, of any assistance coming from the Federal Government as it has been consistently refused in the past.

### Unaware of Announcement.

"The member for the Sault went to Ottawa with Sir James Dunn," continued Mr. Hepburn. "I didn't know Sir James was going to the Sault to make an announcement. He had asked me earlier if there might be a decision as he proposed to spend a million and a half dollars on a plant and had made the financial arrangements. You can see that an early decision was necessary. A few days later Sir James made an announcement regarding the plans of his own company. It was not Government policy that he was announcing and I cannot believe the honorable member for the Sault is as piqued over this as he would have us believe. He claims to have been unfairly dealt with in this matter. But I wish to make clear to the House that the iron ore bounty is not for the Algoma Steel Corporation alone; it is for all the Province.

"It is not the prerogative of any private member to make such an announcement, as it applies to the whole of Ontario. Sir James Dunn made an announcement concerning his own company's plans.

"I propose to tell the House, Mr. Speaker, of some of the difficulties the Government has encountered with the honorable member for Sault Ste. Marie with regard to patronage.

### Patronage Quarrel.

Premier Hepburn charged that Dr. Roberts had continually interfered in patronage matters in the North. "On one occasion," he said, "we had to move the district engineer's office of the Highway Department from the Sault to Blind River because of that interference. He interfered with the administration of the Provincial Air Service to the extent that they won't let him go near the airport now. But he has gone beyond that; he has trespassed all bounds. I will read a wire to explain why he holds such animosity against the Algoma Steel Company."

The Prime Minister then read to the House the following telegram, dated Montreal, March 5, and signed by Sir James Dunn:

"Have just read Globe and Mail account Dr. Roberts's speech yesterday. In my statement at Clergue dinner, February fifteenth, I did not presume to announce Government policy, but, as Chairman Algoma Steel, announced our company had provided \$1,500,000 in accordance with the agreement made with your Government for ore bounty. Dr. Roberts following day accused me of usurping his rights, maintaining announcement should have been made by him. He complained generally that he was ignored by your Government and by me. I explained that I had no such intention. On February seventeenth Dr. Roberts complained to company's General Manager Rahilly in my presence that he was forgotten as soon as his services were rendered, that he should have had company's medical work and that he expected medical work growing out of bounty agreement, about which Rahilly felt unable to give him the assurance asked. Since this meeting, Dr. Roberts has twice telephoned me saying that he wanted a meeting with you