

March 9

# House Will Probe Charges Against Insurgent Liberal

## Dr. Roberts Demands Investigation by Legislature Committee After Denying Allegations Made by His Former Leader

### GALLERIES CROWDED

Charges against Dr. A. Duncan Roberts, M.L.A. for Sault Ste. Marie, which he termed "base, despicable, deliberate and contemptible lies," will be probed by the House Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Dr. Roberts, now a back-bencher on the Opposition side of the Legislature after being read out of the party by Premier Hepburn on Friday, himself requested the investigation yesterday in an angry and indignant refutation of the allegations made against him by the Premier.

#### Probe Next Week.

Crowds filled the galleries at the opening of the day's session to witness the sharp clash between the Prime Minister and his former colleague. The expected flare-up came at the expected moment, and former Premier George S. Henry joined in the fight to accuse Mr. Hepburn of playing "adroit" politics in reading the member out of the party.

The Soo member was white with rage as Premier Hepburn concluded a resume of his charges and added a new allegation. "It is the tissue of lies which I would expect under the circumstances," Dr. Roberts retorted in a cold, angered voice.

The investigation of the incident will be launched next week. The committee is empowered to sit after prorogation, to call witnesses, and is permitted to report its findings at the next session of the Legislature. Premier Hepburn and Mr. Henry waived the usual two days' notice required for motions, to permit Dr. Roberts to ask for the inquiry. Sam Lawrence (C.C.F., Hamilton East) seconded Dr. Roberts's motion.

#### Tells of Timber Deal.

The Premier read from a newspaper interview given by Dr. Roberts in which he said all he had told Sir James Dunn was that he would like to be doctor for the Helen Mine, Michipicoten area, which would not be in operation for a year or more. Dr. Roberts was quoted as denying any contract with a pulpwood company and made the subject of another charge by the Premier.

Mr. Hepburn said he would tell the true story of the pulpwood camp medical contract. He said Dr. Roberts came to Toronto and told Hon. Peter Heenan, Minister of Lands and Forests, that, if certain timber limits near Massey, Ontario, were leased to a particular company without tender, he would defend the lease on the floor of the Legislature. The Minister refused to give the lease without tenders and they were called. The company sponsored by Dr. Roberts obtained the lease.

#### "I Have No Regrets."

The Premier read a telegram from Dr. Roberts to the Deputy Minister of Health saying "he was appalled" the department objected to him having the contract for medical work at the camp. It was true he was a long way away, but he had let the work by contract to a local doctor, he said. Premier Hepburn declared Dr. Roberts not only accepted the contract, but had shipped in drugs and supplies and made a subcontract with Dr. Brownlee of Webbwood for the medical and surgical work.

"The honorable member has embarrassed the Government and Sir James Dunn. It is beyond reason a man of his calibre should be importuned, insulted and harassed by a member. I have moved the member across the floor of the House and I have no regrets," said the Premier.

Dr. Roberts was quickly on his feet. He branded the whole story "downright, deliberate lies on somebody's part."

"I hope," he said with feeling,

"that the telephone records will show they are base, despicable and contemptible lies. At no time did I harass him. It is a tissue of lies which I would expect under the circumstances."

#### Because of Speech.

It was, declared former Premier Henry, largely an adroit political move on the part of Mr. Hepburn to move Dr. Roberts across the floor of the House. "I would like the people of this Province to appreciate," said he, "that it was because of a speech the honorable member made last Thursday that he has been read out of his party. The Prime Minister said on Friday that under the circumstances he felt he should read him out of the party. Did he mean the circumstances which were outlined or did he refer to the speech? Why did he not then move to have his member moved? After all, it may be an adroit Premier trying to draw a herring across the trail."

Mr. Hepburn interrupted him. "I agree," he declared, "that the situation has developed from the speech. As a result of the speech certain disclosures were made to me which I wouldn't have had under ordinary circumstances. I had had only one conversation with Sir James Dunn. He read The Globe and Mail while in Montreal and wired me all this information unsolicited, as did several of the company's officials. He told me he had considered these requests so unusual that he had not acceded to them, and had not told me of them.

#### Asks Henry's Attitude.

"The reason I had to act," continued Mr. Hepburn, "was that the attitude of the honorable member for the Soo toward the bill was affected by the company's attitude to him in respect to his importunings. I'm not so thin-skinned I can't take a little abuse from my own supporters."

Mr. Henry: "That doesn't alter the situation. He knew of this in the middle of February—"

"No," interrupted Mr. Hepburn. "These telegrams were received by me the day following the speech. I didn't know he had badgered Sir James Dunn." What, he asked, would have been Mr. Henry's attitude had he been in the same position? Mr. Henry did not answer.

## QUINTS' AFFAIRS ARE KEPT SECRET

### Hepburn Refuses to Divulge Information Regarding Contracts

Information concerning the administration of the fortune being amassed for the Dionne quintuplets must be kept strictly confidential, Premier Hepburn told the Legislature yesterday as he refused to table a reply to a question on the order paper placed by former Premier Henry.

The Opposition Leader had expressed determination to delay passage of a bill respecting the guardianship of the quints until he had full information concerning the administration of their affairs, but upon a promise from the Premier that the information would be given to him confidentially, he agreed to let the bill receive second reading and go into the committee stage.

In keeping the information secret, the Premier said he was protecting the advertising firms which had made contracts with the quint's guardians. It would not be fair, he felt, to release to the public details of the contracts.