

# 'DEFEATED RACE' CHARGE DENIED BY COL. DREW

All the bitterness of the East Hastings by-election of 1936 flared in the Ontario Legislature yesterday as Joseph A. Habel, Liberal, North Cochrane; Opposition Leader George A. Drew, Hon. Leopold Macaulay and Premier Hepburn became involved for half an hour in impassioned dispute over the "defeated race" label which Colonel Drew was charged by Mr. Habel with tagging on his French-Canadian race during that hectic early-winter ballot battle.

"We French are broadminded enough to forgive," said Mr. Habel, "but never will this be forgiven by the French people of this province. It was too crude and was said to win an election."

Instantly the fat was in the fire, and before the subsequent sizzling argument had died down under the wise and firm direction of Speaker James H. Clark Colonel Drew had repeated to the House his many-timed outside denial of the now-notorious alleged utterance; the Prime Minister, duty bound under the rules, had accepted the denial; Mr. Habel had twice been put in his place by the Speaker for calling the Opposition "the gang" that would make for a disunited Canada; and blunt allegations had been made from the Opposition that minors had been "importuned and compelled" by Mr. Hepburn to furnish affidavits supporting the presumed Drew-discrediting campaign in the election in question.

The awkward situation developed in the House when Mr. Habel began to attack the temporarily absent Opposition chieftain, and Mr. Macaulay took up cudgels in the latter's defense.

"Are you aware of the fact that my Leader has repeatedly denied having ever made such statements?" he asked Mr. Habel.

"I know he escaped from the House this afternoon," retorted Mr. Habel.

"Well, you didn't scare him out," clicked Mr. Macaulay. "He'll deal with you in time."

Mr. Hepburn recalled that according to the press reports of the East Hastings fight Colonel Drew had made his "famous statement" at Plainfield, and that he, the Premier, the following night, had spoken in the same place and hall. He had asked his audience if any one had heard the utterance credited to Colonel Drew, and eleven people had stood up and had said they had heard the Colonel refer to the French as a "defeated race," and three had produced affidavits to that effect.

"So," he added, "the Opposition leader may have denied saying it, but I still think he said it."

## Drew Hurries Back.

Mr. Macaulay at once protested. "And you, Mr. Premier, will have to take that back, too. You will have to accept my honorable leader's word, when he is here, that he didn't say it."

"And how old were the people who made those affidavits?" put in Dr. H. A. Welsh, the Conservative victor of the East Hastings scrap.

"Some of them were employees of the government," another Tory reminded the Premier.

Mr. Habel was about to pick up the thread of his argument, when Colonel Drew, flushed and almost running, entered the Chamber from the Opposition offices' door, and rose to a question of privilege.

"I had hoped," he said, "that this House would not be disgraced by repetition of a statement which I've emphatically denied on many occasions in the past and which I emphatically deny in this House now. I repeat that it was never made at any time, anywhere, by me, and the contemptible misrepresentation about what I said was just what the Premier wanted in that election."

Mr. Hepburn, with the Speaker's consent, repeated his recital of the Plainfield meeting incident. He had taken the trouble also, he said, to contact the Toronto Star reporter

who reported Colonel Drew, and the reporter had said that he was "sure Colonel Drew had made the statement."

"I am glad," Colonel Drew retorted, "that the Premier has seen fit to give me the opportunity of dealing with this matter. It has roused a great deal of ill feeling and prejudice, which—I repeat—was just what the Premier desired. He talks about having spoken to the reporter for the Toronto Star. That is significant in itself. There were six reporters at my meeting, and not one of the others reported that I had said anything derogatory to the French-Canadian race."

The following night, or two nights later, Colonel Drew added, the Premier had also spoken in Plainfield, and he had "produced three affidavits—"

"I didn't produce any affidavits," the Premier interrupted.

"The Premier produced three affidavits," Colonel Drew went on, "and those three affidavits were signed by boys, not of voting age—they were all minors, and they were children of men who were employed during the election by the Liberal riding association."

## "All There Is to It."

"The Premier importuned and compelled them to make the statements," flared Colonel Drew.

"I did nothing of the kind," the Premier shot back. "Why, your organizer prepared them," Colonel Drew shouted.

The Premier, visibly angered, rose to his feet—also demanding the right to speak on privilege. He read the then Toronto Globe press report of his Plainfield meeting. "It is by Douglas R. Oliver," he said, "and Mr. Oliver is in the gallery now." The report in question said that when the Premier had asked his meeting if any one had heard Colonel Drew make the "defeated race" utterance, eleven people had stood up, and a man had pushed forward, saying: "Mr. Premier," and had turned over three affidavits to him. "And while I am on my feet," the Premier said, "let me point out that the Leader of the Opposition is given to making statements he afterward denies. Up at Bayfield he accused me of going south on a holiday with all my expenses paid by the province—"

"Surely," said Colonel Drew, jumping to his feet, "we don't have to discuss that at this time. I'm prepared to discuss that matter and any others the Premier may care to name some other time, but why add that to the issue before us?"

"Well, then," said Mr. Hepburn, "let me repeat that as an honorable member of this House I am compelled to accept another honorable member's word. And I so accept the honorable the Opposition Leader's word in this situation. That's all there is to it."

## Will Renew Health Bill

Under an amendment to the Marriage Act, which is to be introduced before the Ontario Legislature shortly by David A. Croll (Lib., Windsor-Walkerville) persons contemplating marriage would be forced to secure from a medical practitioner certificates that they were free from social diseases.

Mr. Croll introduced virtually the same bill last year and withdrew it after the ministry and the House asked for an opportunity to study the proposed legislation. Mr. Croll has intimated that this year he would press for its adoption.