

# Col. Drew Declines Hepburn Challenge To Repeat Charge

'Quitter,' Liberals Shout, When Opposition Chief Refuses to Air Assertions Made on Radio That Premier and Habel Conspired to Revive Issue of Colonel's Alleged Slur on French Race

## CHALLENGED TO SAY IT IN LEGISLATURE

Challenged by Premier Hepburn before the Legislature yesterday to repeat on the floor of the House charges he broadcast the night previous over the radio, Colonel George A. Drew, Conservative Leader, declined amid cries of "Quitter" and "Say it now" from Liberal benches.

Showing no evidence whatever of the reputed illness with which rumors of his impending retirement have been connected, Premier Hepburn exhibited the fiery, fighting qualities which marked his rise to the Ontario premiership, and in tones of sarcasm told the Conservative Leader that Legislature members were now getting a lesson "in what a prima donna looks like when he is cornered."

The radio charge which Colonel Drew refused to repeat on the floor of the Legislature—where, under House rules, he could have been compelled to withdraw it—was that Premier Hepburn had conspired with J. A. Habel (Lib., Cochrane North) to revive the whole "defeated race" issue on the floor of the Chamber last Thursday.

The Premier's scornful comment before the House yesterday was that, although the House was then in session, Colonel Drew's charge had been "made in the most contemptible way over a network where I couldn't reply."

### Taunts Anger Drew.

Angered at the taunts hurled at him from Liberal benches, Colonel Drew declared he would not withdraw any statement "which I am not compelled to withdraw by the rules of the House," and added that he would speak again over the radio next Monday night.

Mr. Hepburn coupled also with his denial an attack on the Conservative Leader on the ground that he was not paying sufficient attention to what was going on in the House, and charged that during the last three days the House was sitting, "he was not present more than half-an hour."

The heated and at times scornful words which passed between the leaders came as a climax to the long-drawn and bitter issue between them on Colonel Drew's alleged

statement at a Plainfield election meeting, that the French in Canada were members of a "defeated race." It flared into the open last Thursday when it was drawn into the Throne Speech debate by J. A. Habel (Lib., North Cochrane), and died down on that occasion when Colonel Drew denied having made the statement and Premier Hepburn accepted the denial.

All the pent-up anger which the matter has aggravated broke yesterday when the Premier made a denial of Colonel Drew's radio charges and linked it with the earlier denial of Harry Johnson, Liberal organizer, who was accused by the Conservative Leader with having arranged the taking of three affidavits from minors. These

youths, it was claimed, swore that they had heard Colonel Drew, then the Conservative organizer, make the statement as alleged.

### Premier Rises on Privilege.

The storm, whose approach was heralded by rumblings of comment in the corridors, broke immediately after the calm of the prayers' period. Mr. Hepburn rose on a question of privilege, referred to the radio speech and announced his intention of reading it to the House.

"It is a correct report," snapped Colonel Drew.

The Premier continued to read. He pointed out that Liberal Organizer Johnson had denied having anything to do with the preparation of the affidavits.

"There were not six reporters at the meeting as stated by the Conservative Leader, but three," he continued. "I have checked with Kenneth McTaggart, who was the reporter for The Globe and Mail at that time and there were two men from the Toronto Daily Star and MacTaggart. He says the reason why the Star had a complete report was that the Star reporters

took the speaker verbatim, while his story had been dictated to him by the then Conservative Organizer before the meeting."

He then read a detailed report of Colonel Drew's speech, adding, "the whole statement was predicated upon the offensive remark." The Premier claimed that in the heat of campaigns he had made statements which he had regretted afterward, but held that he had never attempted to hide later under a blanket statement of denial. Neither had he ever attempted to capitalize upon racial issues.

### Denies Any Durance.

Adding to the Liberal Organizer's denial, he read a letter from one who was present when the affidavits were taken—one who said there was nothing in the way of a threat or promise made to the three boys. He read also a wire from E. O. Butler, Belleville, solicitor before whom the affidavits were made. Mr. Butler said four or five others were present at the time. He noted the three youths were of an age sufficient for them to realize "what they were doing. Certainly there

was no durance or influence brought to bear in my presence."

The Premier denied the charge he was responsible for spreading the report and read reports from The Globe and Mail, the Evening Telegram and the Toronto Daily Star of the meeting at Plainfield on the night following the Drew speech. Each reported that the three brought forward their affidavits and that eleven had stood up and vouched for the statement attributed to Colonel Drew.

"That's one medium through which the story was spread for which I was not responsible," said Mr. Hepburn. "That deals with anything I might have had to do with the spreading of the malicious falsehood which he charges."

In answer to the assertion that the two of the boys had been threatened that their fathers would lose their jobs if they did not sign the affidavits, he read a report from R. M. Smith, Deputy Minister of Highways, who reported a search of the department's files had failed to reveal the names mentioned.

"He has charged that I entered into a conspiracy with Mr. Habel by bringing this before the House," he continued. "I had no knowledge whatsoever what the member intended to say in his speech. That was a deliberate falsehood. The press clippings to which the Conservative Leader referred were sent in by my secretary after the matter was raised. I want to protest most emphatically against the attitude taken by the Conservative Leader. I accepted his word the other day and thought the matter was dropped. I would suggest he would pay more attention to what has been going on in this House."

Liberal cheering halted him for a moment. "During the last three days the House has been in session, he has not been present more than one-half an hour." Again applause rolled up from the government benches. "Yesterday, some bills were introduced, a number were given second reading and others were considered in the Committee of the Whole House, the most important stage, and he was not present. Not once was he here to represent his constituency or his party."

"I don't expect much accuracy from the Premier, but I will say I was present yesterday when the most important bills were being read," countered Colonel Drew. He had not left the House before 4:15, he said.

"Nevertheless, the Opposition Leader has not been here hardly at all and everybody here knows that," Mr. Hepburn replied.

### Won't Waste Time of House.

"In the first place," said Colonel Drew, "I was hardly in the House when I declared it was not our in-