

Drew and Lamport Clash In House on Coatts Case

Speaker James H. Clark was called on for a bewildering series of rulings in the Legislature last night when Allan Lamport (Lib., St. Davids) engaged half the members of the Opposition in a duel of words during the course of his budget address and ran into heavy skirmishing when he attempted to cross swords with Col. George Drew.

Within a space of two minutes, the Speaker was called to rule on (a) the right of a member to discuss a Government order which had already been withdrawn; (b) the right of members to discuss a question ruled sub judice by the Deputy Speaker some days ago; (c) the withdrawal of at least six charges direct and inferential; and (d) the niceties of parliamentary language concerning members' opinions of each other.

While the galleries and the House itself rocked with laughter and thumped desks as the verbal duelists scored their points alternately, the Leader of the Opposition and the member from St. Davids threw themselves into the fray with obvious enjoyment.

Personalities cropped up more and more frequently as the debate wore on, but both members skirted the borders of parliamentary procedure with commendable success until Mr. Lamport took Colonel Drew to task for his remarks on the Coatts case during a debate earlier in the session.

"The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the injustice done to Mr. Coatts and showed newspaper captions describing his false arrest," he said. "And all the time he had been acting as solicitor for that very

same man and taking thousands of dollars from him."

"I have never represented Mr. Coatts at any time, nor taken thousands of dollars or any money from him," Colonel Drew replied.

Mr. Lamport proceeded with his discussion of the Conservative Leader's argument during the debate on the Jurors Act amendments and the Speaker advised him that, since the measure had been withdrawn by the Government, further debate on it was improper.

"Well, I can talk about statements made by the Leader of the Opposition if I don't discuss the bill," Mr. Lamport replied.

"I might point out that the Deputy Speaker ruled reference to the Coatts case sub judice," Colonel Drew interjected.

"You don't think so," shot back Mr. Lamport. "Now you're squirming again."

He charged that the firm of Balfour, Drew & Taylor had acted for the Provident Insurance Company, of which Mr. Coatts was a director, and the Provincial Service Agency, controlled by Mr. Coatts.

"The member is displaying his customary ignorance," the Conservative Leader said, and the Speaker asked for a withdrawal as Government members protested.

"I withdraw the word customary," amended Colonel Drew, amid laughter.

"Whether a man's ignorance is customary or not, a reference such as that is hardly parliamentary," cautioned the Speaker.

"Very well," Colonel Drew replied, "I withdraw the expression and say that he has a complete lack of knowledge of the facts of the case to which he is referring."