

PRESS REPORTS 'DOUBLE-PLAY,' HEPBURN SAYS

**Public Given Wrong
Impression by Certain
Papers, House Is Told**

REVIEWS RECORD

Declaring that he felt it was his duty to call the attention of the House to "erroneous reports" which had been published in certain Ontario newspapers, Premier Hepburn rose before the orders of the day in the Ontario Legislature yesterday and referred to newspaper articles which had appeared in the Toronto Star and the Ottawa Journal.

The Premier said these newspaper reports had created an entirely wrong impression in the public mind. He read a report in the Ottawa Journal concerning the Ottawa conference on the Sirois Report, in which it was said the Ontario delegation, headed by the Premier, walked out of the conference.

"That, Mr. Speaker, was the impression spread abroad," said the Premier. "It was not correct. The delegation did not walk out on the conference."

At this point Mr. Hepburn read from Hansard his remarks to the conference concerning the Sirois Report and his attitude concerning it. He said Mayor Morrison of Hamilton had attempted to correct the impression that the Ontario delegation had walked out of the conference.

"Did Not Walk Out."

"We did not walk out," said the Premier. "Those who wrote that story sat in the gallery and saw us sitting there."

The Premier then referred to an item broadcast over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on his trip to New York last Sept. 23, in which it was announced he would speak on "Canada's War Effort and America's Lack of Preparation." This was incorrect, said Mr. Hepburn, and when he checked with the CBC he was told the report was obtained from a reliable news service.

"This reliable news service was the 'Toronto Red Star,' which I consider to be the most unreliable of news sources," declared Mr. Hepburn.

The Premier described the reports as a "double play from the Toronto Star to the Ottawa Journal." He also made mention of a report in the Star which quoted Hon. Angus Macdonald, Minister of Defense for Naval Affairs, as saying in a Welland by-election speech that remarks by Premier Hepburn, Opposition Leader Drew and Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen were being quoted by enemy propagandists.

"This was libellous," said the Premier. "Mr. Macdonald denied saying it, and the Star published a retraction, but this does not excuse its publication nor detract from the libel action that may follow."

Got 1,000 Letters.

The Premier revealed that he had received over 1,000 letters of protest concerning remarks attributed to him in connection with the United States Navy. At no time had he made any offensive remarks concerning the American Navy, he declared.

"The controlled press spread the untruth, but did not spread the denial I made," said Mr. Hepburn.

Mr. Hepburn then referred to a statement given in the House of Commons on Feb. 16 by Pensions and Health Minister Ian Mackenzie "who is responsible for the total lack of war preparedness or is a total goat of Mackenzie King."

The statement charged as false and alarmist a report which quoted Premier Hepburn as saying that "45,000 men have been discharged from the armed forces mostly because they developed colds and tuberculosis from lack of proper clothing."

Mr. Hepburn denied flatly having made the statement as quoted, and declared he had said that "In the early days of the war many had developed colds and tuberculosis through the lack of proper clothing."

He recalled that, in those early days, Ontario had loaned 8,000 blankets to the armed forces, and that he, personally, had seen the barracks where men were lying on newspapers.

As a result of that, the Province had offered to give hospitalization for mental and tubercular cases, without any question of pension involved, providing they were discharged as suffering from these ailments, within ninety days of the dates of enlistment.

"I didn't say that 45,000 were discharged because they had developed colds and tuberculosis," he repeated. "I said many," adding that while they had no accurate figures on the number of men discharged, "we can tell of the number we cared for."

"I am going to say that the Dominion Government has broken faith with us again, in spite of our generous offer to provide hospitalization. Now Ottawa has deliberately backed up on the agreement, and the 90-day agreement is not going to be lived up to."

Find Accommodation.

"Now we find that many young men who served for more than ninety days overseas are being returned and are being discharged suffering from tuberculosis and mental illness, and the Dominion Government is refusing to deal with them in the light of pensions. We have to find accommodation for them," he said.

He then read a tabled letter from Dr. B. T. McGhie, Deputy Minister of Health in Ontario, which said that, notwithstanding the Province's offer to treat tubercular and mental cases among Ontario soldiers, no adequate provision has been made by the Dominion Government for the care of these men upon their discharge.

"As a matter of fact," the Premier read from the letter, "in some instances where we have accepted soldiers in uniform into mental hospitals to diagnose and report on their mental condition, they have immediately been discharged while still in our care and left in our institutions, even though they may have originally been residents of another Province."

"For this reason we . . . also have had to refuse Ontario citizens

discharged from the army on return from overseas because of mental disease because of the fact that the Federal authorities had made no arrangements for paying the maintenance of these ex-soldiers in Ontario institutions."

The letter said that in the case of ex-soldiers discharged because of tuberculosis disease, "where the Federal Government does not award a pension or dependent's allowance," the Provincial Government places the wife on mother's allowance.