

Drew Withdraws Charge Dewan a Party 'Heeler'

Opposition Leader Says Conant Turned On Hepburn After Taking Premiership From Him

The Hepburn resignation from the Conant Cabinet was brought to the floor of the Legislature yesterday when Opposition Leader George Drew accused Mr. Conant of "turning on" Mr. Hepburn after the latter had raised him to the Premiership in the belief that he shared the same views as he did toward Ottawa.

There was a brief but torrid exchange of personalities in which Col. Drew described Agriculture Minister P. M. Dewan as "an abject and pitiful example of a real political heeler." At the request of the Speaker the Opposition Leader withdrew the word "heeler" and substituted for it the word "follower."

It was a sudden storm and it subsided as quickly as it had arisen. Col. Drew was almost through his address in the Throne Speech debate when he was sidetracked into the Hepburn-Conant developments by a query from Mr. Dewan, who wanted to know whether Col. Drew

was a Conservative or a Progressive Conservative.

Premier Conant was the original target for the Opposition Leader's shafts. Quoting from a speech made by the Premier before a Liberal meeting at the Ontario Club last Saturday night, Col. Drew dwelt on the Premier's attack on the Progressive Conservative Party.

"Last Saturday our new Premier was preaching for a call," remarked Col. Drew. "He made a tub-thumping, political speech in which he claimed the only salvation of the world was in blindly following the Liberal Party. Elsewhere lay perdition. And the Premier used a Biblical quotation. He asked: 'Can the Ethiopian change his spots?' This was a reference to the Progressive Conservative Party."

"Can the Ethiopian change his spots?" repeated Col. Drew, drawing attention in this manner to the fact that the proper quotation refers to a leopard.

"The Premier has gone through a form of marriage with Ottawa," continued Col. Drew. "Yes, a shotgun marriage," he added. "It was only a few weeks ago that the present Premier was talking about not being a party to any one making Ontario a suicide squad, a fall guy. As recently as that the Premier was ridiculing the Prime Minister of Canada. . . ."

"I am quite sure I never mention-

ed the Prime Minister of Canada in that way," interrupted Mr. Conant.

"Well, I am going to read what was said," continued Col. Drew. "This is what the Premier said: 'The Prime Minister announced in a blaze of glory . . .' Was that meant to be flattery?" demanded Col. Drew, looking up from the press report. "And it wasn't long before the Premier announced that he was not going to aid the Dominion in the matter of tracking down draft evaders."

"Can the Ethiopian change his spots," repeated Col. Drew once more. "It is a strange solicitation that the Premier of Ontario now shows for the Prime Minister of Canada. And it is a pitiful spectacle to see the man who is probably the only one who would have chosen the present Premier to succeed him being turned out as Treasurer on a resignation handed to him last October."

When Mr. Dewan interrupted Col. Drew's speech to ask whether he was a Conservative or a Progressive Conservative, Col. Drew retorted: "You will know where we stand when the test comes." A little later, referring to the Hepburn resignation, Col. Drew declared: "Here we have a Premier brought to power by a man who evidently believed he shared the same views as he did concerning another Government. And then the Premier turned on him."

"You followed him in that," declared Col. Drew, looking at Mr. Dewan.

"That's my business," retorted Mr. Dewan.

"I have as many friends as you have across the Province," Mr. Dewan asserted at another stage of his clash with the Opposition Leader, who charged him with "falling into line" on all occasions.

Co-operation Necessary.

Premier Conant, in continuing the Throne Speech debate, departed from his prepared notes to refer to Col. Drew's "personal references." He told the House that time should not be taken up with a "play by play" account of things that had happened.

"But I think it is in order for me to return the compliment by saying we are fortunate in having a superman who is always consistent, always encyclopaedic, knows all the answers, and can advise us on all subjects," remarked Premier Conant. Liberal members applauded when the Premier quoted from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village": "The more they gazed, the more their wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew."

The Premier said he was prepared to criticize the Dominion Government whenever the occasion warranted criticism, but he would not voice criticism in a "personal and vindictive way as has so often happened in the past." The co-operation of Ontario with the Dominion Government was essential

for all-out prosecution of the war, the Premier stressed.

"As far as this Government is concerned," he promised, "assistance will be rendered in the fullest measure. All-out support and co-operation of the Province of Ontario is absolutely essential if we are to have an all-out war effort in Canada."

Indicative of Ontario's essential place in the war effort, he recounted that Ontario had 35 per cent of the Dominion's population, 31 per cent of her needed resources, produced 50 per cent of Dominion revenue, and 60 per cent of Canada's war production was within Ontario's limits. Also, Ontario had provided 38 per cent of the enlisted men.

Here he reviewed, department by department, the Province's achievements since the outbreak of war, and declared: "Our farm problem is largely the result of the labor situation." He felt that the Dominion Government had "made a mistake" in the order that no farmer should leave the farm without a permit. It was like locking the stable door. But, he insisted: "I am perfectly correct to criticize the Dominion Government, but not in a personal and vindictive way, such as has been detrimental to both the Province and the Dominion."

It was the intention this summer of the Minister of Agriculture, he said, that at least 100,000 persons would help with farm crops. "The Dominion Government has got to do something very definite and very drastic to meet the situation," the Premier declared, and urged House members when they returned to their ridings to help organize farm service.

For his Government, Premier Conant emphatically denied responsibility for the beer famine in Ontario, though financial arrangements with Ottawa regarding liquor revenue "will ensure to the Province reasonably adequate revenues from liquor for the duration of the Dominion's liquor control regulations." These arrangements also, he said, "will enable the Provincial Treasurer to present a more favorable and a more accurate budget than would otherwise have been possible."

As to the "reduction in the quantity of available beer that results from the Dominion's order," Mr. Conant said the aspect was "disturbing" and he wished to "disabuse the minds of some who, apparently, are under the impression that the reduction in the quantity of beer and the resulting rationing is the responsibility of this Government or of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario.

"I want to say at this time, most emphatically and unequivocally, that such is not the case.

"The Liquor Control Board has done and is doing its very best to ration and distribute as fairly and as equitably as possible the reduced quantity of beer resulting from the order of the Dominion Government."