

Big Gamblers Work In Toronto Hotels, Drew Tells House

Attorney-General's Policy Blamed for Evil by Opposition Leader; Conant Puts Onus on City Police

Gambling racketeers were operating in Toronto hotel suites over the protests of the managements concerned, and the activities of the gambling squad appointed by the Government were being paralyzed by the policy of the Attorney-General, Opposition Leader George Drew charged in the Legislature yesterday. Winding up

the Opposition's share in the Budget debate, Col. Drew declared that professional gamblers had transferred their operations from suburban gambling palaces, and were now ensconced in hotel suites, with the hotels powerless to stop it.

The refusal of the Attorney-General to close up premises raided by the authorities, unless such premises were fitted up and used as a betting house or as a gaming house, and where it appeared that gaming was the main business in the premises, was blamed by Col. Drew for the present situation.

"I am informed, and the Premier and Attorney-General is in a position to tell the House, that Manny Feder and his gang are operating on a large scale in Toronto, and that complaints have come from the hotels themselves," said Col. Drew. "It is the policy of the Attorney-General that is paralyzing the gambling squad of the Provincial Police.

"These gamblers are not taking large items of equipment into the hotel suites. There are no roulette wheels. But the equipment they take in is just as effective for their purposes. This is one of the reasons why I wanted to go into the Public Accounts, and see why the hands of the officers have been tied. I wanted to see why the slot-machine racket hasn't been stopped. If we are going to pay for these squads, then we are entitled to know what they are doing.

In winding up the debate, Premier Conant declared there were two types of gambling premises, the out-and-out joint and the small shop.

Up to Toronto: Conant.

"In the work of the gambling squad there are these types," said the Premier. Addressing Col. Drew, he said: "You wouldn't want us to put these barber shops and tobacco stores out of business because some one was convicted of operating a handbook on the premises? I am

not going to be a party to persecuting the people of this Province."

"Do you deny that you have any communications in your files concerning Manny Feder operating in hotels?" interjected Col. Drew.

"I deny I know anything about Manny Feder," replied the Premier. "Whether he's operating, or when or where. But I'll say this: If Manny Feder is operating in Toronto, it is up to the police of Toronto. Toronto has its own police force, one of the finest, and is well capable of doing it if it wants to do so."

"The men who conduct gambling in an organized way are mostly men who have a criminal record and who have found that gambling is more profitable than such crimes as murder and theft," continued Col. Drew. "The time has come to end this pretense about the gambling racket having been stopped. While it is true that most of the gambling palaces have been closed, gambling hasn't been stopped.

"These gamblers are carrying on business flagrantly and in the open, and yet we have a statement from the Attorney-General that the special gambling squad of the Provincial Police is empowered to go anywhere in Ontario. As always happens when racketeers are closed down, their brains are exercised in another direction, and now we find them operating through the hotels.

More Active Than Ever.

"Where have you seen the names of any prominent gambling men being prosecuted?" asked Col. Drew. "The truth is that professional gambling is more active than it ever was, and under the direction of the very same men. There have been prosecutions. Places have been closed down. Most of the conspicuous gambling establishments have remained closed, probably because it would have been too noticeable if they had not, but the same racketeers are operating."

Col. Drew read a paragraph from a report made in February by Chief Constable Draper of Toronto to the Board of Police Commissioners. In it Chief Draper said applications had been forwarded from his department to the Attorney-General requesting that applications be made to the court for orders closing premises, in accordance with the act, and in every instance the Attorney-General's Department had replied as follows: "As a matter of policy, the Attorney-General has determined that he will not move the courts for an order closing premises under the Gaming and Betting Act unless the premises are fitted up and used as a betting house or as a gaming house and where it appears that this is the main business operated in the premises."

Demands Explanation.

"I believe we should be told by the Attorney-General why such a policy has been adopted," said Col. Drew. "I am particularly anxious to know why such an extraordinary policy has been adopted in view of the fact that I have been informed that the Attorney-General's Department has reports, and very detailed