

APRIL 9

Charges Crime 'Serious,' Drew Urges Cleanup

Cleanup of an "extremely serious" crime situation in Toronto and Ontario in the past few months which "suggests a close tie-up between gambling rings and receivers of stolen jewels and precious metals" was urged in the Legislature last night by Opposition Leader George Drew. He called on Premier Gordon Conant, as Attorney-General, to remove any limitations that might exist on his "vice squad" so that it could operate within municipalities to assist their police.

Premier Conant replied that since the Provincial Police had only 741 men and some veteran guards and

the City of Toronto had 1,300 efficient police, he thought interference by Provincials would be an insult to a capable Toronto force. But Provincial Police would co-operate if asked to do so.

Col. Drew declared he was not speaking of "persecuting" casual small gamblers, but he felt organized gambling must be stamped out and that thefts indicated there must be some "fence" with some other occupation to make an organization possible to handle such rich booty. Gambling on a racketeering scale must be stopped with the other vice rings that went with it, he said.

Unless the situation were ruthlessly stamped out, Col. Drew declared, conditions might approximate Chicago, with no regard for human life. Provincial police should not stop at municipal boundaries and give racketeers sanctuary there.

Col. Drew wanted to know why a charge was withdrawn against a man in Toronto said to have been the outlet for jewels while the man who stole them was now doing seven years in St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary, near Montreal. The man convicted had made a statement naming the outlet as in Toronto, he said.

Premier Conant said it would be an insult to Toronto police if the 10-or-12-man anti-gambling squad went in to do its work. But, he said, on Sept. 11, 1942, Staff Inspector Doyle of the Provincial anti-gambling squad conferred with Chief of Police Draper on reports of gambling in a large downtown hotel and on Nov. 16 Inspector Doyle conferred with Inspector Vernon of the Toronto police regarding the same hotel. After that "he was quite justified in leaving it to the Toronto police force," Premier Conant declared. To police Toronto with the Provincial force, he felt, was "unthinkable."

Beverage Room Tour Planned By Henry as Gordon's Guest

Liquor Board Chairman St. Clair Gordon and George S. Henry (Prog. Con., East York) will make a tour of city beverage rooms to see conditions for themselves, it was decided last night in the Legislature.

An invitation to visit the hotels was extended by Mr. Gordon to Mr. Henry following a debate on the beverage-room situation in the city. The invitation was promptly accepted by Mr. Henry, and a date will be set.

Mr. Henry referred to the series of articles on beverage rooms which appeared some months ago in *The Globe and Mail*, and questioned the Liquor Board chairman as to whether any action had been taken to clean up the conditions alleged to exist.

"Did my honorable friend read the articles?" asked Mr. Henry.

"Some of them," replied Mr. Gor-

don. "But let me point out that hundreds of persons who complain about certain things have no first hand knowledge of the matters they are complaining about. Why should we take the word of these persons when we have officials in the premises almost every day and night?"

"These articles were written by a man who was there and he drew a very vivid picture," said Mr. Henry.

"Will my honorable friend agree to take a night and go down with me and see the conditions in beverage rooms?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"All right, I will," came the reply from Mr. Henry. "If I recommend to you afterward that two or three authorities be cancelled, will you follow my recommendations?"

"I will give it every consideration," was the Liquor Board chairman's reply.