

THE HERALD

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1908
 SUBSCRIPTION—\$1.00 A YEAR.
 PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY
 AT 81 QUEEN STREET,
 CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND.
 JAMES MCISAAC,
 Editor & Proprietor.

Please don't delay your subscriptions for 1907. We need the money, we have earned it and shall esteem it a great favor if you remit now.

Fighting for a Principle.

In the House of Commons, Ottawa, last week, the greater part of the time was occupied in a strenuous and spirited debate between the Government and Opposition on a question of constitutional right. Early in the week, or during the previous week, Mr. Ames, member for one of the divisions of Montreal, a Conservative, was discussing the matter of the sale of timber leases in Ontario or some other western part of the Dominion. He had previously asked for certain papers bearing on the question, from the department of the Interior; but now he said the copies of the documents furnished were not satisfactory and he asked that the original documents be produced, in order, as he said, that omissions in the copies might be supplied. This request was resisted by Mr. Oliver, Minister of the Interior, in whose department the required papers were filed. Sir Wilfrid Laurier backed up the Minister of the Interior, and the Government supporters were asked to vote against the motion for the production

of the documents. The Government refused to supply the documents, and the Opposition argued that the Government was acting arbitrarily and unconstitutionally in refusing to supply the documents.

The Leader of the Opposition and his followers were quite alive to the rights of the peoples representatives in this matter and decidedly convinced of the arbitrary and unconstitutional attitude assumed by the Government; and the sequel proved that Sir Wilfrid Laurier had a rude awakening as to his untenable position. When the motion to go into supply was made on the day following the debate above referred to, Mr. Borden moved an amendment, to the effect that the peoples representatives in Parliament are entitled to all documents hearing on the Government's policy and the administration of Government departments, except in particular cases, arising from time to time, and intimating that no supply should be voted until this right was vindicated. Mr. Borden backed up his resolution with a powerful arraignment of the Government for their arbitrary and unconstitutional conduct in this matter. He pointed out in the plainest and most positive manner that the Government's course was untenable, according to all procedure and precedent. In scathing language he informed the Leader of the Government that no supply would be voted until the Government receded from their arbitrarily assumed position. Mr. Borden was followed by Mr. Foster who rubbed the salt into the wounds in the Government ranks, opened by his Leader. Sir Wilfrid scarcely expected this bombshell and he at once assumed an attitude directly opposite to his first position, and declared that he accepted the

late Friday night. Sir Wilfrid said he would make a statement on the question when the House would meet on Monday.

In this matter the Opposition are fighting for the peoples rights; they are doing battle for a constitutional principle and they have the hearty support and applause of all honest and independent men throughout the Dominion, in their struggle for constitutional liberty and against oppression. The attitude assumed by the Government in this particular, shows the spirit that creeps into a Government, when permitted to have their own way for a number of years. They then begin to arrogate to themselves rights and powers that belong to the peoples representatives in Parliament. They come to act as though they believed they ruled instead of being responsible to Parliament. The great constitutional principle that the cabinet is responsible to Parliament, and thus to the people, should never be lost sight of and the Opposition, in this instance, are engaged in a noble work in emphasizing this great constitutional principle. The Government papers, of course, raise the question of obstruction. That comes with a very bad grace from the organs of a party that gained power on a policy of

obstruction. Let the Opposition in Parliament bear in mind the conduct of the Liberal Opposition in 1896, when their whole policy was obstruction for obstruction sake. In the present case the Opposition are resisting the arbitrary and unconstitutional conduct of the Government and refusing to vote supply on a constitutional question of the most vital importance touching the rights and liberties of the people. While the Opposition continue to hold up Parliament on such questions as this they may be sure they are doing the work for which the people elected them, and they will have the approval of all honest and independent electors.

In the House of Commons a few days ago, Sir Wilfrid, in answer to Mr. A. A. Lafurgy said that \$1,388,085.57 had already been paid by the Dominion Government on account of the construction of the big bridge across the Hillsborough. This amount, he said, includes substructure and superstructure of the bridge, the approaches and completion of roadway and floor for highway purposes. But, more than that, there are still claims outstanding. Mr. M. J. Haney has a claim for \$393,821.04 on substructure and approaches, and Mr. Hugh McDonald a claim of \$16,081.04 on account of the superstructure. The Government is arbitrating the claim of Mr. Haney, Mr. Collingwood Schreiber being the sole arbitrator.

wheat. It only provides that if the tariff should be reduced in favour of other countries Canada would be included. But Mr. Monk showed that Mr. Pichon, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, introducing the treaty at home, declared that he had carefully guarded the French protection on grain and that the tariff which was now prohibitive against Canada would not be reduced. Mr. Foster and Mr. Ames made a careful analysis of the schedules, showing that on nearly all articles of Canadian export the French duty remained prohibitive, and that in the most of them which we do ship to France the duty was unchanged. Mr. Ames had communications from some forty importers of Montreal, three out of every four of whom reported that they could find little advantage in the treaty. The bill was given the first reading.

MORE CONCEALMENT.
 A new departure was made on Monday when the Government refused to bring down original applications for timber leases moved for by Mr. Ames. The Minister of the Interior held that copies were good enough and asked the House to vote down the motion. The whole party majority was cut down to thirty-five because a member of Liberals shirked the vote rather than commit themselves to the programme of concealment.

Up to this time the right of Parliament to examine all records of Government has not been questioned though the House always allows the Government to keep secret state documents of confidential character. That exception does not apply to such ordinary business as applications for timber leases, and Mr. Oliver did not claim that these papers were confidential. In fact he offered to bring down copies of them. It happened that Mr. Ames did not want copies. His experience of the past had shown him that the originals were better, and other members have learned the same thing. Take the following instances:

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Stanley Bros.	Stanley Bros.	Stanley Bros.

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POLICY OF CONCEALMENT

Carried to a New and Unheard of Length.—Members Not Allowed to See Original Government Records.—First Mr. Oliver Invites Members to Examine Official Papers.—Second He Advises Them to First—Obtain Order of House.—Third He Induces the House to Re-

A ROSS RIFLE SCANDAL

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Grows from first Estimate of \$300,000 to 509,000 Admitted and more to follow.—Will be \$600,000 in the end.—Including a \$20,000 residence for the Master.—Wall estimated at \$14,000 cost over \$50,000.—Two Faced Policy of Immigration.—Opposition Resolution against Bonuses.

Ottawa, Jan 18, 1908

In this week's discussion it was easily shown that the boast of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Brodeur and other Ministers that they had for the first time in Canadian history negotiated a treaty without Imperial assistance was absolutely false and vain. The record showed that Mr. Fielding and Mr. Brodeur went to France as British plenipotentiaries exactly as Sir Charles Tupper did in 1893 and as he went to Spain in 1884. In all three cases the Canadians alone carried on the negotiations with a foreign country, and in all three the British Ambassador was expected to sign the treaty. Sir Charles Tupper's official report of 1893 said "Negotiations have been carried on entirely by myself on the part of Canada." The instructions in 1884 respecting the Treaty with Spain stated that "the actual negotiations would probably be conducted by Sir Charles Tupper," but that the Ambassador would sign with him. So we have the Prime Minister and his colleagues sounding their trumpets all over the country as if they had done a new thing when they were simply following an example at least twenty three years old.

RATHER ONE SIDED.

One feature of the new French Treaty itself was explained by Mr. Foster in his review. A year ago Mr. Fielding introduced his intermediate tariff as a basis for reciprocity bargains. He made it lower than the general tariff and higher than the preferential, explaining that it would be a list which Canada could offer, count-

Member of Parliament and the near relatives of another member, who made a lot of money out of it, began by an application that was shown to be fictitious. Copies of the papers would not have revealed this secret. But the original with the postmarks and the office stamp showed that the department had received in Ottawa a letter which purported to have been mailed in Montana the day before. The hand writing of the real applicant, which a copy would not have shown, disclosed the fact that he was a well known operator in Government concessions and a close associate of Mr. Sifton. Thus the true inwardness of the Galway land deal was revealed.

Again take the case of the Arundel printing scheme where four times the proper price was paid for a Government printing job in London and the rake-off in the shape of three cheques for over £600 sterling each was distributed. The marks on the original cheques enabled the Public Accounts Committee to trace the transaction and follow up the payments.

A third case was that of the file transaction in the Marine Department where Mr. Strubbs bought for \$2,315 a quantity of mill files, sufficient for 30 years supply of the department and at once turned them over to the Government for \$4,786. The original cheques with the marks on them showed that the Montreal middleman cashed his paper at Ottawa under circumstances that threw a good deal of light on the transaction.

OLIVER'S DEPARTMENT UNDER SUSPICIONS.

These discoveries from original records may have led the Government, and especially Mr. Oliver, to refuse further inspection of the records. Certainly the course taken places the minister under grave suspicion. For in the first place in previous Sessions Mr. Oliver complained that Mr. Ames was asking for too many copies and invited him to go to the department, examine the files and thus find out what papers he needed. Mr. Ames was satisfied with this, but after a time Mr. Oliver changed his mind and wrote to Mr. Ames telling him that it would be better to move for the original papers and have them brought down. This Session Mr. Ames took the minister's advice and then the minister rose

in the House and requested Parliament to refuse papers which he had himself advised Mr. Ames to ask for. The majority of the members supported the minister, though many were ashamed to do it, and others left the Chamber to escape a share in a course which they felt to be a disgrace to Liberalism.

MUTILATION IS NOW POSSIBLE.

All the afternoon and the evening Opposition Members insisted upon the right of the people through their representatives to examine the public records. It was left to Mr. Oliver supported by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Brodeur and a few machine members to defend the programme of concealment. Even the Liberals could not claim that the Government made a good case. The refusal of original papers left the impression that there was a good deal to hide and that copies brought down are not always to be trusted. In fact it was shown that in Mr. Oliver's own department important paragraphs in reports had been suppressed in papers purporting to be copies of original reports.

Following up this method in the Public Accounts Committee, the departments have caused papers brought down there to be removed from the room after each meeting, so that members lose the opportunity heretofore enjoyed of going through documents and preparing for the examination of witnesses. Thus members of the committee must examine the papers while the witnesses are testifying if they do it at all. A strong protest was made by Mr. Bennett against this method and it may be effective.

MORE ROSS RIFLES FINANCED.

The Ross Rifle contract was before the Public Accounts Committee this week. Col. Warteles, on whose certificate the government has paid \$900,000 in progress estimates on uncompleted

Mr. Borden, Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Foster and other members of the Opposition argued against the course pursued by the Government and showed that it was arbitrary and unconstitutional, and directly contrary to the spirit of representative government. They pointed out that the peoples representatives in Parliament should have access to all documents bearing on public questions and having reference to the policy of the Government, other than documents of a private and confidential nature. That the papers in question were of a public character was sufficiently evident from the fact that copies of them had been tabled. These copies, it was held by the Opposition, were not correct and some facts were omitted from them that should be found in the originals. Strong arguments from many points of view were advanced by the Opposition, why the originals should be tabled. It was pointed out by Mr. Foster, for instance, that the very hand writing in the original documents would be a sufficient reason for requesting their production. All the arguments of the Opposition were of no avail; the Government arbitrarily voted down the motion for the original papers.

It is not at all unlikely that these originals contain statements, omitted from the copies, that are quite damaging to the Government. However that may be the request for the production of the documents was not only reasonable and constitutional, but altogether in accord with the principles of representative government. The refusal to produce them, strikes a blow at the very root of our representative institutions.

The cabinet is responsible to the people's representatives in Parliament, and the representatives are responsible to the people; consequently the people govern. By this ar-

bitrary refusal the Government arrogates to itself a power that has not been handed over for their arbitrary exercise.

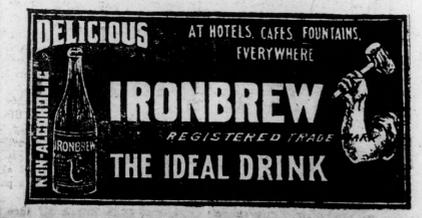
When the motion to go into supply was made by the Finance Minister on Friday, the question of these documents again came up. Mr. Ames had not received the documents, although the motion claiming the right of their production had been accepted by the Government. The Leader of the Opposition took up the matter again and enquired why this extraordinary manner of acting. The Government evidently felt the ignominy of their retreat and wanted to shield their humiliation in some way. Sir Wilfrid said that the acceptance of Mr. Borden's motion only meant that the Government might accord the privilege, under certain circumstances, of bringing down original documents; but would not concede the point as a right. Immediately the fat was in the fire again, and Mr. Borden, Mr. Foster and other Opposition members had the Government by the throat. As the peoples representatives they wanted no privileges or would accept none from the Government, in a matter of right. They demanded their rights and would be satisfied with nothing less, and until this right was granted no supply would be voted. They kept their word; for not a dollar of supply was voted when the House adjourned

the Opposition. This admission of the Prime Minister's false position was received with derisive laughter by the members of the Opposition. The discussion was followed up by several other members of the Opposition and when the House adjourned about midnight, no supply had been voted; the House had not got into supply. Although Sir Wilfrid accepted the amendment of Mr. Borden, the Minister of the Interior and some others did not appear to find the dose very palatable; but it was generally thought the matter was closed. Such was not the case however, as will be seen.

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