

OTTAWA LETTER.

True Inwardness of Charleson Investigation Revealed.

St. John's Representative in a Pitiable Plight.

The Minister of Railways and Canals Shown up in His True Colors.

Accused By Hon. Mr. Tarte, and Condemned Out of His Own Mouth. His Absence for Several Days from the House Not Surprising—An Appeal to the Electorate Two Years Hence.

OTTAWA, April 11.—The true inwardness of the Charleson investigation, by the public accounts committee, was revealed yesterday morning. The boast of Mr. Tarte, that he would grant an impartial hearing of the case, when it was brought up before the auditing committee of the house, was not verified by the action of which he was guilty yesterday, and which resulted in the closing out of every effort on the part of the opposition to throw light upon the dealings between W. G. Charleson, hardware merchant, of Ottawa, and his father, J. B. Charleson, superintendent of the Yukon telegraph construction. It is apparent that the public works department, and the government as a whole, have decided that no account will be given to the public of the dealings between the public works department and W. G. Charleson. In this case public would be to invite strong censure on the action of Mr. Tarte; and the minister of public works is not one who courts investigation where he can avoid it.

The result was that one of the most disgraceful scenes ever enacted in parliamentary life in Canada, was witnessed by those who attended the committee meeting. It can hardly be called a committee meeting in view of the action of those who were present in the interests of the government; a bear garden would be a far more fitting term to convey the idea of the proceedings which were carried on, and Chairman D. C. Fraser was powerless at times to prevent incidents and to prevent the recurrence of incidents which he was more than once called upon to condemn in forcible language. Several members were to be seen on their feet at once, all attempting to obtain answers from Mr. Charleson, the witness, was followed by an uproar on the part of the government supporters, which successfully blocked any prying into that gentleman's affairs. Mr. Charleson, instead of being encouraged in his evidence, was told point blank that he need not answer any questions, that he considered might injure himself or his political friends, and he took advantage of the protection of the chair and the majority of the committee, to the fullest extent.

It will be remembered, that at the last sitting of the committee, Mr. Tarte and Sir Louis Davies adopted a course which resulted in strong protests from the opposition members present. They specifically blocked the public works department with the disgraceful transactions which have taken place between Mr. Charleson, Sr., and Mr. Charleson, Jr., and one member of the committee, Mr. Gourley, leave compelled on that occasion to leave the meeting as a protest against the conduct of the minister of the crown. But that incident was mildness itself when compared with that which attended the committee's deliberations yesterday. Mr. Taylor started to ask Mr. Charleson about a certain sum of money, which he claimed, was paid to D'Arcy Scott as a contribution to the liberal campaign fund from Mr. Charleson. At the last meeting Mr. Taylor had proposed to Mr. Charleson a question as to whether he (Charleson) had contributed any money to the liberal campaign fund to one Percy Scott. The answer was an emphatic negative. But it seems that Mr. Taylor had made a mistake in the Christian name of Mr. Scott and when Mr. Charleson was called upon to answer for his dealings with D'Arcy Scott he declined to do so. But on the other hand he would not say that he had not paid D'Arcy Scott a sum of money, and left no doubt on the minds of those present, that his contribution to the liberal party's funds at the last election were handsome.

Now in connection with this question of the dealing between D'Arcy Scott and Mr. Charleson, the four ministers, Mr. Tarte, Sir Louis Davies, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Sifton, all demonstrated by their attitude that they were not to assist the committee in eliciting evidence in regard to the accounts. Mr. Tarte, in view of the necessity of the committee in any way reflect upon a minister of the crown. It must be remembered that it is not Mr. Charleson but the minister of public works and his colleagues who are on trial. There is no doubt that Mr. Charleson paid Mr. Scott a good round figure towards the grit election funds, and that in doing so he discharged an obligation which he felt he owed to those who had been of service to him in placing business

in his way. It was pointed out by Mr. Monk that the ministers of the crown, appointed as they were to guard the public treasury, acted in a most unbecoming manner when they obstructed the public accounts committee in a legitimate effort to protect the interests of the citizens of the country. But the ministers were obdurate, and they insisted upon advising Mr. Charleson, whenever that gentleman showed signs of weakening in his refusal to answer the questions submitted to him by Mr. Tarte and other conservative members of the committee.

To show the plot that has been placed on foot by the minister of public works and his colleagues in order to defeat the ends of justice in this investigation, it is only necessary to state that Mr. Charleson admitted that he has had conversations with a representative of the public accounts committee as to what questions he should answer and what questions he should refuse to answer. He also took the advice of his solicitor, Mr. Murphy, and was told that the public accounts committee had no authority to inquire into his private business. That is to say (and we will take Mr. Charleson's own explanation as to what he means by private business) the public accounts committee has no right to inquire of him what profits he derived from any sales he made to the government. Mr. Charleson contends that it is his business and his business alone what his profits are, and that if he obtained exorbitant rates from the public works department, that only two parties should know what those profits were, i. e., Mr. Charleson and Mr. Tarte. With the private advice of Mr. Tarte, the counsel Mr. Murphy, and the backing of four ministers of the crown, it is not surprising that Mr. Charleson has refused to answer in a single detail any important question that was put to him. In fact the advice and encouragement tendered him enabled him to prove conclusively that if any light is to be thrown on the Charleson transactions it will be under some future government.

Let us look at one transaction between W. G. Charleson and his father in the latter's capacity as superintendent of the Yukon Telegraph Construction Company. In 1888 the company bought a quantity of climbing spurs, and in 1889 he sold 48 pairs of them at \$4.50 per pair, and 24 pairs at \$4 per pair to the department of public works through his father, J. B. Charleson. Mr. Charleson, Sr., refused to say how much he paid for the spurs, and he refused to answer any questions about them when he purchased them from Ahearn and Soper. Mr. Taylor produced a pair of these climbing spurs which he bought and paid for at the rate of \$4.15 per pair, and he also produced quotations from several blacksmiths and harness makers to show that these prices were not below a figure which would guarantee to the maker a sufficient profit to remunerate him amply for his stock and labor. Mr. Taylor, in order to make his case clear, laid out the facts on oath and placed them in evidence before the committee. Mr. Ahearn also went on the stand and told the story of the transactions between himself and Mr. Charleson when the climbing spurs were purchased from the firm of Ahearn and Soper. Mr. Ahearn stated that the spurs sold Mr. Charleson cost about \$2.40 per pair, and that they were sold to Mr. Charleson for \$3.70 a pair, so that Mr. Charleson, according to this, would only make 80 cents per pair on the deal. That does not alter the fact that Mr. Taylor was able to purchase a climbing spur equal in quality to that used by the Bell Telephone Company for \$1.15 a pair, and it looks as if Ahearn & Soper also derived considerable advantage from the transaction between the Charlesons, father and son.

Additional light is thrown on this part of the business arrangements of Ahearn & Soper, Mr. Charleson and the public works department by the visit paid by D'Arcy Scott to Mr. Charleson about election time. According to Mr. Taylor, Mr. Scott approached Mr. Charleson, and asked for a contribution to the grit election funds. Mr. Charleson declined to pay the amount and referred the applicant to George Brophy, who is said to have a silent interest in the firm of Ahearn & Soper, so that the contract for the supply of the spurs seems to have been a family affair, and the profits were pretty generally distributed.

And so, if the committee is to be allowed any latitude in its investigations, it is probable that many like situations will be revealed in connection with the \$12,000 worth of goods that Mr. Charleson supplied in connection with the work of constructing the Yukon lines, and which is referred to in the auditor general's report of 1890. In addition to this amount there is a further sum of \$6,000 which was expended by the public works department with Mr. Charleson since June 30, making in all some \$18,000 which he received from the government in orders for hardware. When it is considered that by far the largest part of these goods were purchased without tender and that Mr. Charleson's own father certified to many of the accounts, it will be seen that there is ample room for close scrutiny of the bills submitted for payment to Mr. Tarte's department. But Mr. Tarte says that the accounts can only be investigated in an indefinite way; and Sir Louis Davies, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Sifton are of the same opinion as their leader, the minister of public works. Then Mr. Flint of Yarmouth, the prohibitionist who has failed to obtain a seat in parliament, but he was also branded as one of the most useful tools that the government has at its disposal, steps in and says that whatever the ministers say is law. And to improve the situation, Mr. German, the representative of Welland, who while a candidate in the liberal interests a few years ago, was disqualified for bribery and corruption, reiterates the statements of his fellow conspirators, that justice in this instance demands that all evidence should be concealed.

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And last but not least, comes Mr. Haggart, the gentleman who was elected in West Huron four years ago by Mr. Preston and his machine. Mr. Holmes is, of course, in line with his owners and is prepared to block the enquiry at every stage. It will be interesting for the public to note the gentleman who has united in this attempt to defeat the ends of justice, and it will perhaps enlighten some of those who have an idea that in the Laurier government there is a trace of self-respect and a desire to rule this country as it should be ruled. With such an aggregation against them, it is hardly possible that the charges will ever be probed to the bottom, but the opposition will have the satisfaction of knowing that at least they have done their best to serve the interests of their constituents and the country at large.

OTTAWA, April 12.—Reference has already been made to the trouble between the minister of railways and canals and the minister of public works, but it was hardly expected that the first blow would be struck at an early hour of the morning. Yesterday morning, however, Mr. Tarte and Mr. Blair met and the result was a scene that has been almost the sole topic of conversation in parliamentary circles during the past 24 hours. It is hard to predict the ultimate outcome of the breach between the two ministers; but there was ample evidence to show that they are at sword's point, and that it is to be a fight to the finish. Mr. Blair, who was present as the representative of the government, saw himself daily contradicted and discredited before what was probably the most numerous assembly attending the present session. Mr. Blair stated in connection with the Crow's Nest Pass Railway Company's bill, which was before the committee for consideration, that the committee of the cabinet to which the matter had been referred had accepted the terms offered by the Crow's Nest Pass Company, and he advised accordingly, when the bill was brought up as it was presented to them. But it seems that a meeting of the cabinet committee had been held the previous evening and Mr. Blair, who had been explaining his railway estimates in the afternoon, was in a state of nervous collapse and did not return to the buildings after dinner. But Mr. Tarte did and he was in attendance when the representatives of the Crow's Nest Pass Company refused to agree to the terms proposed by the government. Accordingly, when the bill was brought before the railway committee yesterday morning, he was in a much better position to act than Mr. Blair, who was in total ignorance as to what had transpired a few hours previous.

Acting in his usual determined manner, Mr. Tarte decided that the C. P. R. should be protected at all costs, and the only way to do that is to turn down Mr. Blair in such a manner that the minister of railways and canals would remember it for the time to come. Accordingly, Mr. Tarte entered the committee room with the solid French vote behind him, and with the support of a large part of the English speaking liberals. With such backing it was no trouble for him to carry his point, and he insisted that before any charter was given to the Crow's Nest Company the rights of Canadian industries should be considered, and that a maximum price to be charged for coal in Canada should be fixed by parliament. Mr. Blair insisted upon the bill going through as originally presented. He told the committee that it could be amended in the house and that unless they were inclined to view it favorably it would probably be crowded out. Then Mr. Tarte told the meeting that the bill had never been agreed to by the government, and that he intended to oppose it to the bitter end; and he asked the consideration of it to be deferred until the Crow's Nest Company were prepared to agree to sell coal as cheaply in Canada as they will in the United States. And the meeting responded to the appeal of the minister of public works by deciding that Mr. Blair was in ignorance as to the best interests of his own department.

Perhaps the decision of the committee was induced by Mr. Blair's action before the house on the previous day. Not only was the minister of railways caught in the act of telling a deliberate falsehood to parliament, but he was also branded as the chief conspirator in one of the worst scandals ever perpetrated in this country in connection with the Intercolonial railway. Already the country is ringing with denunciations of the agreement by which Mr. Blair was enabled to spend four million dollars of the people's money without so much as consulting parliament. In 1896, when the conservative government was defeated, Sir Wilfrid and his colleagues came into power, found that a number of contracts had been made in the

other matters. But it is highly improbable that Mr. Borden or his followers would stoop to such measures, for after all it is Mr. Blair and the government who will suffer from such crookedness, and beyond lowering themselves by having to transact business with such a person they will not be inconvenienced.

The deal which Mr. Blair closed with Mr. Clergue and about which he practised such gross deception probably rivals any scandal that has ever been brought to light in this country. Years ago, when the Mackenzie government were in power, they had a weakness for wasting public moneys on steel rails, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his associates seem to have inherited that failing. The contract calls for the delivery of 25,000 tons per year for 5 years at a price to be fixed when the rails are ordered in each year by the government. The governing quotation will be that of the open market in England, but as was pointed out by Mr. Oser, the railway department may be compelled to buy when rails are high, and in that case this country will be involved in an extra expenditure amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars. This year's contract will result in an overcharge of from \$200,000 to \$350,000, and there is no reason to believe that such results will not meet with in the future. Mr. Blair has made no provision by which he can definitely fix the prices to be charged by the Clergue company, and he will always be in a delightful state of uncertainty as to what is a proper time to dispose of the contract. He has decidedly had feature of the situation is that if Mr. Blair's principle is sanctioned, any government, without the consent of parliament, can take upon itself the expenditure of millions for what may turn out to be a decidedly bad bargain. It is against all the best principles of responsible government that such a course should be pursued in this or any other self governing country. Carried to its logical conclusion it would mean that parliament has no power in Canada and that a few unscrupulous ministers can make themselves utterly irresponsible to the people of the country, and can spend unlimited amounts without so much as a word being raised in protest.

But it is impossible that such a condition of affairs should obtain here, and it is almost certain that the people of Canada will condemn such arrangements in a manner which will leave no doubt in the minds of the government that such a policy cannot be carried on with impunity. But it is consoling to know that under such circumstances Mr. Blair has an opponent in one of his own cabinet ministers. If Mr. Tarte wishes to turn down the minister of railways and canals there may be a fight and a bitter one. In that case there is only one man that will have to take a back seat, and that man is not Mr. Tarte, a result of his deceit and his turn-down by the minister of public works. Mr. Blair is today a knight without a lance. He is facing the cleverest duelist in the Laurier administration, and he cannot hope to parry the thrusts which Mr. Tarte is driving home with vigor which can only result in one way. Again, Mr. Blair is disarmed by having to face an indignant country, and this with a knowledge that he has been guilty of the unpardonable offence in endeavoring to mislead electors.

Mr. Blair has now been absent from his place in parliament on two evenings, when his estimates were to be considered, and he was also a missing quantity yesterday. It is safe to predict that Mr. Blair's estimates will consume more time in their passing than those of any other minister. Determined as the opposition were a few days ago to unmask the absurdities and extravagances which exist in connection with the management of his department, they are infinitely more increased today, with the necessity of unfolding to the public gaze the disgraceful methods employed by Mr. Blair in the carrying out of execution of his schemes. Not half the story has yet been told, and the days to come will reveal situations which would hardly be expected to have existence in this country. The lights are on, and the people of Canada will gaze upon a spectacle such as seldom disgraced this fair dominion.

OTTAWA, April 15.—It was generally thought that the vacancy in the senate resulting from the death of Senator Almon would have been filled at the council meeting on Saturday, but as yet no successor has been announced, and it is understood that an appointment will be made until after the Nova Scotia local elections. Hon. Geo. Murray has been here for some days, on provincial business, and he is to appeal to the people in the very near future. To appoint a senator, therefore, would be to cause much strife, as the number of applicants desirous of filling the unoccupied chair is to be counted, not by units, but in groups. Since it became a matter of doubt as to whether a Halifax man should be selected for the position, and the suggestion was thrown out that one of the agricultural counties should be honored by a representative in the senate, the government has been over-run by claimants, who consider that they are justly entitled by virtue of their sacrifices in behalf of the liberal party, to the recognition at the hands of the powers that be. Whether it is to cost \$10,000 is a matter of doubt, but it is safe to say the bids will not be accepted until Mr. Murray has settled the local election, and thus rendered harmless any unpleasant consequences that may follow.

Speaking of the Nova Scotia local elections reminds one that it will probably not be a matter of more than two years ere the dominion government again appeals to the people. The completion of the census means that a redistribution of seats will have to take place, and it is generally expected that the Northwest provinces and territories will be given at least fifteen new members. Some of the constituencies in Manitoba and the other western provinces are abnormally large and many of these will have to be divided into two or more ridings. If this is done it is hardly possible that the people of the Northwest will wait for the expiration of the statutory



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period before demanding that they should be recognized in parliament, through their new representatives. The new element creeping into the house from the west is rapidly asserting itself. Made up as it is of men of very decided views, this undisciplined force, if taken as a standard of western ideas, shows conclusively that the government will have to meet the views of western electors when the time arrives. The best authorities on such matters here, assert that two years will find Sir Wilfrid and his colleagues seeking re-election, and there are already signs that the government is preparing for the contest.

The census will cost about \$1,000,000. In 1881 it took a little over \$500,000 to pay the bill. But the grists are taking extraordinary precautions on this occasion in order that no persons of French descent will be omitted from the list, and hence the great increase. The house talked census for a few minutes during the evening session, and shows that the counting of the people of Canada is to be taken advantage of by the Brit machine to the greatest possible extent. It will be remembered that Thomas Cote, in his "Confidential" circular, announced that the information given to the census enumerators would go abroad, and that the only person having access to the official slips would be census officials themselves. It seems, however, that up in Ontario arrangements are being made whereby liberal organizers will be furnished with full census returns and will have the advantage of knowing the politics of every elector in their industrial districts. Thus they will be furnished with a fund of information which for political purposes is invaluable.

In regard to the confidential circular sent out by Mr. Tarte, it is now learned that it was not an anonymous letter, but persons of French descent who might be expected to have considerable influence in their private capacity with fellow French residents. Another feature of this communication, which would seem to indicate that it was not as straightforward as it might be, was the fact that Mr. Cote, when approached by newspaper representatives and asked if such a letter had been sent out, positively denied all knowledge of it. Mr. Cote also furnished a conservative member of parliament with a false translation of the letter and did his best to conceal its true character. Now the grists are claiming that another circular, in language substantially the same as that sent to French speaking Canadians had been distributed among the residents of English speaking communities. But although the census bureau has been asked to furnish copies of this letter, they are exerting either an undue amount of discretion in the matter, or are getting copies printed. As a matter of fact, no similar circular, except the translation distributed by Mr. Cote, is known in this part of the country. And the uncomfortable position in which the grists have been placed owing to the bringing to light of the Tarte letter, shows how seriously they are taking the exposure.

The Charleson investigation is running along rather quietly just now. True, at the last meeting, Mr. Sifton and Mr. Tarte attempted to block the enquiry to the best of their ability, but as the witness, Mr. Richardson, a civil engineer who was engaged in connection with the Yukon Telegraphic construction, did not seem to have any recollection of the transactions, there was little to suppress. It came out, however, that some thousands of telegraph poles which had never been used on the line, had been bought and paid for. After the poles had been strung along the line, it was found that it was desirable to take another route, and rather than move them a second time they were abandoned and the wires were strung on trees. The money expended for the poles has thus been wasted and it goes to show how little care was taken in this work to safeguard the public interest.

The Cook charges, which came up this week, are still full of interest to the government. Despite the fact that Sir Charles Cartwright's hands are alleged to have been washed clean in this connection and that he has been dismissed by government organs, the minister of trade and commerce seems to be considerably unnerved by the prospects of further investigation by the senate over selling business. During the past few days Mr. Cameron, son of the late Hon. Mr. Cameron, by whom Cook was offered the seat for \$10,000, has been in town, and it is said that the government is (Continued on Page Seven.)

ARCHBISHOP

Bishop Bond is bishop of Metropolitan

(Montreal) The resignation owing to advanced health, made it of bishops of the of Canada to elect high office, and a bishop of the pr the chapter house Cathedral for the There was, of course, as this meeting of nually convened of the work of the missions and matters est to the church behind closed. tion of a successor Lewis overshadowed interest.

Great precaution the privacy of the be disturbed, and con Norton imposition upon all w tion in regard to which had brought gether. Yesterday afternoon a col thought would pr being in attendance the venerable bishop out and take his of the house of bishop There were present the chair), Dunn, Kingdon, Thornloe, chairman and Ha meeting that the e would fall upon high honor, seeing the sake of peace a church, had made the best of the opportunity. There may be other names suggest house came to the question the choice Bond, who simply Bovey his thanks to Bishop Bond, as Lord Archbishop Metropolitan of Canada is mentioned, province of Canada means a jurisdiction extending from Ontario to the Atlantic, of course, the Land and British have separate jur preme authority in Archbishop Michr, mate of all Canada, position his grace meetings of the ge meant to strengthen interest, and which into working order.

The compliment of the house of bis and the city of Mon of His Grace Archb considerably enlarge astical province. All matters requi that is, all matters affecting the gener church—will be ref will be the final co will be enlarged, though, of course, on the ecclesiastical ter he has the oversight questions affecting eral procedure would be extended by of a diocese and church in its wider the ecclesiastical pr His Grace Archbish recovering. It was by courtesy of arch politia while he h it will not be offic The new metrop the congratulations men in the provin acity in which his the church—whether rector or bishop, b best that was in h it will be felt a stow upon one who, temporal and spirit the church, was the

Tonight in the sy clerical circles, a c senting the severa in the city, will me of tending hearty His Grace Archbish Arrangements going to be comp completed, but am fittingly speak for the Very Rev. Dea tween whom and it fisted for many ye of friendship and m

THE NEW AR The Most Gov. Bond, Archbishop of Metropolitan of Cana Cornish family, at Truro, England, on 1841 he was ordaine by Bishop Mon was called to St. C as assistant to Dr. C succeeded as rector, of Montreal in 1873 1878, he was conse Montreal. He mar Eliza Longley, of St. died on June 20, 1878

A NEW STAGE IN

(New York) The transference of erment of the South from Petersburg to Zoutpansburg by the Gen. Schalk-Burger, staging of another last stage of the S. Having made up t list to the end, wh the Boer leaders hav tion at which they they called to camp, wher Gen. Botha reported to have met latter returned south was last heard of Vazamel Berg, in the of the Orange River fish force had been