

THE HERALD

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It will be remembered that the expenditure in connection with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, was one of the questions engaging public attention at the time of the Dominion general elections in 1904, as well as before and since that time. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr Fielding and their colleagues asserted, reasserted, over and over again, that the Government end of the road would not cost the people of Canada more than \$13,000,000. This statement on its very face seemed ridiculous and bore its own refutation. Mr. Blair who was then Minister of Railways estimated that the Government part of the undertaking would cost over ten times thirteen millions, and no doubt Sir Wilfrid and Mr Fielding were convinced that Mr Blair's estimate could not be very wide of the mark. But these eminent statesmen had so far succeeded in the game of politics by deceiving the people, and such profitable tactics must be continued; consequently they reiterated and shouted from the housetops the story of the thirteen millions. No one who gave the matter any serious thought could for a moment doubt that this statement was false and misleading in the highest degree, but it made capital for the Government and therefore accomplished the end for which the statement was made. But now the truth is beginning to come out, and the evidence of the Government's falsehood and deception is coming before the public little by little. The work has only just begun, but the published expenditure up to 31st January 1907 was \$6,249,958.37 and the balance of the fiscal year ended March 31st last would take about another million. This is Mr. Fielding's own admission. The estimate for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1908 is \$28,000,000. That makes upwards of \$35,000,000 expended and voted, and the work has scarcely begun. It is quite likely the cost to the people of Canada will go beyond Mr Blair's estimate of \$13,000,000. This is how the Laurier Government practices economy of the people's money; this is how they make their actions square with their promises. But this is no exceptional case; it is quite in line with their entire conduct of public business since they took over the Government of Canada.

The Laurier Government are guilty not only of the most scandalous waste and extravagance in the expenditure of the people's money; not only of squandering hundreds of thousands of dollars by way of bribes and rakes off to party favorites, middlemen and hoodlums; but they are equally guilty of openly and brazenly obstructing every attempt to investigate this class of expenditure. This manner of obstruction; this determination to prevent the discovery of the truth was much in evidence during the recent session of Parliament. It happened time and again in the Public accounts committee. When invoices of goods supplied to the Government were under consideration, and it was quite plain the Government had paid two or three times as much for the articles supplied, as these same goods had been purchased for by the middlemen; opposition members of the committee tried to find out the prices paid by the agent or middleman. Whenever any such investigation was attempted, Mr. Fielding, or some other minister, or some fighting government member would immediately take the floor and forbid the witness giving any information on the point. For instance, an opposition member of the committee would ask a man, who had sold certain supplies to the Government, to produce the

invoice to show what he had bought these goods for. Immediately some of the Government members would block any further investigation; he would openly tell the witness not to answer any such questions, and of course the majority of the committee would sanction such a procedure. Sometimes the questions were carried to the House and a demand made for information; but here also the Government majority would prevent the truth being discovered. By such tactics as these the Government go on increasing the expenditure by millions upon millions and when information is asked of the representatives of the people are insulted. Is that the kind of Government the people want?

Ottawa Weekly Letter.

Bad for the Government

A Session Which Weakened the Administration.—Two Ministers Driven out and a Third Proves a Disappointment.

MR. AYLESWORTH A FAILURE.

As Tactician Minister and Member,—A Burden to his Colleagues But No Terror to Outside Evil Doers.

A FEW DISCLOSURES.

Robbins, Galway and Grand Forks Land Deals,—Blair more, Moncton, Truro and Halifax,—Dredging, Dry Dock, Sub-Target, Cement Immigration and G T R Scandals.

MR. BORDEN'S GROWING STRENGTH

A Session of Useful and Important Service by the Conservative Party.

Ottawa, May 3, 1907.

The Session which closed last week has undoubtedly weakened the Government. Ministers in charge of the two largest spending Departments have resigned under show-downs. Though the resignation of Mr. Hyman has not been accepted it is certain that he will never again take charge of his Department. He is no longer in Parliament is out of the country and it is now believed that he will not again be a candidate in London. Mr. Emmerson's place will be filled by another man whatever may be the result of his appeal to the Courts. Sir Wilfrid Laurier settled that matter on the day when he promptly accepted the resignation.

MR. AYLESWORTH A FAILURE.

Mr. Aylesworth, who was expected to bring some strength to a Government suffering from the loss of Mr. Fitzpatrick and Sir William Mulock, has proved a distinct failure in public life. This is the view of Members on both sides. The worst troubles which have befallen the premier are the result of Mr. Aylesworth's efforts to make the Insurance Commission do an unfair party service. He and his friend Mr. Shepley turned the whole inquiry into a political man-hunt, ruined it altogether as an insurance inquiry, discredited its findings, finally bringing down and submerging one of the leading members of the Government. As a tactician Mr. Aylesworth is probably the worst that has been. In Parliament he has been a weakness rather than a strength to his leader, for his peculiar smartness is of that kind which constantly gets his own party into trouble. As head of the Department of Justice Mr. Aylesworth has shown a curious vacillation and developed a remarkable series of inconsistencies.

LOOSE CONVICTIONS

On the Lord's Day Act Mr. Aylesworth changed from a Provincial righter to a strong advocate of extreme federal power, and then was turned again on compulsion to a Provincialist. This Session he was again transformed into a Federal usurper on a question of street railway control, changing himself in the interest of certain political friends, who desired to escape provincial jurisdiction. Mr. Aylesworth has by

refusal to promote or assist legislation against election frauds given encouragement to the conspiracies and crimes which have brought so much disgrace upon this Country. He has made no effort either to bring the criminals to justice or to prevent the repetition of their offences. He has not lifted his hand or his voice against the perpetrators of frauds on the Dominion Treasury. The Department of Justice has been an aider and a better of the Department of Railways in the land deals at Moncton, Truro and Halifax. Exploiters who have been dividing among themselves the public domain in the West have found no reason to dread Mr. Aylesworth's authority.

A FEW DISCLOSURES

The deals exposed during the Session ought to be thoroughly explained to the electors of Canada before the next election takes place. In the Robbins Irrigation Company deal a \$80,000 acre block of land was sold for \$3 an acre, less \$2 rebate, to a group of political speculators closely attached to the Government. The purchasers before paying a cost turned it over to the other group for a half a million dollars profit.

We have heard this year of the completion of the Grand Forks Cattle Company deal in which the same group of political on-hangers cleared \$350,000 on leases obtained by favoritism, and on terms which were not open to competitors.

We have the Galway Ranch scandal where Members of Parliament, relatives of former land commissioners, and their friends, made use of a bogus name, of the name of an absentee who could never be discovered, to secure a closed twenty-one year lease which cost \$650, and seems to have been sold immediately for \$20,000.

A FEW OTHER SAMPLES.

There is the Blairmore Town Site, a property said to be worth \$400,000 obtained by a politician now a Member of the Provincial Legislature of Alberta, for \$480, by the assignment to him of a claim which the courts found to be obtained through prejury and fraud. In this case the Department of the Interior after the frauds were discovered directly interfered to prevent the law taking its course and prevented the recovery of this domain by the people of Canada.

The case was exposed of an Immigration Commissioner having a public salary of \$3,000 a year, putting through a Western land deal with parties in Vermont, who sued him and his partner and got judgment for \$14,000 damages on the ground that the purchasers had been deceived.

There was a case of a Government Engineer, who, while receiving regular pay from the Department of Public Works, prepared plans for a private dry-dock company, receiving his pay in shares of the concern, then inspecting the property for the Government and making a questionable valuation for the purpose of a Dominion subsidy probably to himself and to his associates.

There was proof that an officer of the Transcontinental fixed a price for goods to be purchased through a middleman far above the amount for which the goods could have been bought direct. The intermediary in this case was one of the persons accused in the London election conspiracy, and had a recommendation to the purchasing agent from one of the Transcontinental commissioners. So flagrant was this case that the firm which supplied the goods returned to the Government the excessive amounts in spite of the contention of the Government purchasing agent.

SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT.

A dredging inspector appointed by political influence against the advice of the district engineer has confessed that he received \$3 a day to give his whole time to inspection, while he farmed out his job at \$1.25 per day to another Government inspector, who also received \$3 per day from the Government to give his whole time inspecting other operations. The first mentioned inspector also put in and collected a bill for boat hire giving the alleged name and certificate of the owner of the boat, whereas the boat was his wife's canoe, the name he gave was hers before her marriage, and he used the canoe to take orders from the dredge crew for supplies from the shop in which he was clerk.

SUB-TARGET AND CEMENT.

A partial exposure was that of the sub-target machine contract, in which the contracting company was organized by the distribution of \$500,000 in shares, in lots of twenty-five and fifty thousand, among officers and politicians, in-

cluding some very close political friends of the Minister of Militia. Mr. Strubbe, the Montreal contractor who figured in last year's exposures, was to the front again this year as having received an extra ten cents a barrel on five or six thousand barrels of cement supplied by contract to the Government. This allowance was claimed because Mr. Fielding, after the contract was made, added ten cents to the cement duty, and the extra amount was given though the cement was made in Canada and the manufacturers did not increase the price to Strubbe.

THREE INTERCOLONIAL DEALS

The record of this Session's exposures includes three Intercolonial land deals. Following the Moncton operation of the previous year, in which Matthew Lodge bought \$5,075 worth of land and immediately turned it over to the Government for \$75,880, there is a similar but less profitable deal in which the Government paid \$10,490 for land which Lodge had bought for \$3,300, including his legal expenses. In the Truro deal the Government paid \$11,500 for a block of land currently supposed to be worth less than half this sum. The middleman in this case seems to have received 18 or 20 building lots and a considerable sum of money as his rake-off.

THE HALIFAX DEAL

The Halifax land deal amounted to the purchase for \$45,000 of certain lots of land which the middleman had just before bought for \$8,753. One of the partners in this operation, on which 14 1/2 per cent. profit was made, is a Member of the Nova Scotia Legislature and of the Provincial Government, and is the owner of the Government organs in St. John and Halifax. Incidentally it was shown that the lawyer who acted for the Department of Justice in the transaction made good earnings out of it. It was also disclosed that he has been taking a commission out of Government law business done in the province by other lawyers. Some strictures of the Halifax Herald on his share of the transaction led this lawyer to sue the paper and a Halifax jury found against him.

THE SMALLER FRY

This is a partial list of the matters disclosed during the Session just completed. It might be enlarged by mentioning other similar transactions, or by tracing as far as possible those in which exposure was blocked by exclusion of evidence and refusal to furnish information. The custom of making profit out of the Government has spread to some of the less important officials, half a dozen of whom in one branch of the service were found to have conspired together to make out bogus expense accounts, supported by falsehood and forgery, whereby they swindled the Immigration Department out of an amount nearly equal to their salaries. The accountants under Mr. Oliver were ignorant of the fact until their attention was called to it by the Auditor-General's Department.

THE GRAND TRUNK ACCOUNTS

A few illustrations show how some inquiries are made futile by Government interference. The Grand Trunk put in a bill for \$663,000, on which the Government guarantee was demanded as the cost of construction of the prairie section of the Transcontinental. It was found by the Government Auditor that for \$160,000 of this amount there were no particulars, or that the details showed payments for other than construction purposes. Payments were made to lawyers and politicians, to newspapers and to persons who had nothing to do with the construction of the railway. Nevertheless the Department of Railways and the Department of Justice approved the bills. After discussion with the Department of Finance which raised objections, the Grand Trunk withdrew the claim and afterwards sent in an account for a little less than half the money. This also was not paid.

INQUIRY BLOCKED

When the Public Accounts Committee undertook to investigate the whole transaction it was found that the disputed bill had been removed and no copy was to be obtained. The Grand Trunk Auditor who was summoned went off to the Medford races. His assistant said he knew nothing about the account except that he had been ordered to destroy the papers. All attempts on the part of the members of the Committee to obtain a copy, which could have been made up from the Grand Trunk books, was frustrated by the Ministers and their supporters, who declared that it was no business of the Committee or the country what accounts were presented, to the Government and not paid. It is understood that these unspecified items of some fifty thousand dollars included money spent by the Grand Trunk Company in obtaining the Grand Trunk Pacific contract and securing the subsequent legislation. If this is so the matter is of some concern to the country. In any case when a bill for a million dollars is presented to the Government and five-sixths of it paid, the country has a right to know the details of the whole bill. But no doubt the Ministers had the best of reasons for shutting out this inquiry.

WHO GETS THE MONEY.

The other instance is that of the North Atlantic Trading Company, which has received a third of a million dollars, for pretending to send immigrants to Canada who would have come just as fast without it.

Following the example of last year the Government again refused to place its own officer to make known to the Agriculture and Colonization, the names of the contractors who got this money.

A GOOD SESSION FOR MR BORDEN

While the Government has grown weaker as the result of this Session the opposition has gained in power, in confidence, in aggressiveness and in cohesiveness. Mr. Borden has made no mistake and his party has loyally and vigorously supported him. He has been perfectly frank with his supporters in the House, looking them fully into his confidence and receiving like confidence from them. It is not to be expected that the members of any party would agree upon all questions that arise, and Mr. Borden has not undertaken to interfere with individual freedom of action in subjects outside the range of party politics. For that matter he has been required to exercise authority within party lines.

On every motion on which Mr. Borden has divided the House, he has had the solid support of his party, given freely and heartily.

No party in opposition in the history of Dominion politics, or in the record of Provincial Legislatures, has given a better example of loyal support to party

WHAT CONSERVATIVES STOOD FOR

During this Session the Opposition has stood out strongly for publicity in all public matters. So far as was possible it has investigated the public expenditure. It has moved for inquiry into disputed questions of policy respecting labor troubles, railway passenger fares and freight rates, and combinations in restraint of trade. It has demanded investigation into matters affecting the honor of Members of Parliament on both sides of the House. It has divided the House in protest against the refusal of public officers to explain Government transactions. It has made public protest against election frauds and corruption, demanded legislation against them and the enforcement of the criminal law against election conspirators, bribers, ballot switchers, and other criminals of their class. It has divided the House against the deals and shams of public lands in the West, and against deals and rakes-off in the purchase of lands by the Government in the East. It has protested in the same way against the degradation of the public service, against encouraging and rewarding partisanship in government officials, against condoning and rewarding embezzlement and fraud by agents and officers of the Government. It has stood up for righteousness and honour and decency in public life.

OUTSIDE OF PARLIAMENT

During the Session the Conservatives have kept the Provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba in Provincial elections. It has shown in Ontario what an honourable and capable administration by its party can accomplish in contrast to a preceding so-called Liberal administration. It has carried on an aggressive Provincial campaign in the Eastern Provinces, has made some advances in Quebec by-elections, and along the line has prepared the way for larger conquests.

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