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Our Ottawa Letter.

EVERY SAFEGUARD TO G. T. P.
GONE.

The secret of the government's secrecy in connection with the amendments to the Grand Trunk Pacific contract is out at last. The electors of eight constituencies in which bye-elections were held were denied information as to the nature of the concessions to Mr. Hays and his associates. It is well for the government that strict silence was observed on this question. In eight contests the government vote, on an average, was 570 less than in the last general election. Had the G. T. P. latest deal been announced, it is certain the loss to the government would have been much greater.

In a contract dated February 18th, the government agrees to release the Grand Trunk from almost every obligation it took upon itself in the matter of the Grand Trunk Pacific. Every boasted safeguard to the people's interests is swept away, and strong as was Hon. A. G. Blair's denunciation of the scheme a year ago, one unconsciously wonders if that gentleman's vocabulary would be equal to presenting the deal, as it now stands, in its true colors.

In brief, the period of construction of the Western Section is extended from 5 to 8 years, with a further provision against strikes; the G. T. P.'s liability for rolling stock is reduced from \$20,000,000 to \$15,000,000 for both sections; the Grand Trunk deposit of \$5,000,000 may be made in "cash or approved government securities"; and will be repaid on the completion and equipment of the Western Section and not held, as originally intended, until the Eastern Section is completed; the G. T. P. may lease the Eastern Section piecemeal as construction is completed; the guarantee of the bonds of the Prairie Section is unchanged, but on the Mountain Section the government undertakes to guarantee 75 per cent of the actual cost, instead of a maximum of \$30,000 per mile; the government undertakes to refrain from foreclosing its mortgage on the G. T. P. until 5 years' interest is due, upon which the government shall operate the road until such time as it will have recouped itself, when the property will revert to the company; the G. T. P. is given permission to present to the Grand Trunk \$25,000,000 in common stock which may be sold in open market in place of being held by the Grand Trunk as a company for 50 years; running rights over the Eastern Section to be guaranteed the Grand Trunk for 50 years after the expiry of the lease, in the event of the government taking over the road; and the G. T. P. to have the right to sell to the government, at the expiry of the lease, all branch lines which may not be considered desirable by the company.

It will be seen at a glance that the few redeeming features of the original agreement are wiped out. The company assumes no risk, the hazard being the government's alone.

GOVERNMENT'S MOST ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.

The Laurier government is a whole-souled, warm-hearted and generous institution. It never sees a friend want. Senator Cox-Mr. Hays and others interested in the Grand Trunk Pacific will willingly bear testimony to this. The Grand Trunk Pacific, had it given effect to its first contract, would have pledged the Western division as security for the payment of interest on its bonds. Failure to meet its obligations in this respect for three years would have meant government possession and operation. This would scarcely be considered a hardship in ordinary business circles. But so good and so benevolent an aggregation of philanthropists as the Dominion cabinet could hardly be expected to confine themselves to the hard and fast rules of mercantile life. Accordingly, Senator Cox et al were given five years instead of three to work up a bill against the government. Moreover, it was decreed that the government should not enter into possession of the G. T. P. Pacific lines for all time. If hardship inflicts itself upon the promoters, they are, in conjunction with the government, to appoint a receiver

who will manage the road until it becomes a sufficiently good commercial venture to pay off the government. It will then have become a property worth owning, and will in due course be handed back to the Cox-Hays syndicate. Few but Sir Wilfrid will see the advantage of one becoming a creditor only to have to pay oneself. If the farmer with a heavy mortgage on his farm could only arrange matters a la Hays and have the mortgage pay off the claim, how lovely everything would be for the Canadian agriculturist. The farmer expects no such boon, but that is exactly what the Laurier government has provided for the G. T. P. How can the government justify such an irrational proposal?

MR. EMERSON AND THE G. T. P.
The new Minister of Railways, H. R. Emmerson, lacks the backbone of his tutor and predecessor, Hon. A. G. Blair. The latter quickly resigned his portfolio when he discovered that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was arranging the Grand Trunk Pacific deal behind the back of his responsible railway adviser, and did not hesitate to handle the government's programme without gloves. Mr. Emmerson, quite in contrast with his patron's course, has allowed himself to be used as a cat's paw in the rearrangement of the contract. During the greater part of the negotiations Mr. Emmerson was simply a private member of Parliament. On entering the cabinet, he was at once dispatched to St. John to conduct the bye-election campaign which resulted in such disaster to the government, and on unqualified condemnation of the Grand Trunk deal, as it then appeared in its comparatively moderate form. On February 18th, the date of the signing of the new contract, Mr. Emmerson was in Halifax, far away from the scene of the final ceremonies which imposed new burdens on Canada and conferred increased favors on the Grand Trunk Railway Company. Later, the country will have the privilege of reading Mr. Emmerson's defence of the new scheme, concerning which he was scarcely consulted. The fact that Mr. Emmerson has accepted responsibility for the acts of Sir Wilfrid Laurier without first being taken into the Premier's full confidence, does not foreshadow greatness for the present director of government railways.

MILLIONS FOR THE GRAFTERS.
One of the features of the original Grand Trunk Pacific contract which the government claimed would be of the greatest benefit to Canada, was the obligation imposed upon the Grand Trunk to take over and hold as a company for a period of 50 years \$25,000,000 of G. T. P. common stock. Every minister who spoke on the measure dwelt at length on the importance of this provision. Hon. W. S. Fielding, who analysed the financial aspects of the contract, said of this provision, as reported on page 8570, Hansard, August 12th, 1903:

"We have required that the Grand Trunk Railway shall not only be behind this undertaking, but in it and of it. We have provided that common stock of this company to the extent of \$25,000,000 shall be held, not by promoters, not even by the Grand Trunk Railway officials individually, but by the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada itself. . . . We are not much concerned as to what price the Grand Trunk Railway may pay for the stock. That has been a subject of discussion, but I do not attach great importance to it. If the Grand Trunk Railway acquired that stock at a comparatively small sum and afterwards floated it on the market at a higher sum, that would be a proceeding which might be open to objection. But the Grand Trunk Company must not only take this stock, but hold it for all time; they cannot put a dollar of it in the market. It is absolutely impossible to buy a share of that stock; it must be held by the Grand Trunk Railway Company itself and no person can buy or sell a share. Where, then, comes in the chance of speculation?"

Mr. Fielding's language admits of only one interpretation—that the government recognized the importance of making the Grand Trunk hold the common stock and thus save it from speculation. To further safeguard the interests of the public the opposition moved an amendment providing that the Grand Trunk should pay par value in cash for the stock. The government refused that amendment, and under the new contract of February 18th, 1904, the Grand Trunk may receive the \$25,000,000 worth of common stock as a present from the G. T. P., and dis-

pose of 124,999 shares of it in open market, which if sold at 75, would yield the Grand Trunk \$9,374,925. This represents an enormous take-off, from watered stock on which patrons of the G. T. P. will have to provide interest by paying high freight rates. It is, perhaps, the most wonderful of the G. T. P. amendments. It violates a principle which was uppermost in Mr. Fielding's mind on August 12th, 1903. It puts millions of dollars in the pockets of the promoters and places on the shoulders of Canadians a burden for years to come.

CANADA TO BUY ALL OLD JUNK.

Mr. Charles M. Hays should shake hands with himself. The Grand Trunk Pacific or Grand Trunk—whatever way one wishes to take it—secured under the contract of October 24th, 1903, about all that an ordinary concern could hope for. But Mr. Hays saw his opportunity and grasped it with both hands. Like "Jim," the colored character in Mark Twain's "Huck Finn," "he laid low to see what'd come of it." The government was driven into a corner by this simple method and the net result is that Mr. Hays has made a bigger hole in the treasury and has paved the way for prospective bargains which at present cannot be estimated at their true value.

One of the concessions to the Grand Trunk Pacific, the importance of which can only be determined by time, is the undertaking of the government at the end of 50 years to relieve the Grand Trunk Pacific of all branch lines of the Eastern Section named by the company. This means that at the expiry of its lease, the Grand Trunk may unload on the public all branch lines which are found to be unprofitable, at a price to be agreed upon, the government grant to the said lines, without interest, to be deducted from the figure decided upon. This implies not only a hard and fast bargain which will force Canada to eventually become responsible for the mistakes of the G. T. P., in constructing worthless branches and the purchase of miles upon miles of old junk, but a promise on the part of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to assist all branch lines which may hereafter be projected from the Eastern Section. It is a situation full of promising possibilities, without risk on the part of Mr. Hays and his associates, and abounding in endless opportunities for Canadians to spend their money in behalf of a few needy millionaires. The Canadian government should speedily take out a junk dealer's license.

PROVIDENCE, TIME, COX, ETC., WAIT.

July 30th, 1903, will long be remembered as the date of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's prediction of ruin for Canada. "Heaven grant that it be not already too late," said the Premier, in his advocacy of the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme. The United States, Providence and Time had all combined to exterminate Canadians. The Cox scheme was of today; tomorrow could not be tolerated. Five years for the construction of the Western Section was the limit.

But now all is changed. The United States, Providence, Time, Cox and Laurier have come to an understanding. Eight years will now suffice to construct a road, which on July 30th could not be delayed for a day. Canada has found favor and destiny no longer decries the disappearance of this country from the map. It will cost a few more millions, but then, what of that? Canada is saved, even at the sacrifice of Sir Wilfrid's reputation as a prophet of evil and the stamping of that statesman as a man given to the utterance of needless nothings which six short months reflect in all their nakedness and pithiness.

DIED

At the Connolly House, Dundas Esplanade, on the 14th inst., Ellen S. Bell, aged 89, widow of the late John Bell, Esq., and eldest daughter of the late Hon. George Cole.

At Boston on the 13th inst., Charles E. Small, son of the late Charles Small, of Marshfield, P. E. I.

In this city on the 9th inst., Mary Swan in the 90th year of her age.

At Maple Plains, on 17th of Feb., Mary, beloved wife of John J. Smith in the eighty-first year of her age leaving a husband, one son and eight daughters to mourn. May her soul rest in peace.

At Galois, Maine, March 10th, Daniel O'Hollaren, eldest son of Patrick O'Hollaren, Sparrow's Road.

In this city on March 13th, 1904 of diphtheria, Annie Youngest child of Joseph C. and Mary A. Corney, aged 10 years and five months.

Entered into rest at Clyde River, March 14th, at 10.30 p. m. John A. Scott aged 27 years.

News of the War.

London, March 9.—Among various rumors printed in the absence of any known happenings, is a report from Ting Kow, that the Japanese are advancing upon Feng Wuanheng, between Mukden and the Korean frontier. It is stated, and partially admitted by the Russian Press, that the Japanese are officially dispatched, and is not confirmed from any other source that the Russians in Northern Korea are gradually but constantly withdrawing to the Yalu River. It is stated in Chinese official quarters in Shanghai, that the rival armies are likely to meet at Yalu river in three or four days.

The Telegram this morning publishes a despatch from Tokio, dated March 7, saying: "It is reported that the Japanese fleet engaged the Russian Vladivostok squadron at sea yesterday. The result of the engagement is not announced, but it is believed that the Russian ships were destroyed or captured."

LATER.

Tokio, March 14.—It is believed here that already a decisive naval engagement has been fought in the vicinity of Vladivostok, and tidings are anxiously awaited. The Japanese did not go to Vladivostok for the purpose of bombarding the town, but to locate the enemy. The attack on the armored cruiser Bogoy of the Russian fleet are stationed there. It is understood that when the Japanese fleet arrived there on Sunday they found the Russian squadron absent. This gave the Japanese squadron an advantage in the way of avoiding the inshore battery and at the same time putting it in a position to meet the Russian ships re-entering the harbor.

The Gromobli is a Russian first class cruiser, 12,000 tons; speed, 20 knots; armament, four 8 inch, two 6 inch guns. The Rurik is 11,000 tons, has a speed of 18 knots and the same armament as the other two.

The Bogoy is 6,000 tons, with a speed of 23 knots, and has armament of twelve 6 inch guns.

Further details of the bombardment of Vladivostok on Sunday last are as follows:—Vladivostok, March 6.—A fleet of five Japanese battleships and two cruisers appeared off this port at 1.25 o'clock this afternoon and bombarded the town and shore batteries for fifty-five minutes. The fleet approached in the direction of Usurbi Bay and about thirty miles south east of Vladivostok. Entering Usurbi Bay, the enemy forced a line of battle, but did not approach to a closer range than five and one-third miles. They directed their fire against the shore batteries and the town, but no danger resulted, as most of their 200 lb shells failed to burst.

The Japanese ceased firing at 2.20 p. m. and the enemy retired in the direction of Aok Island. Simultaneously two torpedo boat destroyers appeared near Aok Island, and two more near Cape Moidel. The Japanese ships were covered with ice. The attack resulted in no loss to the Russians, but cost the enemy two hundred thousand roubles (\$100,000) in ammunition. Most of the projectiles were six and twelve inch shells.

The population of Vladivostok were warned of the presence of the fleet on the horizon of a hostile fleet and of the prospect of an attack during the day, but it remained tranquil.

FIVE RUSSIANS KILLED BY SHELLS. St. Petersburg, March 6.—Official despatches received here concerning the bombardment of Vladivostok by a Japanese fleet, this afternoon, do not mention any Russian losses, but private advices say that five were killed, four sailors and the wife of an Engineer.

It is apparent that the Japanese were afraid to risk exposing their ships to the plunging fire of the land batteries and it is considered probable here that the attack was really for the purpose of drawing the fire of the Russian forts, compelling the Russians to disclose the position and calibre of their guns and also for the purpose of ascertaining whether the Russian squadron is in port.

FRANS EXPT MY CLOSE SEIZ CANAL. St. Petersburg, Saturday.—The Birsheva Videmost professor to have private information that the Council of Ministers in Calna has decided to close the Suez Canal to the belligerents.

The Gazette says the Japanese are preparing a serious attack on Port Arthur.

The Videmost says—"England and the United States have joined hands to prevent Russia eventually reaping the fruits of victory."

The fact of French sailors being called to join the flag at Brest once again raises grave fears of international troubles threatening Europe.

As far as the Suez Canal is concerned its absolute neutrality is guaranteed by all the Powers, and the Egyptian Government has no authority to close it. It is as free as the waters of the ocean to any belligerent in time of war and either combatant can pass through it under certain well defined regulations.

London, March 10.—A despatch from Tien Tsin states that the Japanese advanced towards the Yalu River and captured Feng Wang Cheng. They have driven the Russians from the vicinity of that town to Takung Ling, the eastern pass, and now are in force seventy miles east of New Chwang. There, thirty-five thousand Russians are strongly entrenched at Liao Yang and Hatching, where a battle is imminent. Small engagements have been fought and the Russians are retreating with loss. The Japanese are using the same tactics and advancing along the same route employed in the war with China. A Tien Tsin despatch says that their Japanese authorities for some time suspected that information concerning the

movements and plans were being supplied to Russia. The traitor seems to have been discovered in a well known Japanese forwarding agent in Tien Tsin who was arrested last Monday, and who committed suicide in prison. Several other Japanese are under suspicion.

ATTACK ON PORT ARTHUR. Port Arthur, March 10.—A message from the Signal Station at eleven o'clock last night announced the appearance of the Japanese squadron on the horizon. Fifty minutes later the shore batteries opened fire on the Japanese vessels. A gale then sprang up and the attacking fleet soon withdrew.

London, March 11.—Not only is there no confirmation of the report that the Japanese established themselves at Feng-Wang-Cheng and elsewhere in Southern Manchuria, but the indications are that they are untrue, having arisen from native gossip. It is regarded as very improbable that there are Russians in the neighborhood of Ping Yang. A skirmish was reported at that place on Wednesday, but this would indicate that the Japanese are actually occupying a position in the rear of the Russian lines on the Yalu River. The story of the naval battle between the Japanese and Russian squadron is also doubted. The Japanese legation have no information on the subject of the reported Russian engagements and are sceptical as to both. The bombardment of Port Arthur was apparently unimportant, not amounting to a serious attack. No other active hostilities have been reported.

The construction of the railroad from Seoul to Ping Yang was commenced yesterday, and the line will be completed September.

RUSSIANS HAVE ALREADY LOST THIRTEEN WARSHIPS.

The Matin publishes a despatch from Tokio, saying that the Japanese Navy Department has announced that thirteen Russian warships representing a total of 94,000 have received injuries since the opening of hostilities.

The Matin's Harbin correspondent says: "General Sakaroff commanding the First Army Corps arrived at Harbin yesterday. Troops continue to pass through Harbin bound to the south. The railroad is working with admirable regularity and Harbin has every appearance of a military town. The troops are drilled continuously. Fighting in Korea is expected shortly."

RUSSIA'S BIG FORCE. The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Echo-de-Paris says: "Prince Louis Bonaparte has been given the command of a brigade of Cossacks. He will start for the Far East on Thursday." "By the 17th March, there will be 217,000 Russian troops in Manchuria," the correspondent continues. "This information was given me by a military authority, and it shows that the transport system is working perfectly."

COREAN SOLDIERS ATTACK RUSSIANS. The Russian soldier operating in the vicinity of Anju are committing all manner of excesses, maltreating the native women and perpetrating robbery at every opportunity.

Corean soldiers attacked a body of the Russian last Friday, and succeeded in killing thirty of them. It is reported that as the result of a collision between Russian and Corean soldiers at Kang Ge the Russians were driven beyond the Yalu River.

London, March 12.—The initiation apparently of a more vigorous strategy by the Russian fleet at Port Arthur is attributed to Admiral Makaroff's arrival. It is suggested that if the battle ship Retvizan has been removed from the entrance to the harbor the new Admiral will likely take strong offensive action against the Japanese fleet and to wrest from her control of the sea. How far such line of operation could be co-operated in by the Vladivostok squadron cannot be guessed at, there still being no hint of its whereabouts.

Yesterday the torpedo fleet met in battle at Port Arthur. One Japanese boat was sunk and a Russian destroyer destroyed. The Russian commander with two ships went to the destroyer's assistance but was driven back by the Japanese cruisers. Part of the Russian crew were drowned and the rest captured.

FRENCHMEN TO LEAVE NEWCHWANG. Vin Kow, March 10.—The British consul strongly and officially urges the foreign women and children to leave Newchwang before the river opens. The British station gunboat Epiegle will leave as soon as possible, and will not be replaced. The family of the United States consul, Mr. Miller, will leave to-morrow.

It is understood that the neutral powers will not embarrass Japan by the presence of warships in the river here, and therefore neutral interests at Newchwang will be officially abandoned.

The tension among Russians also continues. There are circumstantial reports of fighting east of the railroad, and there is strong evidence of a Japanese advance.

It is reported that the action of the Russians in ordering Newchwang to be fortified was due to the withdrawal of the foreign warships, thus removing the last possibility of the neutralization of this port. The Russians received by train this morning two five-inch siege guns and two six-pounder Howitzers. They were unloaded at the Newchwang railroad station.

London, March 10.—A despatch to the Times from Wei-Hai-Wei says: "It is reported in good authority that the Russian troops have driven back Hui Jui, Korea (54 miles north-west of Chem-pool), which resulted in the defeat of the Russians."

London, March 14.—There is no real information as to the land movements of the Japanese from any source, but as the correspondent of the Times points out the practicable landing places are hardly yet free from ice. The sudden return of winter has increased the difficulties of the Japanese. They have no intention of marching their main army any further than is necessary along the execrable Korean roads. The troops already landed are sufficient to have foot-hold in Korea and seize Ping Yang. It is evident from despatches from every source that the bombardment of Port Arthur on Tuesday was much more effective than the official accounts state. Reports of the evacuation of the place are not credited. It is probably due to the fact that the new town has been rendered impossible to live in and must be abandoned.

A Chee Foo despatch says that on Thursday night after the bombardment

of Port Arthur by the Japanese, Chee Foo was placarded with posters stating that Russian ships and forts were wrecked by the Japanese. These greatly impressed the Chinese.

Tien Tsin, March 14.—A despatch says that officials who witnessed the bombardment of Port Arthur states twenty Russians were killed on board the Retvizan, and twenty in the town. The Russians claim that they sunk a Japanese cruiser at Ting Kow on Friday. Great depression is noticeable among the Russians at Ting Kow.

According to a Tien Tsin correspondent of the London Standard, the Russians are withdrawing all their surplus troops from Port Arthur to Harbin and Kirin, because of the shortness of provisions, and because it is doubtful whether or not they would be able to hold either Port Arthur or New Chwang against a resolute attack. The spirit of the Russian troops, who are largely recruits, has been broken, by starvation, cold and harsh treatment from their officers. The Russian losses on the Yalu River are to reach a total of 2,000 men.

Kio, March 10.—A Pekin telegram to the Jiji Shimpo states that England and America have protested against the Russian action in sinking a junk at Nin Chwang, because the crews of their war vessels now staying there will be blockaded.

London, March 25.—It is most probable that Port Arthur has not been captured nor evacuated notwithstanding the reports to that effect in some papers. Not a word of confirmation can be obtained from Tokio while Shanghai reports the receipt of a telegram from Admiral Makaroff advising the Russian's plan of campaign has undergone a complete change especially as the Japanese have not followed their naval successes by active land operations.

St. Petersburg, March 15.—A Russian correspondent proceeding to the front writes to the St. Petersburg Telegraph, Bineau from Irkutsk, Siberia, as follows: "Our express train travels slower than the slowest train in European Russia. The seats of war is still remote, but its presence is felt. Long rows of cars filled with soldiers, the caravans and primitive sleighs drawn by speedy horses which we pass along the way at crowded stations, break the motony of snow bound wastes and endless forests, and the stillness is broken by the song of the jolly reservists, and the bells of the village churches sounding clear through the frosty air. This battle and activity amidst Siberian desolation strikingly illustrates a Russian giant shaking his limbs preparatory to punishing his foe."

St. Petersburg, March 14.—General Kurapatkin who is about to leave for the Far East to take command of the military forces there, had a long farewell interview with the Emperor to-day. He also paid parting visits to the Empress and the Grand Dukes. The Emperor in bidding him farewell expressed the greatest confidence that he would bring glory to the Russian arms. Later in the day General Kurapatkin received a deputation of the Municipal Council, who presented him with an address and a triple Roman sword picture, representing the warrior Saint Alexander Nevsk, Alexis and George. In returning thanks the General modestly said:

"It is necessary to be calm and patient. The army will make faithful efforts to complete the task entrusted to it by the Emperor. Slight reverses are possible. Our troops are assembling slowly and in this everything depends on the railroad. I am firmly confident that God will respond to our prayers and bless Russian arms."

It can be asserted positively that there will be no conflict of authority between Viceroy Alexieff and General Kurapatkin. The former is to retain administrative control of the Viceroyalty. General Kurapatkin, although nominally a subordinate, will exercise complete control of the land operations and Vice Admiral Makaroff will command the fleet in the Far East.

About 8,000 men going forward are over the Siberian railroad every day and by the middle of April all the troops necessary to put into effect the plans of the Government will be East Asia. The land railroad around Lake Baikal is expected to be completed by the middle of April and thereafter the transport of men and supplies and ammunition of war will not, it is believed, give any further trouble.

It is reported that the Russians have advanced to Kinchow, commanding the New Chwang Railway. New Chwang is thus brought in the belligerent zone and is liable to Japanese attack. English and American warships at New Chwang have protested against the Russian blockade of the port. The Russians are entreaching near Wiju on the left bank of the Yalu.

Great Conservative Gains in Quebec.

Montreal, March, 11.—Four bye-elections for the Quebec Legislature were held yesterday.

All four seats returned Liberals by acclamation at the last general election.

In Maskinongue, Lafontaine, Conservative, was elected by 200.

In Port Neuf, Naud, Conservative, was elected by 250.

In Berthier, Lafontaine, Liberal was elected by 110.

In Sherbrooke, Mathieu, Liberal, was elected by 400.

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