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TOURIST TRAFFIC

The volume of tourist traffic from the United States this year has been considerably lessened by misleading press dispatches appearing in American and Canadian papers regarding the Canadian Registration Act. It was unwarrantably stated that visitors to Canada from the United States would be compelled to register at a post office before they could secure accommodation at a hotel, that passports were absolutely necessary, and more recently the absurd rumor was widely circulated that women from the United States would not be allowed to return home. This latter ridiculous report is specifically denied by Mr. W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, who officially designated it as "absolutely without any foundation in fact."

Senator O'Brien Robertson, a member of the Dominion Cabinet, and Chairman of the Registration Board, is equally positive in his denials of the other unwholesome reports. The actual facts are, according to the official statement of the Registration Board, that the Registration Act applies only to people permanently resident in Canada and does not affect even remotely anyone living in the United States; that no registration at a post office is necessary, and that no passports are required. The possession of papers showing the holders to be American citizens, in all that is necessary to cross into Canada. At the international boundary line the holders of these papers are given an identification card by the Canadian Immigration Officer, which enables the visitors to travel freely where they wish without any interference on the part of Canadian officials.

Senator Robertson, Chairman of the Registration Board, has announced that "neither in the instructions issued, nor the regulations for Canadian registration is there anything that would indicate desire or intention to impose restrictions upon Americans or aliens, entering, travelling in, or leaving Canada."

The experience of these American visitors who have already come to Canada verifies Senator Robertson's statement, and unfortunately there are many across the border who have not read this announcement, and may still be influenced by the false reports to stay at home, and their vacation, and cause a mutual loss to themselves and to Canada.

Straight Denial of Murchie Affidavit from Hon. Wm. Currie

Entirely Different Version of Conversation in Office Given and With Evident Candor and Frankness—President of Lumber Company Tells of Talk With Murchie—Col. Loggie Found Latter Unsatisfactory Official.

Fredericton, July 17.—Absolute and unqualified denial of the allegations in the Murchie affidavit was given by Hon. William Currie, speaker of the legislature, at the afternoon session of the inquiry which was held by James Friel, K. C. of Moncton. Mr. Currie's version of the conversation on which the charges were based differs vastly from that given by Murchie, the former government lumber scaler. His evidence was given with evident candor and frankness and as a witness he proved much different from the man responsible for the charges.

When the session opened Col. T. G. Loggie, Deputy Minister of Lands and Mines, was called to give evidence. Examined by Dr. Baxter he told of the appointment of Archibald Murchie, as a government scaler in 1908. As an illustration of instructions to scalers the witness read a circular addressed to all scalers last year, dealing with the size of logs, which might be cut, their markings, etc. Stumpage was payable, he said, on all logs down to five inches diameter at the small end.

Regarding the evidence of the Continental Company's scaler that logs of less than eight inches were disregarded, he said that scaling smaller logs was impracticable.

Instructions to scalers as to how to carry on their work were only general, as the scalers, having passed their examinations, were supposed to know their work. Instructions were limited chiefly to information regarding the limits of the district in which the scaler was to operate.

The duties of the chief scaler, the witness said, were to see that his subordinates were alert on their work, that they were performing their monthly accounts, answer correspondence and see that a correct count of the cut was filed with the department. He was not able to say if the count of the books for the Continental operations for 1916-17 had been returned.

With the aid of a map Col. Loggie showed the location of the Continental Company's timber limits. At the headwaters of the Charlo, their lands adjoined the Richards Company permits.

From the scalers' returns the department seldom could tell from which of the lands any particular lot of lumber was cut. Plans of the district indicating the Continental Company's limits, had been sent to Murchie. Col. Loggie was asked to produce copies of the plans, and also any correspondence with Murchie and returns sent by him.

When he returned Colonel Loggie produced a copy of the formal appointment sent to Murchie. He showed by his record that scale plans had been sent to the scaler, had been returned by him on August, 1917, and destroyed as old and unserviceable. New plans were sent at that time. These would show part of the Richards lands on the River Charlo, as well as the Continental's lands. Letters from the chief scaler, October 4, 1916, showed what forms and books had been sent to the scaler. The witness could not find that any of these books had been returned. All we know of Mr. Murchie's sending to the department were the returns which had been put in evidence at Campbellton.

System Not Good One.

The system of scaling recognized was largely averaging. It was a poor system but some scalers had to deal with fifty millions of lumber and they could not actually scale more than four or five millions.

The books were intended for use of the scalers on the logs they actually scaled. The department knew nothing of the country where they were employed by the scalers to aid in counting the logs and provided no forms for their return. A statement of all scaling done by Murchie for other concerns besides the Continental Company was promised by the witness.

The monthly statement forms had been sent to Murchie but he had returned only one, that already in evidence.

A letter from Murchie, dated December 4th, 1916, accompanying his returns for logs cut, and asking for \$300 on account of salary, was submitted. The witness had answered promising the check. On March 8th, 1917, Murchie wrote that as his estimate dated February, had not been returned, he would send another copy. He wrote that his total scale was 9,531,000 feet.

The witness had no record of previous correspondence regarding the missing estimate which the chief scaler might have written. The official had told the witness that he had tried to secure more monthly returns from Murchie but had failed.

Letters from this witness acknowledging receipt of estimates, re-inquiries about sawmills, and enclosing check for balance due Murchie on the basis of 9,531,000 feet were put in evidence.

Final returns for 1916-17 were received from Murchie on April 30th, 1917, and marked O. K. by the chief scaler.

Dr. Baxter—"What information would he have by which to check the figures?"

Witness—"He would have some information from traveling around."

Q.—Is his check of any value?

A.—Practically none, but we hope to change that.

Continuing the witness explained that the chief scaler, after checking the returns, sent them to the department to have the stumpage accounts made out.

The account for the Continental Company was as follows: Spruce 1,022,000 feet at \$1.50 per M, \$1,533; fir, \$2,149,000 feet at \$1.20 per M, \$2,578; cedar, 1,047,000 feet at \$1.50 per M, \$1,570.50, total \$6,066.50. A check for this amount and one of \$1,264 for mileage were received on August 5th from the company, with a letter from Mr. Currie. The mileage was an annual payment of \$8 a mile for leased land. There was no fixed rule in the department for making deductions from the scale for fir. He was left to his own judgment.

To Mr. LeBlanc, the witness said that once a scaler was appointed, he received no official notice of further annual appointment. Forms were sent to them each year. It was the aim of the department to ascertain the exact cut on crown lands. The department had received many complaints regarding the bills. Each one was investigated and usually the department's count was found correct. If he was over charged, the operator should pay the bill and claim a refund.

If he were able to show the actual cut was less than the amount of the department's count, the bill would be correct. The department was not infallible.

The witness had produced all his correspondence with Murchie, but the chief scaler would have some additional correspondence with him. Murchie did not make monthly returns regularly. The witness promised to secure and produce all returns made by Murchie for operations other than those of the Continental Company.

The court here took recess, to resume at 2.30 o'clock.

Afternoon Session.

When the afternoon session opened Colonel Loggie announced that the plans of timber limits supplied to Murchie had been found in the office and he produced them. They showed the limits of the Continental company, the Tobique, the Culligan, the Louison and the Richards companies.

Continuing his evidence, Colonel Loggie testified that Murchie's final scale showed, in addition to the Continental company's cut, the cut of A. & J. Culligan which showed a total of 2,999,000 feet and for the Louison Lumber Co., a total of 1,084,000 feet.

In addition to their operations in Murchie's district, Messrs. Culligan had cut other lumber and Mr. LeBlanc asked for the cut reported by other scalers for them.

Dr. Baxter protested that this was not relevant to the inquiry. As the other scalers were not involved and evidence had been given that the Culligans had not tried to influence Mr. Murchie.

Mr. LeBlanc said it was necessary to show how Murchie had done his other work. The commissioner admitted the evidence. Witness said that J. R. Hachey had reported a cut by Messrs. Culligan of 1,877,000 feet on which stumpage had been paid.

To Mr. Copp, witness said that the department did not find it necessary to make corrections in the charges based on the scalers' returns very often. It always had been the custom for the chief scaler to pass on the returns before they were filed. It was not so satisfactory as in the old days when the chief scaler actually went through the woods and saw what was being cut. His instructions were to leave the stumpage bills on the scalers' returns when O. K. by the chief scaler. The department had no other way of learning the account of the cut. While Murchie held office witness said he thought he could say, that the department never found it necessary to investigate his returns. Asked if he remembered that James Reid had been overcharged \$1,000, he said he had a dim recollection of such an occurrence. He did not know before that the methods used by Murchie were general, if he had reason to think so he would have ordered a recount.

The chairman remarked that the Continental company's cut was shown by their own books to be more than 8,000,000 while they had paid only on 4,500,000 and asked if the department was at the mercy of the scalers. The witness said that they were dependent on the scaler and the chief scaler for their returns. The scalers were appointed on the recommendation of the members of legislature. When a government changed most of the scalers had changed also. They hoped to improve this. The lumber scale rate was fixed by the governor-in-council.

Daniel E. Richards, president of the Continental Lumber Company and manager of the Richards Mill Company, was called by Mr. LeBlanc, and sworn.

He testified that the Richards company owned eighty-eight per cent. of the stock of the Continental company. He was really the financial manager for both companies. Mr. Currie was the manufacturing manager at Charlo.

Witness said he had had conversation with Murchie about the stumpage. Murchie came to his office and told him he had to make his report for the government. Witness had said that it was too early in the season for them to tell what the cut was but on account of heavy snows, it would be less than usual.

Murchie asked witness if 4,500,000 to 5,000,000 would suit him and witness had said that that would be satisfactory to him. Murchie said he would try it at that figure. That was before the election of February 24th. Witness had told Mr. Currie of this, that the stumpage had been settled at about 4,500,000 feet. The Continental Lumber Company ran on its own scale, but witness financed it. He had power to sign checks for the Continental company, and had the company's seal. Witness looked after the sale of all the Continental company's output, except the shingles.

To Dr. Baxter, witness said that at the time of the conversation with Murchie he was known as a supporter of the former government and had worked for it. In his conversation with Mr. Murchie nothing had been said of the amount of the previous year's cut. In the previous year they had paid stumpage on about 4,700,000 feet.

Dr. Baxter—"If the previous year stumpage had been paid on 4,700,000 feet and you had said that the current year's cut was less, why should Murchie say that he would make it between 4,500,000 and 5,000,000?"

A.—That figure seemed fair enough to me.

Q.—How did Murchie express himself?

A.—He said that would be all right. Q.—When the season started did you have any conversation with Mr. Currie regarding the probable size of the cut?

A.—No. Continuing, witness said he had expected the Continental company to get about 5,000,000 feet of lumber.

There was a discussion at this point over the advisability of evidence regarding the Groux operations on the Richards lands, but the question was ruled in order.

Witness said that the Continental Company had not paid government stumpage to the Richards company for this lumber, and the Richards company had not paid stumpage to the government for it, but it was included in Murchie's report of the Continental company's operations.

Purvis Scale Too High.

Mr. LeBlanc interrupted Dr. Baxter to say that Purvis' evidence showed that he had nothing to do with these logs and had not even seen them. The stumpage paid for the lumber was on about 750,000 in the Continental company's account. Mr. Currie was responsible for the Continental company's operations. In estimating the cut in advance of the season witness had figured on the Groux operations when putting his estimate at 5,000,000. He said that the Purvis scale did not stand up in sawing. They had to knock off about twenty per cent to figure what the logs would cut. Mr. Currie never had discussed with witness the conversation with Murchie. When the stumpage bill came in Mr.

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Currie had asked witness if he should pay it. Currie's question was with regard to the amount of money on hand to meet the bill.

The logs were not all saved yet, they had not been resurveyed. To Mr. LeBlanc witness said that about 5,000,000 feet of the previous year's cut had not been saved. J. A. Reid had been sending crews of jobbers into the woods to cut for the company. Reid settled with the jobbers and the company settled with him. Some logs of the previous year's cut still were in the brooks.

To Mr. Copp, witness said that his company had furnished the money to pay the Continental company's stumpage. He had settled the stumpage with the scaler for the previous three years. In explanation of why he should settle with the scaler, witness said it was a little game, as Mr. Currie was not on the same side of politics with Murchie, while witness was.

Witness had been in a position to do favors in the way of patronage for Murchie.

To Dr. Baxter, witness said he never had got any political favors for Murchie and the latter never had asked him. The method of settling, the witness said, had been in vogue for many years, twenty years or his knowledge.

Hon. Wm. Currie.

Hon. William Currie was next called and examined by Mr. LeBlanc. He testified that he had known Murchie for many years. He knew Murchie to be an ardent politician but was not of the same political party.

He remembered the conversation in his office with Murchie. LaPointe came with Murchie. Murchie had been in the habit of selling foodstuffs to the company for years.

Q.—When Murchie came in that day did you tell him that he should not make his returns too high?

A.—No. Q.—Did you tell him to keep it down to 4,500,000 feet?

A.—I did not. Q.—Did you tell him that you would look after him?

A.—No. Q.—That he would have nothing to fear?

A.—No such a thing. Q.—Did you tell him to try to keep it down to 4,500,000 feet?

A.—No. I never told Murchie or any other scaler to reduce his return in the twenty-five years I have been in the business.

Q.—Did he tell you he was going to cut down the scale?

A.—When Murchie came in, he commenced talking about the scale. I said, "Mr. Richards told me that you said he had settled the scale." He took a pencil and started figuring. I said, "Just do the best you can, so long as you do nothing wrong." When he was going out I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "I'm going to give you a tip." He said, "What's that?" I said, "Don't get yourself into trouble for anyone."

Q.—Did you promise to keep Murchie's job for him?

A.—No. I knew it would be useless. He had been very active against us.

Q.—Was some of the lumber left over?

A.—Yes, some in the boom and some in the river.

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