

INVESTIGATION INTO FAMOUS "PATRIOTIC POTATO" TRANSACTION

Government Appoints Royal Commissioner to Begin Inquiry Here on September 24

James McQueen, of Shediac, to Act—Facts Brought to Light in Connection With Much-Talked of Transaction Makes Investigation Imperative, Hon. Mr. Foster and His Colleagues Feel—What Became of That \$40,000 Concerning Which No Satisfactory Explanation Was Given Before Commissioner Stevens.

The investigation into the famous "Patriotic Potato" transaction, asked for in the fall of 1915, when the present Judge W. B. Chandler was Royal Commissioner investigating many charges against different departments of the government of that day, but refused, on the ground that there was no time to make the inquiry, is now about to be made.

James McQueen, Esq., Barrister at Law, of Shediac, has been appointed by the government to make the inquiry and his commission under the Great Seal of the province was forwarded some days ago.

Little by little certain facts concerning the much talked of transaction have come to light until the present government cannot well overlook the definite statements made, which are apparently so entirely at variance with the documents on file in the government offices and contradictory as well to the assertions made in and out of the House of Assembly by those who were in office at that time.

The reasons for the appointment of the present royal commissioner, Mr. McQueen, are set forth very fully and conclusively in the terms of the commission handed to him, which is based upon an order-in-council passed by the government at a recent meeting.

Auditor's Discovery. It seems as if the discovery made by one of the auditors of Price Waterhouse & Company in its investigation of the books of the province, really accounts for the beginning of the inquiry which has led to the disclosure of certain facts, making it necessary for an investigation into the whole transaction. This auditor ascertained that the entry in the auditor-general's report of 1915, which represented that some \$28,861.89 had been paid to the province by A. C. Smith & Company, was not in reality a fact, but that instead, A. C. Smith & Company had given a note to the provincial secretary-treasurer for this amount of money and the said note was discounted by the deputy provincial secretary-treasurer of that day and the proceeds of the settlement represented to the people of the province as a cash settlement.

This note for \$28,861.89 was a four months document and it fell due at about the time the legislature of the province assembled for the dispatch of business in March, 1916, and the auditor of Price Waterhouse & Company discovered that it was paid by funds transferred from Moncton by a prominent supporter of the local government. Why this gentleman took it upon himself to pay the note of A. C. Smith & Company is not yet known. No doubt this will be disclosed at the investigation.

The fact, however, that this somewhat interesting statement of how the province obtained such a large sum of money had been effectively hidden from the public, seemed to make it necessary to inquire still further as to the statement which had been filed by the agricultural department of that day with the auditor-general and which was headed: "Returns of collections made by A. C. Smith & Company on account of potatoes sold by the New Brunswick government."

In this statement appeared the name of J. C. Manser, of Havana, as having received and remitted for nearly 8,000 sacks of potatoes, and from Premier Foster wrote to Mr. Manser in May of this year enclosing the statement of A. C. Smith & Company in which his name appeared, and asked if it was correct that he and others named in the statement had received and remitted for potatoes sold by the New Brunswick government.

Mr. Manser's Reply.

Mr. Manser's reply must evidently have been a bomb shell, for he not only denied that he had remitted for any such potatoes but also stated that he and the other merchants did not receive any potatoes from A. C. Smith & Company during the year 1915. Apparently then, according to the facts set out by the premier preliminary to an order-in-council, he had an interview with Colby Smith of the firm of A. C. Smith & Company, and although Mr. Smith 1915, and that he had been acting for the government in 1915 he refused to give the present premier of the province any information whatever in regard to the transaction.

Another paragraph of the report of Premier Foster to the committee of the executive council implies that the payment of the note for \$28,861.89 came from other sources, and then a very significant statement is made that in the investigation held by Royal Commissioner John M. Stevens, K.C., it appeared that one William B. Tennant, of the city of St. John, received from the Nova Scotia Construction Company the sum of \$100,000, and on or about May 29, 1916, deposited the same in the bank and withdrew by check against such deposit \$40,000 in cash, and no satisfactory explanation was given before the said John M. Stevens as to the disposal made by the said William B. Tennant of the said \$40,000 so withdrawn.

This might indicate that the patriotic potato transaction and the final settlement thereof was linked up with the payment of money by the Nova Scotia Construction Company and the disappearance of some \$40,000 of the \$100,000 paid over to Mr. Tennant. No doubt every attempt will be made to get out the facts. P. J. Hughes, barrister-at-law, of Fredericton, has been retained by the government as chief counsel.

The Order-in-Council.

The investigation will open in St. John on Tuesday, September 24. The order-in-council which led to the issue of the royal commission to Mr. McQueen is as follows:

The Honorable the Premier reports for the information of the committee of the executive council:

That the provincial government at the outbreak of the present European war, as an assurance of the loyalty of the people of the province to the mother country, offered a contribution of One hundred thousand bushels of potatoes to the imperial government for the use

of the army and navy, or to be used in such manner as would be deemed advisable.

That the offer was accepted, and the funds necessary to pay for the same, and to make a contribution toward the relief of the Belgian people, amounting in the whole to \$150,000.00 was raised by a special warrant under the provisions of the Audit Act, and by the Act of George V, Chapter 12, provision was made for the issue of debentures for the purpose of meeting the indebtedness in connection therewith.

That during the years 1914 and 1915, it appears that large quantities of potatoes were purchased by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, acting through the Department of Agriculture, from various persons, and that a part of the potatoes so purchased was shipped to Europe for the purpose hereinafter mentioned, and that a large quantity of the said potatoes hereinafter referred to as the "surplus potatoes" were not sent to Europe, but were disposed of through the said Department of Agriculture.

What Accounts Show.

The accounts of the fiscal year 1915 as published by the auditor general indicate that the sum of \$28,861.89 was paid to the province by A. C. Smith & Company, a firm then carrying on the business of produce dealers, in the city of St. John. He and for the amount received from the sale of the said surplus potatoes, the said A. C. Smith & Company acting agent of the Department of Agriculture.

That said A. C. Smith & Company made a return to the auditor general purporting to show the result of the sale as follows:

Return of Collection Made by A. C. Smith & Company on Account of Potatoes Sold by New Brunswick Government.

Order No.	Bbls.	No. of Sacks	Consignee	Sale Price	Total
1.	100	800	A. B. Crosby & Co., Halifax	\$1.85	\$185.00
2.	200	1,600	Liaison, Havana	2.00	400.00
3.	200	1,600	A. Peres & Peres, Havana	2.10	420.00
4.	500	4,000	Milan Alonso, Havana	2.10	1,050.00
5.	1,968	15,744	J. C. Manser, Havana	1.90	3,767.70
6.	1,000	8,000	J. C. Manser, Havana	1.90	1,900.00
7.	125	1,000	Portu & Hnos., Calbarion	2.10	262.50
8.	200	1,600	Benjamin & Hijo, Calbarion	2.10	420.00
9.	200	1,600	Martinez & Co., Calbarion	2.10	420.00
10.	200	1,600	Centers & Co., Calbarion	2.10	420.00
11.	82 1/2	660	W. D. St. John, St. John	1.00	82.50
12.	4,900	39,200	R. G. Walte, St. John	2.30	11,270.00
13.	8,075	64,600	S. DeJ. Rovire & A. Breslau & Co., Santiago	2.10	6,467.50
Less freight on 4,900 barrels to Calbarion at 50c.....				\$2,450.00	
Less freight on 3,068 barrels to Santiago at 50c.....				\$1,534.00	
Paid by A. C. Smith & Co. on account of \$100,000 bonds at \$1.90.....				\$20,000.00	
Proceeds of calls sold to A. C. Smith & Co. job lots.....				968.69	
Paid by A. C. Smith & Co. on account of B. F. Smith, shortage on future of cars in final necking.....				2,875.70	
Paid by A. C. Smith & Co. on account B. F. Smith, refund interest paid on drafts.....				71.85	
				\$28,861.89	

Sold to A. C. Smith & Co. by St. John, 6,000 barrels at \$1.90.....

Proceeds of calls sold to A. C. Smith & Co. job lots.....

Paid by A. C. Smith & Co. on account of B. F. Smith, shortage on future of cars in final necking.....

Paid by A. C. Smith & Co. on account B. F. Smith, refund interest paid on drafts.....

That inquiry has been made of J. C. Manser, Canadian Trade Commissioner in Havana, Cuba, being one of the persons named in the said account, as to the sale of said, and the said J. C. Manser has stated that the said potatoes had been shipped to him by the said A. C. Smith & Company during the year 1915, and that he had been acting for the other firms mentioned in the said account and that those who had answered the inquiry assured him that they had received no potatoes in 1915 from the said A. C. Smith & Company.

That the said J. C. Manser has reported to the premier as follows:

"Hon. W. E. Foster, Fredericton, N. B., Canada.

"Dear Sir:—I have your letter of May 7, 1916, regarding the statement of A. C. Smith & Co. of potatoes sold to different firms in Cuba.

"I have written these firms and have received replies from most of the dealers mentioned of Havana and Santiago, and they all state, as I have done, that they did not receive any potatoes from A. C. Smith & Co. during the year 1915.

"Enclosed you will find copies with translation of the letters I wrote to these firms together with some of their replies, with translation of same.

"This, to my mind, is a very peculiar circumstance. We sometimes hear of sales being made that are not accounted for, but it is very unusual for a firm to hand in returns for goods sold when it cannot be shown that the goods have been sold.

"Yours very truly, (Sgd.) J. C. MANZER."

That after receipt of the said information, the premier had no interview with one H. Colby Smith, of the said A. C. Smith & Co., concerning the said shipment of potatoes; but the said H. Colby Smith refused to give any information concerning the same.

That it has come to the knowledge of the Lieutenant-governor-in-council that the said sum of \$28,861.89 was not paid to the province by the said A. C. Smith & Company, as set out in the auditor-general's account, but that on the 22nd day of December, 1915, a promissory note signed by A. C. Smith & Co., endorsed by William Cruikshank, then deputy provincial treasurer, for the sum of \$28,861.89 and interest, bearing date the third day of November 1915, and payable four months after the date thereof, was discounted at the Bank of Montreal in Fredericton, and the proceeds thereof credited in the accounts of the province as money received from the said A. C. Smith & Company in respect to the sales of the said surplus potatoes; and that upon the maturity of the said note, that is to say, on the 9th day of March, 1916, the same was paid by a transfer of funds from Moncton.

That from information received by the lieutenant-governor-in-council it appears that the money received from the sale of the said surplus potatoes were not applied toward the payment of the said note, but that the funds provided for the payment of the said note were obtained from other sources.

The Stevens Inquiry.

That upon an investigation held by John M. Stevens, K.C., in connection with matters pertaining to the St. John and Quebec Railway Company, it appeared that one William B. Tennant of the city of St. John, on or about the nineteenth day of May, 1916, received from the Nova Scotia Construction Company, Limited, the sum of \$100,000.00 and on or about the 29th day of May, 1916, deposited the same in a bank, persons remitting or receiving any such

and withdrew by cheque against such deposit \$40,000.00 in cash, and no satisfactory explanation was given before the said John M. Stevens, K.C., as to the disposal made by the said William B. Tennant of the said \$40,000.00 so withdrawn.

That in the opinion of the honorable the premier the matters herein particularly set forth are matters of public interest, which it is the duty of the lieutenant-governor-in-council to investigate, and the honorable the premier therefore recommends that a commission be issued under the Great Seal of the Province of New Brunswick to James McQueen of the town of Shediac, in the said province, barrister, to hold an investigation or inquiry into the following matters, that is to say:

(1) To investigate or inquire generally into any matters or things pertaining in any way to the purchase, sale or delivery of the said potatoes, or any part thereof and the moneys paid therefor or received therefrom.

(2) To investigate or inquire respecting the potatoes purchased as aforesaid by any of the persons, firms or corporations from whom purchased; the disposition of the said potatoes, the person or persons, firm or corporation, to whom, by whom, or through whose agency, and the amounts for which the said surplus potatoes or any part thereof were sold or delivered; the amounts of money received by any person or persons, firm or corporation, from the sale of the said surplus potatoes or any part thereof, and the dates and the manner in which the said moneys were remitted to any such person or persons, firm or corporation, by the purchaser or purchasers, of any such surplus potatoes; the names of any such surplus potatoes; the names of any such surplus potatoes; the names of any such surplus potatoes.

SIR ROBERT BORDEN'S APPEAL

(Montreal Herald.)

Sir Robert Borden made a timely speech at the Ottawa exhibition, when he devoted his remarks largely to an appeal for increased thriftiness on the part of the Canadian people. It will be recalled that when, early in the war, a Belgian delegation made a tour of Canada, they confessed themselves fairly staggered by the waste of our natural resources which was evident upon every hand, and remarked that the Belgian people would make fortunes from the waste land around our towns and cities alone. We have changed somewhat since that time. We are now producing enormous quantities of food from what was formerly waste land. But we are still a very wasteful people, especially considering the paramount need for thrift on the part of every nation in these unparalleled times. In every department of the national life, government, municipal, and domestic, we are wasteful of our means. A change can only be effected by individual conviction. When individual conviction forms a public opinion that will look upon waste in any form as a sin against the cause of liberty and civilization, then both public waste and private waste will cease. One of the first lessons which we as a people have to learn is to cease wasting the money which is now flowing into Canada in such a plentiful stream. The day is coming when we will need this money, every cent of it. Many a man now making easy money is spending it apparently without dreaming that the present driving activity and overwhelming demand cannot possibly last. The duty of us all is to conserve our money just as we conserve for the winter the summertime products of our gardens.

There is now in Canada a general feeling of satisfaction because of the big and powerful way in which the United States is pushing into the war alongside the Canadians, the Australians, the British, the French, and the Italians. The feeling of the Canadian now is that "we are all here" who ought, to be here, and everything is going to be all right.

One paragraph in an Ontario paper ventured to say that one would think from reading the American papers that they only were in the war. But the writer of that paragraph has been having a lively time of it at the hands of other journals. We see no justification for any such comment. The recent British and Canadian successes were featured in larger type on the front pages of New York and Chicago papers than in those of Toronto and Montreal.

Nobody should know, however, as well as Canadians—because we have been through it ourselves—how natural it will be for the American press to take a special interest in the operations of the American forces.

The Canadian newspapers have, quite naturally, taken a particular interest in the Canadian corps. It is expected of us. That is what we are here for. Every Canadian takes a special interest in our own troops and in the battles they engage in. The man would be a cold sort of fish who did not. It will be the same with the Americans; they will naturally back, support, approve, and cheer for their own troops and be most interested in what they do. But that is precisely as it should be.

MUST GO TO BERLIN.

(Illinois State Register.)

As the war of the rebellion was not considered ended until Sherman marched from Atlanta to the sea and until the Union army marched through the streets of the Southern Confederacy; as Germany, in 1917, granted neither mercy nor peace to France until the German troops had arrogantly marched down the boulevards of Paris; as the Huns have dragged over four years, determined to desecrate Paris again; as they have dropped explosives into London and brutally ignored all civilized rules of warfare; as they have sworn to destroy France and crush England; as they have made this a war of conquest and have made neutral territory desolate through fire, pillage and unspeakable outrages upon defenseless women and children; as they have invaded the writers of America, fired upon our shores, destroyed ships of commerce, drowned non-combatants and insulted the United States; there must not and cannot be a final peace until the Allies have conquered and until the perpetrators of these outrages surrender.

Inspector Makes Arrest at Moncton, Followed by Fine—Case Under Factory Act.

Moncton, N. B., Sept. 13.—In the police court here, today, one of the colored porters employed on the C. G. R., was fined \$100 and costs for violation of the prohibition act. He was arrested here this morning on arrival of the Maritime express from Montreal. He had in his possession two or three "long necks" and two new paint gallon tins containing whiskey. During search of the train a grip containing liquor was taken from a passenger. He also was taken to court and fined \$20 for having liquor in his possession. Nine paint tins containing liquor seized recently were taken to St. John today by the chief prohibition inspector.

Another Moncton merchant was before the court today charged with violating the New Brunswick Factory Act by not providing safety for his employees.

His case was adjourned until Monday. Fred Gillen, former employee of the C. G. R. offices, Moncton, who for a few years has been on the staff of the Winnipeg high school, has accepted the position as professor of French in the University of Wisconsin. He is the son of James Gillen, Moncton.

Many local authorities throughout the dominion, it is pointed out, have failed to enforce the anti-losing law effectively. More effective and uniform enforcement is considered necessary for the purpose of securing greater production and supplies urgently needed for the prosecution of the war.

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The regulations governing this liability are published in the Canada Gazette (Extra) of 21st August, 1918; copy whereof may be obtained upon application through the post to the Director of the Military Service Branch of the Department of Justice at Ottawa.

UNITED STATES CITIZENS of the description aforesaid who were IN CANADA ON 30th JULY, 1918, HAVE SIXTY DAYS FROM THAT DATE within which TO EXERCISE AN OPTION TO ENLIST or enroll IN THE FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES, OR TO RETURN to the United States; and THOSE WHO for any reason SUBSEQUENTLY BECOME LIABLE TO MILITARY SERVICE IN CANADA HAVE THIRTY DAYS FROM THE DATE of the securing OF SUCH LIABILITY within which to exercise the like option. It is stipulated by the Convention also that certificates of diplomatic exemption may be granted within the optional periods aforesaid, EVERY CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES TO WHOM THE REGULATIONS APPLY is required to REPORT TO THE REGISTRAR under the Military Service Act, 1917, FOR THE province or DISTRICT WITHIN WHICH he is, in the manner by the regulations prescribed, WITHIN TEN DAYS AFTER THE EXPIRY OF HIS OPTIONAL PERIOD and will be SUBJECT TO PENALTIES IF without reasonable excuse HE FAIL SO TO REPORT. For the information of those whom it may concern Sections 3 and 4 defining the requirements of registration, with which it will be necessary strictly to comply, are set out substantially as follows:—

REGULATIONS

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4. EVERY UNITED STATES CITIZEN WHO HAS DIPLOMATIC EXEMPTION, although not otherwise subject to these regulations SHALL WITHIN TEN DAYS after the granting of the same truly REPORT TO THE REGISTRAR, in like manner and with the same particulars as required by the last preceding section; and in addition he shall embody in his report a true and complete statement of the particulars of his certificate of diplomatic exemption, NEGLECT OF FAILURE without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirements of this section SHALL CONSTITUTE AN OFFENCE PUNISHABLE IN THE MANNER AND BY THE PENALTIES provided in the last preceding section.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH.

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