

DOCTOR CATTO

Writes a Letter and Stirs Up a Hornet's Nest.

HOUSE OF COMMONS THE SCENE.

Parliamentarians and Statesmen Discuss the Doctor's Sanity.

WAS A REGULAR FIELD DAY.

The Yukon Administration Handled Without Gloves—Dawson From a Moral Standpoint.

The 28th day of June last, was another red letter day in the house of parliament. The proceedings of that day's session were about as lively as, when a year ago, Sir Charles Herbert Tupper jumped into the middle of the arena and demanded a judicial investigation into the Yukon administration.

The recent hornets' nest was stirred up by no one other than Dr. Catto, of Dawson, who attained fame last spring as the author of numerous resolutions which for some reason or other he could never have duly and properly considered at public meetings.

Apparently the doctor concluded to take the bull by the horns and so wrote a letter down to Ottawa, which was read in parliament on the above date mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Bell, member of parliament from Pictou.

Portions of the letter only are produced here by reason of lack of space, but enough is produced to show pretty conclusively that Dr. Catto had his fighting clothes on and was out for blood.

The letter formed the basis for a discussion of several hours duration in the house, during the course of which the doctor was variously termed a "lunatic," "a vicious and immoral person," and numerous other equally choice epithets.

The following extracts from the letter will show its general trend and serve to explain the grounds upon which the doctor's sanity is attacked by the Liberal leaders in parliament:

"Do not suppose that I have written from an alien's point of view. Though I am a stranger in Canada, I am a British subject, born in Scotland, and a graduate of two Scottish universities, and have many friends in all parts of Great Britain, who know that I would disdain to write a single word except in the interest of my country, and in the interest of Canada."

"On whom then rests the responsibility of this chaotic administration of affairs on the Yukon? It rests on the government and its agents. Overcome by a sense of official importance, and drunk with unmerited power, they have been capricious, unjust, tyrannical and foolish. Stirred only by motives that are despicable, they have carved their country with a pitiless hand. In doing so, they have cut the conduits of all precious currents, moral, political and economic, that are the life-blood of a community—currents that, allowed to run in their proper channels, would have been, in this case, a source of rejuvenation to Canada."

"Any one living for some time in Dawson finds that he is not living in a social community. There is no classification of the present inhabitants of the Yukon districts. They have, however, been forcibly and roughly cut into two divisions. The government, with its various rings; and the people, the armed and the defenceless, the oppressors and the oppressed, the gatherers of fines and taxes and their victims, the private dealers in monopolies and permits and the unwilling purchasers of monopolized goods; on the one side, those who sell, barter and give away not only the land, but the liberties of the Canadian people in such a manner as to raise a continual suspicion that they participate privately in the benefits they bestow; on the other side, a people compelled to pay from their own hard-labored hands the price for which their lands and their liberties are bought and sold."

"Such was the treatment dealt us by an administration that had renounced the commercial and industrial regulations of the country, that ignored the mining laws and the criminal code of Canada, and was already discredited by a great series of wholesale scandals in connection with the town site, the water front, Dominion creek, Dominion benches, and by a host of individual affairs whose name is legion."

"Observe how matters stand in consequence of the various changes in the mining regulations. All fractional claims, all groups of ten alternate claims, all claims that have not been prospected and represented, now fall into what is euphemistically called crown reserve, but more appropriately known as Sifton's reserve, since the minister of the interior disposes of it privately as he privately determines. Has he always been careful to dispose of this valuable reserve belonging to the people of Canada to absolutely reliable friends, deserving of their country's love? Much of this so-called crown reserve has already proved valuable. As time goes on the miners working on adjacent ground will give a prospective value to more and more of it. In the meantime, it remains idle, costing the minister of the interior nothing. Thousands of men in the Yukon territory are unable to find employment or ground to prospect. But they dare not touch this precious reserve, which already amounts to more than nine-tenths of the gold-bearing area of the Yukon district—a territory larger than Great Britain. What do the people of Canada think of all this being in the hands of the minister of the interior and his estimable friends? Think of it—all this disposed of in accordance with section 16 of the mining regulations in such manner as may be decided by the minister of the interior."

"The claims in that Dominion creek reserve were, in the first instance, illegally withheld from their locators by Walsh, who had no more power to close Dominion creek than he had to close the Yukon district, but nevertheless ratified Fawcett's closure with his fine monarchical sweep as if he had been, autocrat of Canada. The minister of the interior advertised these claims for sale, with the usual governmental proviso that the highest or any offer would not necessarily be accepted. This, proviso, which works no injustice when we are dealing with an administration that acts in good faith, reduced the sale to such an open farce that honest business men and miners who were not in the ring, and who knew the bold proclivities of the department of the interior, were well aware that it was useless for them to make an offer. Notwithstanding this, the Dawson offers were far higher than those of Ottawa. But the claims were sold to a ring in Ottawa for the price of a solitary third-rate placer claim. Will the minister of the interior explain to the people of Canada why he accepted those Ottawa offers, and sold their ground for less than one-twentieth part of its value?"

"The Yukon policy of the minister of the interior is very simple. It is simply a policy of private aggrandizement at the expense of Canada. His plan of campaign is equally simple. It consists of a temporary suspension of law and suits his convenience and the convenience of his friends. It is a plan of campaign applicable to the appropriation of every square inch of the surface and every cubic inch of the contents of a new unappropriated country. It is applicable with equal effect to the timber of Manitoba and to the gold and timber of the Yukon. All that he has to do is to suspend the laws for a short time so as to declare a closure on the country. This has the remarkable effect of converting the country into 'crown reserve,' to be disposed of in such manner as may be decided by the minister of the interior."

"Every saloon pays a license of \$2500. There are ten large saloons in Dawson city. Every roadhouse pays a license of \$500. Say there are 50 such roadhouses in the Yukon district. That would give \$100,000 in two years from saloons and roadhouses. Prior to the imposition of those licenses, a large number of business houses of different descriptions were selling liquor. In the fall of 1898 they were fined \$200 each, near the time when the government came down with its most rapacious swoop of all to fill its local treasury with the universal fine on the prostitutes and gamblers of \$50 each and 'costs.' Every gambler pays \$56 per month, \$672 per annum. There are not less than 100 professional gamblers. That gives \$134,400 in two years from gambling."

"Every prostitute pays \$56 as a commencement of the business, thereafter \$10 per month, \$176 per annum. Say there are 150 prostitutes, again a low estimate, and we have a revenue of \$26,400 from prostitution."

"Public gambling is a crime in Canada. Dawson city contains at least ten

large gambling saloons, in which the police are to be seen daily; but no attempt has been made to suppress gambling. On the contrary, it has been in a manner, legalized by the sanction and connivance of the police and the magistrates, who collect the monthly revenue from the tables in the shape of what they call a fine. They may call it what they please. The plain English of it is that the government runs the gambling on something better than a percentage basis, because it collects the revenue whether the house has lost or won during the month. A man from each house goes to the 'sacred temple of justice,' and pleads guilty for the gambling fraternity of the house, and pays \$56 per month for each of the gamblers in the house. We have heard of one house paying \$830 per month, and Mr. Marjoriebanks informs us that his monthly contribution for gambling in the Horseshoe was \$728. They wanted him to pay \$500 extra because there were girls in the house. The direct revenue from gambling in Dawson city cannot be less than we formerly stated, namely, \$67,200 per annum."

"This is not all. In each saloon there are arrangements from which the government draws \$2500 per annum in addition to the secret monopoly, for restoring the victimized miner to a state of physical and mental comfort, provided he has enough money left to pay for them. There is monopolized fire-water made in Dawson city, and called whisky, at the rate of 50 cents and \$1 per glass. There is an invitation to an exhilarating dance; and then to the private boxes with the smile and comforting touch of perfumed ladies, dressed for their work, who order monopolized effervescent drinks called champagne, for which the miner has to pay at the rate of \$30 per bottle. Complete intoxication follows, and the miner is arrested on the charge of drunkenness. The Yukon administration, which has been robbing him indirectly throughout the whole performance, now comes forward courageously and empties his gold sack by a fine of \$30 and costs. And this is called government. And thus hundreds of young men who never saw the inside of a courtroom till they came here, are decloyed to slaughter in the Dawson 'temple of justice.'"

"Prostitution is a crime in Canada. Dawson city contains several rows of women, perhaps 150, set apart by the government, publicly engaged in that trade. The police magistrates collect the revenue from the women in the shape of what they call a 'fine.' The plain English of it is that the government runs the public women of Dawson as a source of revenue, just as it runs the gamblers."

"The law of Canada says you must not gamble in public; the administration says you may gamble in public, but you must not cheat a policeman, and if you are a gambler by profession, you must pay \$56 per month whether you cheat or not, whether you win or lose. The law of Canada says a woman shall not engage in prostitution; the administration says she may trade in that way; that if she does, she must contribute a share of her earnings and receive the visits of 'the medical officer of health' at his own terms."

Blockade Removed.

About June 1st last matters were even between the railroad and the C. D. Co.'s steamers—no water and no freight. The railroad commenced delivering freight before the river rose, and for about three weeks the amount of freight on hand at Whitehorse increased steadily. When the river did rise, the stage of water reached compared favorably with the most palmy days for river men of the season of 1899, there being a five foot channel over the entire distance between Whitehorse and Dawson with the water still rising steadily.

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