

The Evening Times and Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., APRIL 7, 1914

The St. John Evening Times is printed at 27 and 29 Cambridge Street every evening (Sunday excepted) by the St. John Times Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., a company incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies Act.

THE DUGAL CHARGES.

A painful sensation was felt throughout the province this morning when news was received that charges of the gravest character had been made against the premier of the province, in connection with the leasing of crown lands on Queen lands.

Put in the briefest form the charges are that the premier, who is also minister of lands and mines, was a party to the extension of about \$100,000 from leases of crown timber lands.

It is charged that through the agency of William H. Berry, chief superintendent of leasing of the crown lands department, and under the direction of Premier Fleming, the leases of timber lands were compiled to pay \$15 per square mile over and above the bonus, the whole amounting to about \$100,000.

It is further charged that no portion of this sum was accounted for or paid into the revenues of the province, and Mr. Dugal, who formulates the charges, asks that a committee of the house be named to investigate the whole matter.

It seems incredible that Mr. Dugal would make so serious a charge without strong supporting evidence. There will be no disposition, however, to condemn the premier in advance; but he will be expected to facilitate in every possible way a prompt and complete inquiry into the whole matter.

There have been rumors that when the story of the leasing of crown lands under the new act was told it would reveal the Fleming government in a very bad light, but now a definite charge has been made, associating with it the name of the premier himself, and there is but one course to pursue.

The thing to do, and the only thing to do is to probe these charges. If the government should show any disposition to evade the inquiry, it would become the duty of the lieutenant-governor to intervene, and he may be relied on to do so.

One fact is perfectly clear. It is that this government must not be permitted to put through any legislation granting increased aid to the St. John and Quebec Railway Company until its skirts have been cleared in relation to the charges of blackmail in connection with the timber leases.

Not only the honor of the premier, but of the government, the legislature and the province is involved in this matter of the charges preferred by Mr. Dugal. Only a prompt and full inquiry will satisfy the people. If the charges can be sustained, the fate of the government is sealed. Partnership in the house could hardly dare to go the length of choking off the inquiry, but if it should every member would be a marked man, and there would still be the lieutenant-governor to be reckoned with.

In view of the charges made one reads again with interest the statement made by Premier Fleming about the middle of March on the working out of the Crown Timber Land Act. Referring to the fact that there had been no complete survey of crown lands, and that the government had no detailed particulars as to the various areas of the crown lands and their real value, he said that, "to obtain a full and complete survey would be a very costly proceeding, and to name the cost would probably stagger the house." The premier said that the new policy was working out very satisfactorily, and that the new order of things, greatly increasing the financial returns to the province, "had all been brought about with practically no protest from the lumbermen."

There is a remarkable difference between this statement and the charges formulated by Mr. Dugal. If there is any ground for these charges, what shall be said about the "previous utterances of Premier Fleming?"

RUNS TRUE TO FORM.

An Ottawa correspondent says that the Borden government "has run true to form." In other words it stands by its friends the manufacturers, and gives them a little more protection. The hope that there might be a tariff revision downward is destroyed by the budget speech. There is to be no free food and no free agricultural implements, although there is a slight reduction in the duties on binders and mowers. The manufacturers fare better, as there is increased protection for iron and steel beams, and an increase in the drawback on imported pig iron, a drawback on bituminous coal for smelting and foundry purposes, an increase in the tariff on iron and steel tubing, and various other articles, while iron rods are placed on the dutiable list.

So far as the duty on food stuffs is concerned, the present unfavorable conditions between Canada and the United States are to be continued. The Canadian farmers are to have the advantage of a free market in the United States, but there is to be no compensating change in favor of the Canadian consumers. The cost of living is to be made a little higher by increased duties in some directions, and that is precisely the sum and substance of Hon. Mr. White's tariff message. The Borden government "runs true to form." It stands for the protected interests and ignores the needs of the consumers. It increases the expenditure, increases the debt, and lays the blame upon financial stringency. The people can only get relief from the burden by placing in power a government which will revise the tariff downward, conduct the country's affairs with a reasonable regard for prudence and economy, and bring back again the prosperous times which prevailed under the Laurier regime.

The readers of the St. John Standard had to buy the Telegraph this morning to get the real news from Fredericton. Why did the St. John Standard this morning fail to tell its readers about the charges made against Premier Fleming in the legislature last night?

When Premier Fleming announced that he expected the legislature to prorogue last week he evidently did not anticipate what has since transpired. The legislature of this province has now a matter to deal with that is of even more momentous interest than the Valley Railway bond guarantee.

Mr. J. Norton Griffiths, M. P., cables that two dredges are on the way to St. John and that a third will be sent immediately. The coming summer should be a very busy one at Courtenay Bay. Mr. Dugal of Madawaska, whom supporters of the Fleming government have professed to regard as a joke, will now perhaps be taken more seriously.

The use of bridge timber owned by the province to build barns for friends of the government may be good politics, but is not good business. The reform candidates in the city of Montreal were badly beaten in yesterday's civic elections. Let us hope that the civic elections in St. John will result in giving the city the best city council available out of all the candidates in the field.

The Fredericton Gleaner announces that Premier Fleming is to take a long rest. This announcement was made by Mr. Dugal asked for a committee to inquire into the charges made against the premier. If there is any ground whatever for those charges he will undoubtedly take a long rest.

The Fredericton Gleaner says the federal government has agreed to pay the entire cost of the bridges over the St. John and Kennebec rivers. Before any further legislation is enacted, however, in connection with the Valley Railway the Dugal charges must be investigated.

Who promoted the foreshores bill, which was suddenly withdrawn by the government after its second reading because of a protest from various parts of the province? It was a government bill. The government assumed responsibility for it, and attempted to crowd it through without giving those whose interests would be sacrificed an opportunity to be heard. Were some friends of the government to profit by the measure? By whom was the bill drawn? Did it emanate from the city of St. John? An answer to these questions would be much appreciated. Perhaps the members for the city and county can give the information. Surely the government would consult some of them in relation to the bill. Their constituents would be very glad to hear from them.

John H. Lancaster of Somerset, Me., has lately secured a valuable antique in a pewter platter which was brought over in the Mayflower by Martha Parker, who had been given it by her grandmother. The dish is circular, measures fifteen inches across, and is badly scarred.

BIRTHDAYS OF NOTABILITIES

TUESDAY, APRIL 7.

Many good stories are told about David McNeill, vice-president of the C. P. R., whose sixty-second birthday occurs today, but probably the most characteristic relates to the first year of his sojourn in Canada. On his arrival from Scotland in 1874 he obtained employment in the service of the Northern Railway and was sent to Collingwood to assist the agent there. The boys on the road soon began to call him "Oatmeal" because of his broad accent. After a time he was sent to Meaford to fill a temporary position and while there began to learn telegraphy.

One day, so the story goes, having an idle hour, he grounded the telegraph wire and started with dogged determination to practice the code. Meanwhile the despatcher at Allandale wanted to send an important order but could not raise Meaford. He worked the key until almost frantic and then having a suspicion of what was wrong, called up Thornbury and ordered the conductor of a passing train to "take Oatmeal off the wire" when he reached Meaford. The conductor found the Meaford agent on the platform and informed him some-thing was wrong with the telegraph. The latter hurried into the station and found McNeill busily at work. "Hey, Mac," he shouted, "drop that key. You're holding up the whole blooming line." Luckily the notice was not published, and "Oatmeal on the wire" became a standing joke among the railroad employes.

LIGHTER VEIN

Apparently "The paper says there's a crisis in Mexico. What's a crisis?" "A scarcity of news, my boy."

The Doubtful Compliment "She—Oh, there goes Peggy Brown! Isn't she lovely! I wish I was half as good looking!" "He—Oh, but you are."

Smiles That Slip "Inasmuch as I wish Marcella would wear the muffs that won't come off." "Oatmeal—Is she worth it?" "Inasmuch as; but when I kissed her last evening, I got rouse on my lips."

Bound in Morocco "Listen to this: The Emperor of Morocco includes in his suite thirty keepers of the Imperial Umbrella." "Umph! I'll bet he's come into contact with some of the fellows down at our office."

Objects to It "Do you play auction bridge at your house?" "No; I like the game, but my wife won't permit it." "Why not?" "She won't stand for any game where she has to play the dummy."

Bolling it Down "What's the fuss over there in that corner?" "I'm sending a telegram." "I know that. But why the facial contortions?" "She's trying to tell her husband what she thinks of him in ten words."

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FORESHORES BILL IS WITHDRAWN

The Government is Forced To Back Down

MYSTERIOUS MEASURE

Questions Now Asked Regarding Its Real Meaning—Sweeping Provisions Would Have Caused Trouble

In the face of determined opposition to the government bill authorizing the provincial government to give away the foreshore rights on any ungranted tidal waters, river or lake, Premier Fleming decided to withdraw the bill last evening. Hon. John E. Wilson telephoned the leaders of the movement in protest to that effect and later in the evening Mayor Frink received a telegram from the premier saying the bill had been withdrawn.

The county secretary and recorder were in conference with the city council yesterday afternoon regarding the bill and as a result a strong telegram protesting against the passage of the bill on the third reading was at once despatched. A delegation would have gone to Fredericton this morning to demand a hearing against the bill and only the messages from Messrs. Fleming and Wilson prevented this step being taken. Opposition to the bill had developed in other parts of the province as well, and the premier decided to bow to the storm which arose so quickly after the bill was given its second reading on Friday evening.

The origin of the bill appears to be shrouded in mystery although it is suspected the measure was put forward for favor interests friendly to the government. What Was Behind It? "The bill is killed," said J. A. Likely who led the opposition last evening, "but I think the public should know who was responsible for it, who drew it and for whose benefit it was conceived. It was

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Portland, April 7—Just what kind of liquor is being sold in Portland was demonstrated when Clifford H. Libby, instructor in chemistry at the Portland High School, gave evidence at a hearing of the court yesterday. The mayor and commissioners appeared to be unanimous in protesting against the bill although the telegram was sent in the name of Commissioner McLellan as warden of the municipality, the county rights being considered in danger.

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