

THE FIGHT OPENS AUSPICIOUSLY

The City Campaign Inaugurated Last Night by a Mass Meeting of Government Supporters.

Masterly Exposition of the Policy of the Administration by Messrs. Drury and Duff—Mr. Riley Scores the Opposition.

The opening mass meeting of the campaign, so far as the city is concerned, was held last night in the A. O. U. W. hall, the building being well filled with electors, who had braved the inclemency of the weather in order to hear the candidates discuss the political issues of the day. Every elector present was well rewarded, as for two hours Messrs. Riley, Drury, Hall and Duff laid before them the most substantial reasons why Victoria should return to Ottawa two supporters of the present administration. Messrs. Riley and Hall contented themselves with brief addresses, both of which were well received, the facious way in which the first named handled his opponents and scored their tactics creating much amusement and putting the audience in good humor to receive the good Liberal doctrine which was afterwards dispensed to them.

Of the speeches of Messrs. Drury and Duff there was but one opinion expressed on all sides. In these younger members of the fighting line of the party in this province, the government have two of the ablest champions of their policy in the west. Mr. Duff is by no means a tyro in public speaking, and therefore his magnificent effort last night hardly came as a surprise. But the speech of Mr. Drury, whose oratorical talents have hitherto been untapped, completely captivated the audience, his trenchant arraignment of the opposition policy and his admirable logic winning him many supporters among those who have hitherto given their allegiance to the Conservative party. In the event of his election, now generally conceded, Victoria will not lack an able champion to plead her cause even on the floor of the national parliament and among her ablest statesmen.

Chairman's Address.

A. G. McCandless took the chair and said that the state of the weather and the fact that there were several other attractions in the city no doubt accounted for the fact that there were not more people present. As an independent voter he felt that he could not vote for the Conservative ticket, and it was not for the interest of either the city or country that any one should do so. He was firm in his belief that the Liberal government had done more for the country in the past few years than the Conservative government had done in all the years it was in power. There was a general increase in prosperity all around. He referred to the preferential tariff and other good measures that had been enacted by the Liberal government. He was not prepared to say that the government had done full justice to British Columbia, but it had done more than the Conservative government. The bill to construct the Yukon-Teslin railway was defeated by Senator Macdonald and Messrs. Earle and Prior. If that road had been built it would have killed Skagway and built up a good business for this section. There were many reasons why the present government should be continued in office, and members should be returned from this city who were in sympathy with the government. He was opposed to Messrs. Prior and Earle on the ground that they were not in sympathy with the government and for that reason they would be unable to do anything for the country. The chairman then introduced Mr. George Riley.

MR. RILEY.

Mr. George Riley, who was received with great applause, referred joyfully in opening to the appeal for support for Messrs. Prior and Earle because of their great service to the city. He said he believed that he could do more in six months than Messrs. Prior and Earle had done in twelve years. He had gone to Ottawa last year and with the assistance of Senator Templeman had secured the settlement of the right of way question through the Songhees Indian reserve, which was the entering wedge to the settlement of that whole matter. "Now," continued Mr. Riley, "these candidates claim to be gentlemen. Yet take copies of the Montreal Star, bearing the title of the Toronto Globe, and enclosing the pictures of the Conservative candidates in this city are being peddled about by the secretary of the association. Col. Prior says he is not a party to it. He is a party to it. A man who would do that is no gentleman, and I would be very sorry to ride in the train to Ottawa with him. (Loud laughter.) He owed an apology to Mr. McPhillips. He had always accused that gentleman of talking too much, but feared he might drop into the same rut. Mr. McPhillips had claimed that the Liberals had appropriated the term from the Liberal-Conservative, but the facts proved the Tories to be the sinners in this respect. Mr. Riley said he believed the city was on the eve of great prosperity. The elec-

tors would be called on in a few days to say whether they wished this to be the terminus of the Great Northern railway. If elected he would favor not only this step but also the extension of the Island road to Cape Scott. The subsidy for this road had been practically pledged last year and would have been granted had the parties been ready to go on with it. Were that done Victoria would control the northern trade. (Applause.) Every day, almost, the papers contained accounts of large consignments of gold arriving in Seattle from the Yukon. What benefit was this gold to Victoria? The public work he indicated would direct the stream of Canadian gold to a Canadian city.

The speaker also mentioned the establishment of a mint and the claim Victoria had for that institution. "Will we be likely to get it," he asked, "if Earle and Prior are elected? Not much. I would almost like to see Mayor Gordon elected in Vancouver if Victoria elects two Liberals for reasons of a similar nature." He also referred joyfully to the candidature of Mr. Dewdney at New Westminster, "And the Sea Queen Wales" is running for Nanaimo," he concluded, "but it won't 'wake' worth a cent." (Laughter and cheers.)

RICHARD HALL, M.P.P.

Richard Hall, M.P.P., said that although he was a member of the legislature, speaking was not in his line, and he would as leave be in South Africa and let a Boer take a snip shot at him as make a speech. He referred to a remark made by a Conservative after the election of 1894. Meeting a friend who said that although the Liberals had been returned, they would only be there for four years. "For four years," replied the other, "now that they are in power they will remain there for twenty years." "And so they will," commented the speaker, "if they continue to administer affairs in the same business-like way as they have for the past four years."

Continuing, he said that the aggregation of men at the head of affairs were certainly business men. In connection with preferential trade, he said, business between nations was regulated by the same conditions and influences as private business.

So admirably had affairs been administered that 400,000 or 500,000 had been added to the population of the country, and taxation had not fallen any heavier than before, although expenditure had increased.

Victoria particularly required friends at Ottawa just now, when the harbor needed attention and the island railroad extension was under contemplation. Regarding the sending of the contingents, he repudiated the suggestion that the government was unwilling to send troops. The government was thoroughly loyal. Sir Wilfrid Laurier had acted without indecent haste, but had felt public opinion, and when he found it favoring helping the Motherland the contingent was about in three weeks. The Conservative candidates were making a great deal of a contention that Canada was the eleventh of the colonies to offer aid to the Motherland. But they forgot to say that the Canadian contingent was the second to go. (Applause.)

Briefly itemizing the reforms instituted by the administration, the speaker instanced the abolition of sub-letting of contracts, the doing away with piece work, the establishment of a conciliatory board of arbitration, the increase in the tax on the Chinese. The Liberals had raised the tax as much in four years as the Conservatives had in eighteen years, and he fully believed that if returned they would evolve a settlement of that troublesome question as satisfactory as that of the Manitoba school question. (Loud applause.)

Concluding, Mr. Hall remarked that although it had been claimed that electors should not be governed by motives of self-interest, no one need be conscience-stricken in supporting the Liberal candidates, as they would be voting for the best government Canada had ever had. (Loud applause.)

MR. DRURY.

R. L. Drury met with a rousing reception, and in opening condemned the tactics of the opposition as evidenced by the distribution of the Globe edition of the Star.

He next took up the report of remarks of Col. Prior in regard to the Crow's Nest Pass railway, in which he was said to have stated that the C. P. R. had not received an acre of land, and the Liberal government had given it to Messrs. Cox and Jaffray. He had called on Col. Prior, and that gentleman had utterly denied making the statement. Any reference to the granting of the lands of the Crow's Nest by the Dominion government was absurd, as the grant had been made by the local government in the B. C. Southern. What Col. Prior had said was that the Conservatives offered \$1,500,000 and a loan of \$20,000,000, whereas the Liberals had given \$3,000,000, which was perfectly correct. Yet this difference was more than met by the securing of 50,000 acres of the coal grant and by the reduction of the freight rates from 10 to 33 per cent. These remissions in freight rates more than made up the difference in the two

figures. The government's action had been the first check that great corporations, the C. P. R., had received. (Applause.)

He also spoke of the Great Development of Trade

under Liberal rule. It was a striking fact that for the first time in years the manufacturers had this year not an exhibit at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, owing, as Manager Hill said, to the fact that they were too busy in filling orders to prepare goods for exhibition. Not only was this the case, but the plant factories were running night and day, indicating not alone activity in a certain branch of business, but that the people were prosperous, because pianos are an article of luxury which are only purchased when people have ample means. (Applause.)

In the districts their opponents had led the electors to believe that their binder twine was taxed to-day more than ever. The government had entirely removed the duty, and besides the factory at Kingston penitentiary only supplied one-tenth of the trade, and there was the freest competition in this article.

They did not tell the farmers that the price of twine was due to natural causes—to the war and other causes—and that every ship chandler in the city could tell them the same thing.

He asked whether or not the prosperity of the country should be employed for election purposes. If it was the opposition themselves had made it an issue, because they have predicted that under Liberal rule the country's prosperity would be crushed. (Hear, hear.)

Their opponents, however, should not be treated too seriously, as Sir Hibbert Tupper himself had stated at Brandon that during the heat of a campaign he would not believe anyone on a single statement made by a candidate, in view of the fact that at Sydney in 1896 his venerable father had asked to be judged for all time by a prediction that the Conservative party would sweep the country.

He also touched upon

The Unpleasant Surprise

which Sir Hibbert Tupper had at Brandon, when after replying the old in Vancouver if Victoria elects two Liberals for reasons of a similar nature." He also referred joyfully to the candidature of Mr. Dewdney at New Westminster, "And the Sea Queen Wales" is running for Nanaimo," he concluded, "but it won't 'wake' worth a cent." (Laughter and cheers.)

He also quoted the remarks of Sir Charles Tupper in the House, when in the submission of the fiscal policy of the government the leader of the opposition had predicted ruin to Canadian industries. He was now trying to evade the effect of that statement by saying that the tariff had since changed. So it had been, but the net reduction had been only about \$400,000, and if the original statement were true the reduction, only emphasized its force.

Coming to the preference, he said it had been of the greatest benefit to traders. At this very port the remission in duties had amounted to \$62,000. This had been in the pockets of the citizens of Victoria. He didn't care where the money went, but he did care where it came from. He said that the money went to the consumer or the trader. If to the latter, the money went to make wages higher and to enlarge accommodation. If to the former, it was remitted off the taxes.

The speaker created considerable amusement by referring to the contest in Grey county between Dr. Landarkin and Mr. Richardson, the Conservative candidate, who was defeated. He said that the Conservative platform, ran an advertisement in the papers stating that owing to the great reduction in the tariff he was enabled to sell goods cheaper. (Laughter.) He reminded the speaker of a bill poster he saw that the rejection of Messrs. Drury and Riley will be a most serious, perhaps fatal, blow to the commercial interests of this city. Remember, gentlemen, the question before you is not whether you shall be represented by Liberals or Conservative members. The question is, shall you be represented by the government candidates, or shall you vote for the next five years, as for the past four, be without representation in the Parliament of Canada?

"You have, sir, referred to enterprises of very great moment to this city. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance of the extension of the E. & N. railway to the northern end of the Island. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance to this city of a railway to the Yukon, having for its southern terminus a port in British Columbia. I am not wrong, I think, in saying that the construction of these works will involve the expenditure of many hundreds of thousands of dollars in this province. If, sir, in addition to these enterprises we should succeed in having established a branch of the royal mint in this city, I think I am not wrong in saying that every dollar of trade would be many times augmented, and for years to come the root of land in this city which would not be many times increased in value."

"The plain business question which we have to face is this, shall we place the interests of Victoria in reference to these matters in the hands of Messrs. Prior and Earle, or in the hands of Messrs. Drury and Riley? We have certain demands to make, and many favors to ask from the government of the Dominion. We have two sets of advocates. On the one hand, we have Messrs. Drury and Riley, who are not only in political sympathy with the members of the government and their leading supporters in and out of parliament, but who through themselves and their own intimate personal connections in Eastern Canada, have been associated for many years in various ways with the leading Liberals and with the men who now control, and for years to come will control the Federal politics of this country. On the other hand, you have Col. Prior and Mr. Earle. They are not only political opponents of the government, but their followers. They are, in addition, bitter and uncompromising partisans. Col. Prior has been going about this constituency, and not once, but many times declaring the Laurier administration the most corrupt administration known to this country. He has proclaimed Mr. Sifton as a booby, and Mr. Tarte as a traitor. Gentlemen, when your cause comes before the government and parliament of Canada, do you wish to entrust it to men who have been denouncing the men to whom they are now going to ask for aid and support, or will you not leave it to men to whom arguments and representations on your behalf there will be added all the influence which comes with friendship and esteem and mutual confidence? It must

be met by the government of the Dominion. We have two members out of a total of six allotted to the province of British Columbia. You must also remember that on the basis of the present population of the Dominion, the unit of representation is somewhere between twenty and twenty-five thousand. A redistribution of seats must take place before the close of the next parliament, and if the interests of Victoria are not protected by the use of every weapon which our armory affords; if we should commit the unpardonable fault of sending two opponents of the administration to represent us in the House of Commons, we may, not unnaturally, look forward to the serious risk of losing the favored position which we now occupy."

"But you are asked to support these gentlemen out of gratitude for their public services. What are these services? Let the point out. Sir, when the life and works of Lieut-Col. Edward Gawler Prior and Mr. Thomas Earle come to be written, they will doubtless contain many interesting things, but you will search the volumes in vain for the record of any public act which has redounded to the advantage of the citizens of this community. (Laughter and applause.)

"But since they appeal to their services, let us look at

The Plain Facts in connection with the most vital question, so far as the city is concerned, which has come before parliament since the construction of the C. P. R.

"Let me briefly recount the circumstances. The gold discoveries in the Canadian Yukon in 1897 gave rise to an enormous trade with that portion of Canada. A struggle immediately ensued between the coast cities of this province and the American cities of the Pacific coast for the control of that trade. The American cities succeeded in some way in enlisting the support of their National government, or the officers of the government, and the efforts of our merchants were hampered and at first completely nullified by the harassing and vexatious restrictions and regulations imposed at Skagway. A cry went up from this province for relief. A demand was made for the establishment of a means of commercial transportation into our own territory in the Yukon which would relieve us from the necessity of crossing American territory at Skagway. The Canadian government yielded to the demands of this province. They formed a policy, they laid that policy before Parliament. That policy was this: The construction of a railway having its southern terminus at a port in British Columbia to Teslin Lake by way of Telegraph Creek, and the provision of transportation facilities from Teslin Lake to Dawson City. In order to carry that policy into effect, the government, before parliament opened, entered into a contract with McKenzie & Mann, the well-known railway builders, for the construction of a railway from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake by the 1st September, 1898. Now, gentlemen, there is no reasonable doubt as to our rights of navigation of the Stikine for commercial purposes. The United States government could make regulations to prevent smuggling into their own territories; but they could not impose customs duties; they could not prevent the transportation of cargoes; and they could impose no regulations which would interfere with the right of navigation of that river. If the policy of the government had gone into effect, we should have had established and in operation on the 1st of September, 1898, a transportation route to Dawson, which for all commercial purposes was an all-Canadian route. (Applause.)

"But you must remember that that was only the beginning. The government proposed, in view of the extreme urgency and the vital importance of haste to the people of this city, to begin the construction of their railway at the middle point. But they were pledged by the most explicit declarations to extend that railway southward to a point in British Columbia.

It was urged by the opposition that vexatious regulations would be imposed at the mouth of the Stikine. The government said the United States government cannot do that without violating the Treaty of Washington, and even they will hesitate long before they will tear up without notice a solemn treaty with Great Britain. They said our biddings privileges at Skagway are matters of grace and favor only, but our rights on the Stikine are absolute rights guaranteed to us by the obligations of a solemn international compact between the United States and Great Britain. But the government said, 'We have taken care that if we should be harassed, we shall have a remedy. We shall ask parliament for an appropriation to survey the route to an ocean port in British Columbia, and if our rights should be impeded or threatened we shall forthwith commence the construction of the railway from Telegraph Creek to the Pacific Coast, and we shall complete it without delay.'

"That, sir, was the policy of the government. Before I proceed further let me say that it is not open to the opposition in this city to question the wisdom of the policy of the government. I will call themselves as witnesses. The first witness is Sir Charles Tupper, and his evidence is contained in an interview published in the Mail and Empire this morning in Ontario in January 27th, 1898. He stated that the route chosen is the best that could have been selected. 'When I was in the West,' he said, 'I made enquiries, and I reached the conclusion that Canada sought the earliest possible moment to have communication with the Yukon. I impressed it upon the British Columbia government that it should co-operate with the Dominion government to secure the construction of

a link between the Stikine river and Teslin lake. At Winnipeg, I declared that the undertaking was a necessity, and when I returned to Ottawa I wrote immediately to Mr. Sifton. I impressed upon him the absolute necessity of opening up the route to the coast. You heard my arguments against government construction on the Crow's Nest Pass railway. I am willing to withdraw all that if you will go ahead and give that country a railroad. As a matter of principle I am opposed to government construction, but here is a case in which I quite unhesitatingly feel that the country ought to be prepared to secure an all-Canadian route in order to secure the trade of the Yukon for Canada.' "As to the arrangements made with Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann, Sir Charles Tupper said that they were men who had the capital, resources and energy to carry it out. They were probably the only men in Canada who could put the undertaking through in the time that it was specified. "Sir Charles considered that the government ought to have acted with more promptness, that much valuable time had been lost, and if his suggestions had been acted upon the project would be in an advanced state now. The fact that a trail was to be put through in six weeks so that the distance between the Stikine river and Teslin lake may be covered in three days is in his judgment of great importance. He thinks places for the accommodation of the flood of traffic that will go in. "The completion of the road by September is slower work than might have been done had the question been grappled with earlier. Still it will be of the utmost importance to the Canadian people, Sir Charles gives the government credit for acting with such vigor as it is shown and asserts that the opening of the Canadian route was strongly urged by him upon both governments interested in the proper course to pursue. He does not anticipate any trouble with the United States in transferring cargoes from the ocean boats to river boats at Wrangle. If, however, such should happen, Canada has Fort Simpson to fall back upon, which will be equally serviceable. "Further evidence is contained in a speech delivered in the House of Commons in the session of 1898. In my judgment, from the first moment the great importance of that Canadian Yukon field attracted public attention, there has been a most determined effort on the part of the United States and America and of citizens of that country to grasp and turn to their own advantage all the enormous benefit that is to be derived from the furnishing of supplies to the people who go there, and to provide for their transport into and out of the country. Therefore, when my attention was directed to this subject, I gave it the most careful consideration in my power, regarding it as a party question but as one of vital importance to every Canadian; and have felt it my duty to examine the question in the light of all the information I could get while on the Pacific coast, where I was receiving a great deal of attention. I came to the conclusion that the route by the Stikine river and Teslin lake was not only the best route but the only available route for the construction of a railway, writing that in present season. "The next witness that I call is the Victoria Colonist, a consistent witness for the Colonist has continued to the present day to denounce the conduct of the opposition in defeating that measure—I am reading from an editorial published in February, 1898: 'Hon. Clifford Sifton has declared that the task of constructing the Stikine-Teslin railroad is almost superhuman. That is strong language, but not too strong. Few people can grasp the magnitude of what Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann have undertaken. We believe they will succeed, but only those who have made actual calculations of what must be done in order that the 150 miles of railway may be completed by September 1st can have any idea of the magnitude of the undertaking. The actual work of building the road is not a very serious matter. If the contractors were given two years in which to do the work they would accomplish it without any very great difficulty, but it is to be remembered that they have practically only four months and that during this short period everything used in constructing the railway, except the right of way and the ballast, must be taken up the Stikine river. This is what will make the undertaking exceptionally difficult; and if the contractors can manage to carry out their bargain they will deserve the first place among railway builders. We venture to say that no man ever before undertook to build 150 miles of railway under such circumstances in the same length of time. Fortunately, both contractors are men who have energy and experience to assist them in their tremendous undertaking, and the fact that they have put up a very substantial guarantee shows that they believe themselves able to do what they are attempting.' "My next witness is the British Columbia Board of Trade. This is the message which was sent from Victoria to the Senate of Canada on this subject: 'The B. C. Board of Trade begs to draw your attention to the fact that unless the Lake Teslin road is built this year untold loss will be entailed upon the merchants and shippers of this province, and that if the Northern trade is not directed immediately into purely Canadian channels, a permanent and irretrievable loss would be sustained by the Dominion, and we must enter our earnest and emphatic protest against any legislation that may retard the work now going on.' "The next witness I will call is Col. Prior. He also is a consistent witness. He has Always Stated that had he been in the House of Commons when the vote on this measure was taken, he would have supported it. And that attitude he has assumed and maintained consistently and has never relinquished. "Sir, I think that in this constituency the contest as to the expediency of this measure is closed by the testimony of these witnesses. Had the government policy gone into effect, hundreds of thousands of dollars would have been spent in this province on construction. If we have any doubt as to the effect of this measure on the population and the trade

of British poets, Rudyard Kipling. (Applause.)

He hoped later in the campaign, at a meeting in the theatre, to deal with a number of local issues.

But he would now refer only to the local management of the post office. Under the department of Mr. Mulock the department had received the minister's personal attention, and he had reduced the deficit from \$800,000 to \$47,000. He had also introduced the penny postal rate to Britain, and although the Conservatives had predicted a great deficit, that ever, such had not been the result.

There wasn't a business man in Victoria who, if he had a manager who would handle his business in such a way, but would raise his wages. And perhaps that was the reason that the clerks in Victoria post office were getting

Higher Salaries

than ever before. (Loud applause.) He felt he must draw his remarks to a close.

Voices—"Go on." "You're doing well," etc.

He felt like calling Mr. Earle to account for his statement that the Liberals had not redeemed a single pledge. On the contrary they had carried out every pledge which they were never pledged, such as penny postage and a preferential tariff. But they had promised to settle the Manitoba school question and to reform the franchise laws. Did not they do so?

If his audience considered Sir Wilfrid Laurier's general policy, a good one, he thought it their privilege, not their duty, to support him. The complaint had been made that the election had been brought on before the census had been taken, and redistributed. He thought it hardly expect to be granted his present representation; but before another election, under Liberal rule, he believed the city would advance so much that they would still retain two members. (Loud applause.)

The chairman then introduced Mr. Duff.

MR. DUFF.

The speaker hoped the audience would not be alarmed by the statement that he was to be the principal speaker, as he intended to curtail his remarks very much. Continuing he said: "The occasion of the pending election is one of the most

Important Junctures in the history of this city.

"I am not one of those who believe altogether in parochial politics. I believe in a patriotism broad enough to embrace the whole country, and nothing less than the whole country. But, sir, on this occasion, I have no hesitation in saying that the electors of this district can find the whole duty of a patriot—from whatever standpoint they regard it, whether as residents of this city, as citizens of this Dominion, or as citizens of that war federation known as the British Empire. I say, from whatever standpoint they regard it, they will find the whole of their patriotic duty summed up in the brief admonition, 'Vote for the two gentlemen who represent the government in this contest.'

"I venture to go further, and say that before this contest closes every elector in this city who is open to conviction will realize that every vote for Messrs. Drury and Riley is a vote for the consolidation of the Empire; every vote for them is a vote for the preservation and prosperity of the Canadian Union; and every vote against the most vital and immediate interests of this city of Victoria.

"I say, sir, that the rejection of Messrs. Drury and Riley will be a most serious, perhaps fatal, blow to the commercial interests of this city. Remember, gentlemen, the question before you is not whether you shall be represented by Liberals or Conservative members. The question is, shall you be represented by the government candidates, or shall you vote for the next five years, as for the past four, be without representation in the Parliament of Canada?

"You have, sir, referred to enterprises of very great moment to this city. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance of the extension of the E. & N. railway to the northern end of the Island. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance to this city of a railway to the Yukon, having for its southern terminus a port in British Columbia. I am not wrong, I think, in saying that the construction of these works will involve the expenditure of many hundreds of thousands of dollars in this province. If, sir, in addition to these enterprises we should succeed in having established a branch of the royal mint in this city, I think I am not wrong in saying that every dollar of trade would be many times augmented, and for years to come the root of land in this city which would not be many times increased in value."

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Still it will be of the utmost importance to the Canadian people, Sir Charles gives the government credit for acting with such vigor as it is shown and asserts that the opening of the Canadian route was strongly urged by him upon both governments interested in the proper course to pursue. He does not anticipate any trouble with the United States in transferring cargoes from the ocean boats to river boats at Wrangle. If, however, such should happen, Canada has Fort Simpson to fall back upon, which will be equally serviceable. "Further evidence is contained in a speech delivered in the House of Commons in the session of 1898. In my judgment, from the first moment the great importance of that Canadian Yukon field attracted public attention, there has been a most determined effort on the part of the United States and America and of citizens of that country to grasp and turn to their own advantage all the enormous benefit that is to be derived from the furnishing of supplies to the people who go there, and to provide for their transport into and out of the country. Therefore, when my attention was directed to this subject, I gave it the most careful consideration in my power, regarding it as a party question but as one of vital importance to every Canadian; and have felt it my duty to examine the question in the light of all the information I could get while on the Pacific coast, where I was receiving a great deal of attention. I came to the conclusion that the route by the Stikine river and Teslin lake was not only the best route but the only available route for the construction of a railway, writing that in present season. "The next witness that I call is the Victoria Colonist, a consistent witness for the Colonist has continued to the present day to denounce the conduct of the opposition in defeating that measure—I am reading from an editorial published in February, 1898: 'Hon. Clifford Sifton has declared that the task of constructing the Stikine-Teslin railroad is almost superhuman. That is strong language, but not too strong. Few people can grasp the magnitude of what Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann have undertaken. We believe they will succeed, but only those who have made actual calculations of what must be done in order that the 150 miles of railway may be completed by September 1st can have any idea of the magnitude of the undertaking. The actual work of building the road is not a very serious matter. If the contractors were given two years in which to do the work they would accomplish it without any very great difficulty, but it is to be remembered that they have practically only four months and that during this short period everything used in constructing the railway, except the right of way and the ballast, must be taken up the Stikine river. This is what will make the undertaking exceptionally difficult; and if the contractors can manage to carry out their bargain they will deserve the first place among railway builders. We venture to say that no man ever before undertook to build 150 miles of railway under such circumstances in the same length of time. Fortunately, both contractors are men who have energy and experience to assist them in their tremendous undertaking, and the fact that they have put up a very substantial guarantee shows that they believe themselves able to do what they are attempting.' "My next witness is the British Columbia Board of Trade. This is the message which was sent from Victoria to the Senate of Canada on this subject: 'The B. C. Board of Trade begs to draw your attention to the fact that unless the Lake Teslin road is built this year untold loss will be entailed upon the merchants and shippers of this province, and that if the Northern trade is not directed immediately into purely Canadian channels, a permanent and irretrievable loss would be sustained by the Dominion, and we must enter our earnest and emphatic protest against any legislation that may retard the work now going on.' "The next witness I will call is Col. Prior. He also is a consistent witness. He has Always Stated that had he been in the House of Commons when the vote on this measure was taken, he would have supported it. And that attitude he has assumed and maintained consistently and has never relinquished. "Sir, I think that in this constituency the contest as to the expediency of this measure is closed by the testimony of these witnesses. Had the government policy gone into effect, hundreds of thousands of dollars would have been spent in this province on construction. If we have any doubt as to the effect of this measure on the population and the trade

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"Let Sir Wil the con to parti The po been in but the nunciat Laurier he said unsuccess to unsuccess must a recede, with v they believe themselves able to do what they are attempting.' "My next witness is the British Columbia Board of Trade. This is the message which was sent from Victoria to the Senate of Canada on this subject: 'The B. C. Board of Trade begs to draw your attention to the fact that unless the Lake Teslin road is built this year untold loss will be entailed upon the merchants and shippers of this province, and that if the Northern trade is not directed immediately into purely Canadian channels, a permanent and irretrievable loss would be sustained by the Dominion, and we must enter our earnest and emphatic protest against any legislation that may retard the work now going on.' "The next witness I will call is Col. Prior. He also is a consistent witness. He has Always Stated that had he been in the House of Commons when the vote on this measure was taken, he would have supported it. And that attitude he has assumed and maintained consistently and has never relinquished. "Sir, I think that in this constituency the contest as to the expediency of this measure is closed by the testimony of these witnesses. Had the government policy gone into effect, hundreds of thousands of dollars would have been spent in this province on construction. If we have any doubt as to the effect of this measure on the population and the trade

was to construct a railway from an ocean port in British Columbia, but time was the first consideration. You remember the urgent appeals that went forward from this city urging that delay would be fatal. The government, responded to those appeals, they decided to commence construction of the work at the middle point, and they entered into the contract I have mentioned, which provided for the construction of the line from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake by the 1st September, 1898. Now, gentlemen, there is no reasonable doubt as to our rights of navigation of the Stikine for commercial purposes. The United States government could make regulations to prevent smuggling into their own territories; but they could not impose customs duties; they could not prevent the transportation of cargoes; and they could impose no regulations which would interfere with the right of navigation of that river. If the policy of the government had gone into effect, we should have had established and in operation on the 1st of September, 1898, a transportation route to Dawson, which for all commercial purposes was an all-Canadian route. (Applause.)

"But you must remember that that was only the beginning. The government proposed, in view of the extreme urgency and the vital importance of haste to the people of this city, to begin the construction of their railway at the middle point. But they were pledged by the most explicit declarations to extend that railway southward to a point in British Columbia. It was urged by the opposition that vexatious regulations would be imposed at the mouth of the Stikine. The government said the United States government cannot do that without violating the Treaty of Washington, and even they will hesitate long before they will tear up without notice a solemn treaty with Great Britain. They said our biddings privileges at Skagway are matters of grace and favor only, but our rights on the Stikine are absolute rights guaranteed to us by the obligations of