The West

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UNION LABEL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 1910.

LOCAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS

Since the collapse of the Leader's Manitoba scandalmongering campaign, the western journalistic scavenger has been without an occupation. We would again suggest that it uses its peculiar talents to the unfolding of Saskatchewan's political enigmas. With their talents, the information they already possess and the opportunities they have for securing further knowledge from interested, intimate associates, they should easily solve the four problems that have already been presented to them.

Why did Premier Scott refuse to continue his action against the Moose Jaw News? The News accused the Premier of holding ten thousand dollars worth of stock in the Saskatchewan Valley and Manitoba Land Company. This the Premier denied and issued a writ for $25,000 damages. When the elections were over the brave Mr. Scott withdrew the action. The Leader is in a position to shed light on the Premier's peculiar conduct. This is a land deal of great interest to the people of Saskatchewan. The operations of the company were in this province. Mr. Scott is the leader of the government and the News is one of our leading journals. Who lied, the News or Mr. Scott? The News was anxious for the battle in the courts and Mr. Scott shirked the issue.

In 1906 a certain prominent Liberal, a great friend of the Leader, solicited subscriptions from men in Regina for the purpose of securing the capital for this city. Why was money necessary? What became of the money subscribed?

After the famous "North Pole" scandal, the three returning officers skipped the country and for months lived in Chicago. These fugitives from justice were kept there by money sent from this province. They were in constant communication with prominent Liberals. Who supplied the money to keep these men while fugitives from justice? Who were interested in protecting them and preventing them telling their sordid story?

The last election hundreds of road gang men were switched to doubtful constituencies and in many cases turned the scale in favor of the government. This was done with money from the public treasury. Who was responsible for this illegal expenditure?

The people of Saskatchewan are interested in these things. The Leader is in a position to satisfy their just curiosity.

THE SILENT MAJORITY

Situated in the south end of the legislative chamber is what has been described as the government annex. Here abide the most incapable of the government members and comprise that "great silent majority." They are well trained and disciplined in their one duty as legislators. Marvellous is the development of their voting instinct. As the Premier rises, the "great silent majority" follows his example. And subside as he does, with a look of smug satisfaction on their countenances, signifying that they have performed their duty and done honor to their master's training and as in the case of all such well-trained animals, they may look for the reward, the sweets of government pap and patronage.

But the "great silent majority" is seen again in the performance of their duty as legislators. Clustered around the Department of Public Works, clamoring and snarling for the petty scraps tossed to them by their master, they are lost to all sense of decency and decorum. Continual practice has made them so perfect that the position of the flunkey has become their natural posture. Happy are they if awarded a bridge, road or the control of a liquor license and the successful supplicant becomes the object of envy to the remainder of the "silent majority" who with increased subserviency further strive to win their trainer's gratitude.

While the "great silent majority" is the greatest curiosity of the legislature in point of incapability their cabinet representative was well chosen. How eagerly and anxiously they watch him read the statements prepared by the other members of the cabinet and the departmental officials and what a sigh of relief goes up from the annex when he accomplishes his task without assistance from his seatmate. Truly the member for Saskatoon, the municipal commissioner, does credit to his colleagues in the annex. Not even a decent phonograph, his feats of recitation are wondrous.

Products of the Scott political school, the "great silent majority" and their cabinet representative ably perform their duty as political automata. True, in addition they fill a certain amount of space in the large legislative hall although increasing the dreary blankness of the annex. But why continue? "to shoot a crow is powder thrown away."

THE LUMSDEN CHARGES

Dealing with the Lumsden charges, the Leader, following its policy, presents its usual amount of misrepresentation. It accuses the Opposition of being the author of the charges when they were made by Chief Engineer Lumsden whose appointment to his responsible position was made by the government. It represents Mr. Lumsden as having endorsed the work of the commission when in fact he has done nothing of the sort. The Conservative members of the committee of investigation are accused of withdrawing because they knew the charges were false. The Leader knows that the Conservative members withdrew after being refused the rights that belongd to them and when it was patent to everybody that the Liberal majority were determined to make the investigation a farce and to use their majority to whitewash the boodlers in Canada's greatest scandal.

The situation was that the committee consisted of four Liberals and three Conservative lawyers; that the Transcontinental Commission was represented by an able lawyer, who represented the defence; and that it was necessary to appoint a lawyer to appear for the public, to press the charge made by Mr. Lumsden that there had been over-classification. First the lawyer of the Commission made the impudent claim that he represented the public. This was too absurd and was rejected. Then the Conservative members claimed the right to appoint and instruct the counsel appointed to represent the public.

Everybody knows that it is the distinguished virtue of a lawyer to represent his client. Everything about his attitude and course depends on who engages him. Now, the Liberals, on the committee, were desperately concerned to prove the charges false, to prove that where the contractors got $14,000 for a piece of work which Mr. Lumsden says was worth only $4,000, that $14,000 was the proper price. The Conservatives, on the other hand, were concerned to have the whole matter probed to the bottom. Thus, if the Liberal members engaged a given lawyer, he would be commissioned by the defence; if the Conservatives engaged the same man, he would be commissioned by the prosecution.

The Liberals absolutely denied to the Conservatives this right. They insisted that the counsel for the prosecution must be appointed by the defence and have the defence for his clients. Thereupon, the Conservative members retired from the whole thing.

The following examples of the work o nthe Transcontinental will give some idea of the enormous graft secured by government favorites. These cases are typical of the greater portion of the work.

Case No. 1—The government engineers returned the following figures for one piece of road: Rock 7,375 yards; loose rock, 4,560; common excavation, 9,115; total 21,050 yards. Applying the foregoing prices we find that the contractors got $14,636.65. But Mr. Lumsden when he went over the ground said that this was all earth, or "common excavation," the price of this should have been $4,420.50.

Thus the contractors should have got $4,420.50; they actually did get $14,636.65.

They thus got $10,216.15 more than they should have got. The excess was 230 per cent. Put in another way; the work cost over thrice what it should.

Case No. 2—The government engineers allowed the contractors 4,352 yards of rock; 1,850 of loose rock; 1,233 of common excavation. This works out to $7,711.93, which was paid to the contractor. Mr. Lumsden says that the figures should have been only 600 yards loose rock; all the rest was earth. On this basis, it would have been $1,735.35.

Thus the contractor got $7,711,93.

He should have got $1,739.35.

He got $5,976.58 more than he should have got. Or 344 per cent. more than he was entitled to. This piece of work cost nearly four and a half the proper figure.

Case No. 3—The government engineers returned a certain piece of work as being: rock 1,142 cubic yards, loose rock 1,395 yards, common excavation 1,372 yards, or 4,909 yards in all. The contractors on those figures must have got $4,198.62 on this piece of work. But Mr. Lumsden says that there was only 100 yards of loose rock. All the rest was common excavation. On this basis the cost should have been only $1,059.89.

The contractors should have got $1,059.89.

The contractors actually got $4,198.62.

Thus they got $3,138.71 more than they should have got. The excess was 296 per cent. The work cost four times what it should have cost.

Case No. 4—In this instance the engineers returned 3,000 yards rock, 2,100 yards loose rock, 1,465 yards common excavation; or 6,565 yards, for which the contractors got $5,857.65. Mr. Lumsden's figures are, no solid rock, 820 yards loose rock and 5,745 yards earth; or $1,616.45.

Thus the contractor should have got $1,616.45.

But the contractor actually got $5,857.65.

The over-payment was $4,241.20 or 262 per cent. This work cost more than three and a half times as much as it should.

Thus our four cases so far examined work out as follows:

No. 1—Proper cost, $4,420; actual cost, $14,636; over-payment, $10,216, or 230 per cent.

No. 2—Proper cost, $1,735; actual cost, $7,711; over-payment, $5,976, or 344 per cent.

No. 3—Proper cost, $1,059; actual cost, $4,198; over-payment, $3,138, or 296 per cent.

No. 4—Proper cost, $1,616; actual cost, $5,857; over-payment, $4,241, or 262 per cent.

The charges were made by the Government's own engineer. The committee of investigation, following the instructions of a corrupt administration, is simply a whitewashing affair. Its object is to conceal, not reveal, graft.

CURRENT COMMENT

(Edmonton Journal)

The spectacle of the Dominion government taking from the province of Alberta more money annually for land, timber, and mineral tax than it return to the province in indemnity, contrasted with the spectacle of Brisist Columbia, showing a seven million dollar revenue and a six million dollar surplus, gives some idea of the enormity of the travesty that was perpetrated on this province under the guise of autonomy.

British Columbia has few resources that the province of Alberta cannot duplicate. The province of Alberta has resources in arable land which no country in the world can duplicate.

The province of British Columbia is not distressed by the raising of a seven million revenue. Its resources, practically speaking, are not diminished thereby. The province of Alberta looks forward to the budget of 1910 with apprehensions of deficit. It has, practically speaking, no resources upon which to fall back.

The province of British Columbia is wealthy beyond computation by the ownersh'p of its lands, timber and mines. The province of Alberta has been beggared by the Autonomy Act by which these resources were taken away. The people of Alberta know where the blame rests.

CONTROL OF RATES

(Moose Jaw News)

The argument frequently advanced in these columns that the effectual method by which to secure reductions in railway rates is by specific agreement with the companies—and that the most opportune time to secure the same is when negotiations granting assistance for construction are being concluded—has recently been confirmed in the agreement between the government of British Columbia and the Canadian Northern.

British Columbia has guaranteed the bonds of the Canadian Northern Pacific Company, which is the Canadian Northern operating in that province under a provincial charter for 600 miles of road. The guarantee is for $35,000 a mile, and interest at 4 per cent. for three years. This means that a liability of $21,000,000 on account of principal has been assumed.

This is the chief form of assistance that the Company has received, though there are concessions of a minor nature.

In return, British Columbia has secured control of rates for all time—control, not only of local rates, but all through rates, on traffic originating within the Province, and coming from without it. In case of the Company being dissatisfied with the rates modified by the Government the Company has bound itself not to appeal to the Dominion Railway Commission, but to the Supreme Court of the Province; two justices of which are to determine such appeal having power to confirm, modify, disallow or revise such rates.

This is a great concession on the part of the Company. How was it secured? How came it that the Canadian Northern, which in the matter of control of rates, conceded nothing to Alberta and Saskatchewan, conceded so much to British Columbia? even went to the length of waiving all right of appeal to a federal commission, which remained open to it, a procedure which, invariably is the last resort of hard pressed corporations?

British Columbia secured control of rates chiefly because he r government insisted upon it, Premier McBride knew full well, as every well informed member of the Provincial Cabinet knows, that general reductions in rates are not effected by the Railway Commission. Indeed, Premier McBride was so suspicious of the Commission loop hole that he insisted the Company should bind itself not to resort to it. That is concession for concession. That is a practical demonstration of the fair exchange policy by which a government says to a railway: "We will give you reasonable assistance, if in return you will give us reasonable rates."

It is specially to be noted that in British Columbia the Canadian Northern is operating under a provincial charter. Why is this? A provincial government exercises control over a railway which it incorporates. The government of British Columbia desired to secure and retain control over the Canadian Northern system in that province particularly in the matter of rates. Through the granting of a provincial charter to the Canadian Northern Pacific this was obtained; and through the clause in the agreement by which the Company bound itself not to appeal to the Railway Commission, provincial control over rates was obtained by a statutory obligation. But the McBride government was even more exacting. It said to the Canadian Northern: "you must agree also that the Canadian Northern Pacific will not at any time apply to be declared a work for the general advantage of Canada." And the Company agreed. Of course if the Canadian Northern Pacific could be declared a work for the general advantage of Canada, it would, by that act, escape from Provincial control.

Compare these stringent conditions by which the Canadian Northern in British Columbia is bound, with the loose and unmeaning provisions in that company's agreements in this province, through which it escapes from Provincial control. The Canadian Northern lines in Saskatchewan are built under two sets of charters, one which it has obtained itself from Ottawa, and another, which under other names it has obtained from Regina—these latter are the Saskatchewan Northwestern and the Saskatchewan Midland. The Provincial government has no control over the lines incorporated by the Federal parliament, but until excepted by express legislation it has control over the lines incorporated by the provincial legislature. But the latter will escape, if they have not already done so.

In the acts incorporating the Saskatchewan Central and Saskatchewan Northwestern permission is granted these companies to amalgamate with the Canadian Northern. In the act of 1908-09 guaranteeing the bonds of the Canadian Northern, the preamble sets forth as the Saskatchewan Northwestern is authorized to construct certain lines, and also authorized to amalgamate with the Canadian Northern, and whereas the latter company is also authorized to construct certain other lines, therefore it is expedient to guarantee the bonds. The preamble to the act of 1909 guaranteeing Canadian Northern bonds makes similar reference to the powers possessed by the Saskatchewan Midland. It is also provided that no securities for lines to be built under the charters of these subsidiary companies shall be guaranteed until the Canadian Northern becomes authorized by amalgamation with these companies to build these lines. Thus the Saskatchewan Midland and Saskatchewan Central by becoming incorporated with the Canadian Northern, will pass from control of the Provincial government.

Doubtless this would have occurred in British Columbia had not the provincial government intervened, and bound the Canadian Northern Pacific to agree not to apply to be declared a work for the general advantage of Canada.

By escaping from provincial control the Saskatchewan Midland and Sakatchewan Northwestern escape from some onerous restrictions. The Provincial Railway Act says that all tariffs of tolls issued by a company of provincial incorporation shall be approved by the Commissioner of Railways; and that no tolls shall be charged until the tariff of such tolls shall have been approved by him. The government is also empowered to acquire any provincial railway. But as respecting these two companies these provisions cease to app., after amalgamation with the Canadian Northern. Truly, in Saskatchewan the Canadian Northern has had only to make a request in order to get; and it is well known that that company is not backward in asking.

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JOE MARTIN ON RAMPAGE

Again Attacks the Govenor-General --- Called by the Speaker---Seely Says Martin Does not Represent Canada.

London, March 21—The Morning Post deals editorially with the ridiculousness from many view points of the United States press allegations that Canada has been instigated by the government here in taking up an unyielding attitude with regard to tariff concessions.

In the Commons on the consolidation bill, Joe Martin drew attention to the alleged recent action of Earl Grey in taking an active and decided part in Canadian politics.

Mr. Martin said he was satisfied Earl Grey was not misrepresented as he had been informed, and quoted The Times reports of Earl Grey's speeches on the naval question at Regina. This is the question whereon there have been heated discussions in three camps in Canada and this is the first instance of a Governor-General expressing an opinion on a debated question. The speaker reminded Mr. Martin that no money was taken in the bill under discussion for the salary of the Governor-General.

Mr. Martin said he was trying to point out that the Colonial Secretary had not done his duty by allowing such conduct on the part of the Governor-General. This speech led to much discussion in the Canadian press.

Of course there was no national control over the Governor-General. The Speaker, again interposing, said Mr. Martin as a member had a great deal to say about the Governor-General but little about the Colonial Secretary and he was using the latter as a shield to attack the Governor-General which he was not entitled to do by the forms of the House, (hear, hear). If he meant to attack the Colonial Secretary, let him do so.

Mr. Martin said he did attack the Colonial Secretary in part of his jurisdiction, as Colonial Secretary. There were precedents for Government action; there was a Canadian precedent for the recall of a Governor General.

Col. Seeley said though the honorable member represented St. Pancras, he did not represent the people of Canada. The speech referred to was not fully reported but knowing the feeling in Canada and the popularity of the Governor-General, he confidently could say that there was nothing in the speech Earl Grey had made to forfeit in any degree whatever the confidence of the Canadian people. (hear, hear.) This closed the incident.

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WILCOX MAN IN TROUBLE

Short in his Cash and will Appear Again—Used Firm's Cheques.

Gilbert R. Morrow, of Wilcox, agent for the Rogers Lumber Co., whose head office is located at Moose Jaw, was summoned before Magistrate Trant in the city police court Thursday charged with having received two cheques, one for $100 and one for $180, from B. K. Davis, farmer of Wilcox, for which h ehad given no account to the firm. A. Ross appeared for the informant and C. E. D. Wood for the accused.

The evidence showed that these two cheques were paid by Davis and endorsed to the company by Morrow when they were cashed at the Prudential Exchange Co., doing a banking business in Wilcox, not having been sent to the Bank of Commerce at Moose Jaw where it is claimed it was the duty of Morrow to send them. The evidence also disclosed many irregularities in the book-keeping that have been running along for some time.

It appears that Morrow was continually running short in his cash and in order to square the matter up each time he would hold back part of the remittance to Moose Jaw. This was the condition of the books when the auditor checked them with the result that Morrow was discharged and promptly arrested.

Mr. Wood in behalf of the defence, sought to show that there was another person in the office with Morrow and in the employ of the company who had access to all the books and money. The shortages in cash were not discovered until the man was taken into the employ of the firm, and it would be a very easy matter for this man to take the cheques after they had been endorsed by Morrow and get them cashed. The magistrate pointed out that that argument on behalf of the defendant could not possibly apply to the first cheque although it might to the second. He withheld sentence and let the man out on $2,000 bail to come up for sentence on the 24th inst.

The board of management of the Baptist Church have extended a call to Rev. S. J. Farmer, of Brantford, Ont. to succeed Rev. G. Harmon Jones.

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