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SAINT JOHN, MONDAY MORNING, JULY 5, 1909.

THE TRANSCONTINENTAL AND THE HODGINS INQUIRY.

Some particulars were given on Saturday of the charges made by Grand Trunk Pacific Engineer Woods, concerning over-classification on the Transcontinental. These statements were before Parliament at the end of the session of 1908, the last session before the election. A committee of the Commons had been appointed to inquire into similar charges made by Major Hodgins. This officer was, by a process of torture, induced to withdraw the suggestion of fraud, and the majority of the committee would not allow the inquiry to go farther, and find whether the country was making over payments.

Major Hodgins is a graduate of the Royal Military College, and is a South African veteran. He has had large experience as a railway engineer, and when the Transcontinental was placed under contract he was made district engineer for the 400 miles east of Winnipeg. There came a time when he refused to make what he held to be an excessive estimate, though he offered to make what is called a "force" classification, which contained no false pretence. Major Hodgins was dismissed, though the procedure was an invitation to resign.

Having given his story in a newspaper interview at Victoria, Major Hodgins was, at the request of the Transcontinental commission, invited to sustain his charge before a parliamentary committee. This committee was made safe by the appointment thereon of Mr. Macdonald of Pictou, Mr. Carvell and Mr. Geoffrion, three accomplished obstructors, who composed the majority. Mr. Murphy, who is now, but was not then, Secretary of State, was employed by the commission as counsel, at the expense of the Government. But the majority refused to authorize the payment of counsel to bring out the facts. Major Hodgins, who is not rich, asked for this assistance, but was told by Mr. Macdonald that he had himself to thank for his position. Mr. Macdonald also stated in the committee, before a word of evidence was given, that the engineer "undertook to malign public men," while Mr. Carvell at the same stage said "We know he (Hodgins) cannot prove it," meaning the charge that Mr. Carvell was to investigate as a judge.

The majority next declared that they were not concerned in any matter of over-classification. They only wished to hear whether some minister or some commissioner were corruptly connected with the affair.

Major Hodgins made his statement. Mr. Murphy cross-examined him two days. Then the committee adjourned for a fortnight. Resuming, Mr. Murphy cross-examined in a way that was clearly a slaughter of time, for four more sittings, held on two days. There was another adjournment for eleven days. Then the cross-examination was resumed and continued through two sittings on June 14 and two on the 16th.

By this time it was evident that Major Hodgins was to be tired out or starved out. He had been forty days in Ottawa at his own expense. He was responsible so far as he could learn for the fees of his counsel. He had not yet been allowed to bring forward any of the local engineers and other witnesses whom he had named. The majority had refused to consider evidence of false classification, unless it could be shown that it was ordered by a commissioner or a minister. Major Hodgins had been treated like a criminal on his defence. He found all the resources of the country used to prolong the inquiry without bringing in the evidence which he wished to present.

Having thus prepared the way Mr. Macdonald took the witness in hand. He asked Major Hodgins whether the questions involved were not technical. Mr. Hodgins admitted that they were engineering questions. In reply to another question the engineer said he could not bring evidence that Chairman Parent had tried to influence Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Mr. Macdonald asked the witness whether he considered the committee a proper tribunal to determine the question at issue. Major Hodgins had already sufficient experience with the committee to say that he did not. Mr. Macdonald then asked Major Hodgins whether he desired to press before the committee any charges of intentional wrong-doing in the way of interference with the engineers. Major Hodgins had been brought to the point that he did not desire to press anything at his own expense, and he said so. He had come to Ottawa at the request of Parliament. He stated that he could not see why he should stand the expense of ascertaining whether the Government was paying too much for work. He was asked whether a board of engineers would not be a better tribunal, and he hardedly observed that this was for the committee to decide. He was willing to have the agony stop at any time. If the matter was no concern of the public he did not see why he should ruin himself over it.

After Major Hodgins was thus forced to drop out the majority agreed to recommend Parliament to pay his counsel. It is understood that he had been given to understand this before he consented.

When Major Hodgins dropped out the committee had to decide what to do next. Messrs. Macdonald, Carvell and Geoffrion saw a chance to block further inquiry and proposed to drop the inquiry, and report the charges unproved. Mr. Barker and Mr. Lennox, the Conservative members, held that the committee ought to find out whether there had been over-classification and over-payment. They pointed out that Major Hodgins was not a prosecutor but only one witness. Other witnesses were waiting to testify. The statements of Engineer Woods (quoted by The Standard on Saturday), had been produced since the inquiry started. The country had a right to know whether millions had been wrongfully paid as Mr. Woods charged. Mr. Barker and Mr. Lennox desired to examine Chief Engineer Lumsden, Mr. Woods and other officers. But the majority cut off the inquiry at that point, and it was stopped.

Mr. Barker and Mr. Lennox drew up a minority report, and moved its adoption by the House. It set forth the facts to which Major Hodgins had sworn, and these contained the statements of Engineer Woods, declared that they ought to be investigated, and asked that "the subject matter be remitted to the committee with "instructions to proceed therein to completion." This was voted down by a strong party majority and the inquiry was thus blocked.

That was election year. Throughout the election campaign and afterward the work of construction went on with the same classification. It was doubtless paid for by campaign funds from contractors.

But the day of reckoning has come. Mr. Lumsden has made it clear that he is not satisfied with the situation. The others must face the music.

But the people will pay the piper.

PLENTY OF TIME.

The organs of the late Provincial Government make complaint that Mr. Hazen has not allowed sufficient time for the campaign in St. John County, but has fixed the election at the earliest date possible after the issue of the writs.

There seems to be no ground for a complaint like this. The writ was issued and the fact of its issue appeared in the press on the second day of July. Election day is July 20, which is 18 days later. As both candidates had been nominated and organization had begun by both parties before the writ was issued, the time seems sufficient. No one is taken by surprise. The Opposition press announcel some time ago that the writ would be out at once.

Moreover the time allowed is not shorter than in previous by-elections in St. John county or St. John city. Mr. McKeown resigned his seat for St. John city, February 8, 1904. The seat was kept vacant until December 12, when the writ was issued with polling December 30, exactly the same period as between July 2nd and July 20th, except that the days are longer in July. In the same year Mr. Dunn resigned his seat for St. John county, March 28. After waiting until December, the Government issued the writ December 12, with polling December 30, the same dates as the city election. Evidently it had not then been discovered that 18 days was too short a time.

Even in a general election, where some of the constituencies are very large, and where the writs have to go to all parts of the province, the time allowed has not always been much longer than is given for the relatively small and comparatively compact county of St. John. It was 21 days in 1882; 24 days in 1886; 23 days in 1890; 24 days in 1892; 20 days in 1895; 22 days in 1899 and 23 days in 1903.

If these periods are long enough for the whole province, the late Government and the present Administration were not wrong in allowing 18 days for St. John county.

SCANT INTERCOLONIAL INFORMATION.

Mr. Tiffin makes the statement that the Intercolonial passenger earnings for the current year to date are considerably larger than for the same period last year, and also that there is some gain in freight earnings. But he fails to give out anything about expenditure or net earnings. The owners of this road are practically kept in the dark respecting its financial progress.

In this respect the Government railway is away behind the times. All other important roads on the continent give out every week a statement of their gross earnings. Those of the Canadian Pacific are usually printed within three days of the end of the week. Net statements for each month are usually given out before the end of the next month.

Every shareholder of the Canadian Pacific within a week's postal service of Montreal has already received a postcard of the gross earnings and working expenses of that immense system for the month of May, and for the period from July 1st 1908, to May 31, 1909, comparing both with the net profits of the same month, and the same eleven months in the previous fiscal year. The shareholders of the Intercolonial will get this information in November or December, when the House meets, if their representatives ask for it. On Tuesday or Wednesday of this week, the press of Canada will publish if they wish, the earnings of the whole Canadian Pacific system, and probably of the whole Grand Trunk system for the week ending July 3rd. The best that the owners of the Intercolonial can expect is a general statement that the earnings for a period of several months have increased in periods when there is no increase they need not expect to hear anything.

LOOK OUT FOR THESE.

The complaint that the roads are neglected in St. John county should be made in the right quarter and to the right people. The county roads are in charge of the highway boards. Two out of the three members of each board are councillors elected by the people not many weeks ago.

We advise the St. John county electors in each parish to inquire into this matter for themselves. If councillors opposing the Hazen Government are refusing to do their duty for the purpose of making the Government unpopular, let it be known where the fault is. If Mr. Bentley's friends are trying to help him out by refusing or delaying to repair the roads, Mr. Bentley and his party must answer for it. The highway act gives the parish electors control of the road administration in their parishes. The majority of councillors in the county constituency are opponents of the Government. Let it be noticed whether the parishes so controlled are not the ones where the cause of complaint arises. If it is found so the people will know whom to punish on the 20th of this month and again on Municipal election day. Opposition campaign managers, who happen to be on highway boards must not be allowed to betray their trust and throw the blame on the Provincial Government.

One of Mr. Pugsley's organs thinks that the St. John election should have been postponed until some lazy time in the year. There are no times in St. John when the people are at leisure, and we hope that the Government will not follow the example of Mr. Pugsley in holding seats open for long periods.

Here, for instance, is a fine example to avoid. Mr. White resigned the seat for Kings, October 24, 1900. The election to fill the vacancy took place January 28, 1902.

But it should be admitted that it would have happened sooner if the Rothesay forgery could have got in its work. It was the failure of that criminal conspiracy which kept the county of Kings so long unrepresented.

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ARMY CORPS SWING OUT FOR WAR

A British army corps was called out for war the other day, and afforded a fine object-lesson of how quickly and effectively British troops can be organized nowadays.

Never before in the history of the British Army has so unexpected and yet so complete a mobilization been carried out. Nearly twenty thousand men of all arms were lined up ready to entrain and it was only by the absence of a call to the Reservists that the feat differed from what the authorities hope to effect in case of an actual or threatened invasion.

No warning of what was coming was given. At six o'clock in the morning Lieutenant General Smith-Dorrien rode down to the headquarters office and gave the order for the alarm to be sounded, followed by the order for every unit in his command to turn out as rapidly as possible, fully mobilized, and ready for active service.

The military telephones linking up the barracks were soon busy with the order and mounted orderlies carried the summons to those officers who live out of barracks.

Some of the battalions were already in the field: the Gloucesters, for instance, having left barracks at four o'clock for a long day's operations. These were summoned back by mounted men and cyclist messengers and within the hour every barracks was the centre of activity.

Wagons were dragged out and loaded with stores, water carts filled, ammunition drawn from the magazines and distributer, and field dressings and emergency rations issued to the men with their metal identity discs and pocket ledgers.

For some time past the chiefs of staff have been working at this mobilization scheme to render it perfect for a sudden call, and the test that was being applied could only be equalled by the actual call of war. Indeed, among many of the troops the belief was accepted that the invasion was an accomplished fact.

The telegraph wires had carried the news to those officers and men away on week-end leave and the early trains to Aldershot were filled with anxious soldiers, who on reaching the stations raced up to their barracks, to appear in a short space of time accoutred and equipped for service.

Six hours was the time given for the units to get on parade, ready to move off, but so perfect was the machinery that in the great majority of cases little more than half that time was needed to report all ready.

From the Army Service Corps barracks parties of butchers and bakers, clerks, saddlers and artificiers marched off to join the brigade and divisional headquarters, every man having his allotted place and his special duties.

No confusion marked the preparations, and long before the allotted time was up nearly 20,000 men, artillery, cavalry and infantry, with engineers and supply transport services, were marching out of the barracks to go wherever needed.

The brigades and divisions assembled on Laffan's Plain, the Long Valley, Borden and Blackdown, and were in turn inspected in a thorough manner by Lieut. General Smith-Dorrien, who seemed greatly pleased with the smart way in which the order was carried out.

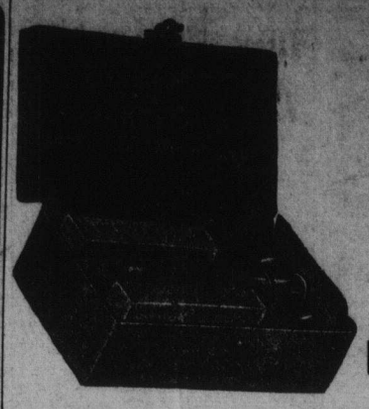
Three days' rations, reserve ammunition, forage, water and even kindling wood for the fires were carried, so complete was the turnout.

It was computed that the first battalion of infantry could have been got away in little more than one hour from the time of receiving the order and from that moment a constant stream of troops would have preceeded to their places for entraining.

WEDDINGS

Bannister-Lodge.
The marriage took place on Wednesday, June 30, at the home of the bride, River Glade, of Miss Florence May Bannister, to Mr. Frank E. Lodge, of St. John. Rev. F. G. Francis performed the ceremony.

Magda Still Aground.
The stranded steamer Magda still lies at the entrance of Yarmouth harbor, with the tide ebbing and flowing in her. Powerful wrecking pumps and other apparatus, with the steamer Bridgewater, under the direction of Mr. Brister, are being placed on board and the work of pumping is now in progress. The steamer if floated, will be taken first to Thomson's piling and her bottom further examined and temporarily repaired.



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EXAMS. WILL COMMENCE TOMORROW

The departmental examinations will begin in the High School building tomorrow morning. The Normal School entrance, the superior class license, junior matriculation and leaving examinations, which are the exams. to be written, will be in progress from Tuesday morning until Friday afternoon of this week. There are eighty nine students who will take the Normal School entrance examinations, thirty seven of which will take the first division exams., forty five the second, and seven the third. Thirty six students will try the matriculation exams. and there are eighteen applicants for the superior school license examinations. Acting Inspector William McLean, together with several school teachers will conduct the examinations. Two gold medals are offered for the matriculation exams., one for the highest aggregate marks, the other for the highest in mathematics.

The following will be the order of the papers:

Tuesday, July 6th.

9.30 a. m. Prac. math. (sup.) Br. and Can. history.; Mat., Eng Lit.; Leaving, Eng. Lit.

2 p. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup.—Eng Gram, Latin (sup); Mat., Eng. Gram.; Leaving, Gram.

Wednesday, July 7th

9. a. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup., Arithmetic; Mat., Latin; Leaving, Latin, (Op.)

11.15 a. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup., Natural Science; Mat., chemistry; Leaving, chemistry, (Op).

2.30 p. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup., Algebra; Mat., Alg and Arith.; Leaving, Arith. and bookkeeping.

Thursday, July 8th

9. a. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup, Geography; Mat., history and geography; Leaving, history and geography.

11.10 a. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup., French; Mat., Botany; Leaving, Botany.

2.30 p. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup., Geometry; Mat., eom.; Leaving, Geom.

Friday, July 9th.

8.30 a. m.—N. S. Ent. and Sup., Greek or French; Mat., French; Leaving, French (Op.)

10.35 a. m.—Mat. Alegbra; Leaving, Algebra.

2.30 p. m.—Mat., Physiology; Leaving, Physiology, (Op.)

MARRIED

DeWitt-Harding—At Germain street church, St. John, N. B., on Tuesday, June 29, by Rev. W. W. MacMaster, Dr. Connell Edward Avery DeWitt, son of Dr. DeWitt, of Wolfville, N. S., to Florence Upham, daughter of Charles S. Harding.

DEATHS

Wilson—On Saturday, July 3rd, at 80 Coburg street, St. John, N. B., Frances MacDonnell, widow of William Wilson, M. D., Q. C., late law clerk of the House of Commons, Ottawa, in the 76th year of her age.
Funeral from St. John's stone church, on Monday afternoon at 2.30. It is requested that no flowers be sent. (Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto papers please copy.)

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Married at Stellarton.
A pretty wedding took place at the Stellarton, N. S. Methodist church, last Tuesday when Miss Lillian Russel of that place, was united in marriage to Herbert Cowan, of this city by Rev. Mr. Outbridge. The bride was given away by her brother, Mr. James Russel.
The bride carried a beautiful bunch of bride's roses. Mr. and Mrs. Cowan arrived here Saturday and are residing at 90 Portland street.

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Lv. St. Stephen.. .. .. ..1.30 p. m.
Arr. West St. John.. .. ..5.40 p. m.

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