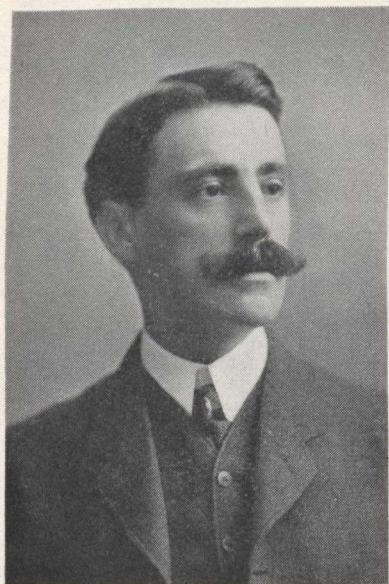


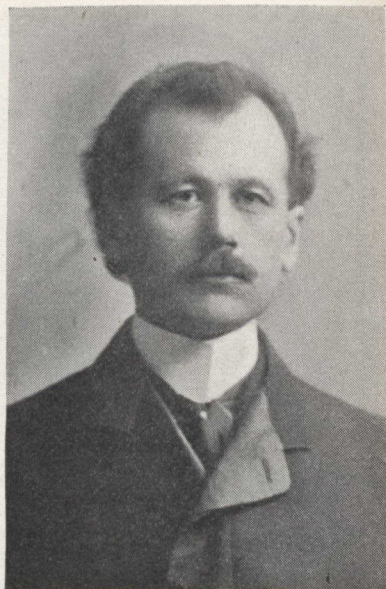
# A Quebec Libel Action

SOME NOTABLE PEOPLE IN  
QUEBEC CONCERNED.

A QUESTION OF  
CAMPAIGN FUNDS.



Hon. Jean Prevost,  
Minister of Colonisation, Mines and  
Fisheries, Quebec.



Hon. Adelard Turgeon,  
Minister of Lands and Forests, Quebec.

**M**R. OLIVER ASSELIN was at one time private secretary to Hon. Lomer Gouin before he became Premier of Quebec. Now he is manager of "Le Nationaliste," a paper published in Montreal which is very friendly to Mr. Bourassa. Last November, he published an article with the heading "Jean Sans Tete," which was an attack upon the administration of the Department of Colonisation, Mines and Fisheries under Hon. Jean Prevost. The article declared that the mines of the province had prospered by the work of the prospectors in spite of Mr. Prevost's neglect of his duties, and that moreover, Mr. Prevost had sold mining lands to his friends at ridiculously low prices.

Mr. Prevost proceeded to defend his honour before the courts, when his colleague, Hon. Mr. Turgeon, acting Attorney-General in the absence of Premier Gouin in Europe, intervened and made it a case of the King vs. Asselin. Mr. Prevost is a clever lawyer and has represented Terrebonne in the Legislature for a number of years. Mr. Turgeon is the orator of the Legislature — "the coming Laurier"—and has been urged frequently, it is said, to give up his portfolio at Quebec to accept one at Ottawa. He is regarded as one of the most promising of the young French Liberals; and hence the charges made against him by Baron l'Epine have a very great importance.

L'Epine was the agent of a Belgian syndicate which tried to purchase a large tract of land from the government along the line of the new transcontinental railway in the northern part of the province, and it was largely on statements furnished by him that the charges were made. The Baron came out from Belgium to testify in the case.

The trial from the first has been sensational. Almost

at the outset, Mr. Turgeon accused Mr. Laflamme, counsel for Asselin, of having offered to settle the case and destroy certain papers damaging to the government. Mr. Laflamme strenuously denied the charge and demanded an investigation, which was held before the Council of the Bar of Montreal, when he was wholly exonerated. The evidence has covered a number of transactions with the mining department; but the biggest sensation came when Baron l'Epine of Belgium took the stand and charged that the Belgian Syndicate, for which he was acting,

had been asked to contribute \$150,000 to the election fund of the local Liberal Government.

Baron l'Epine is a Belgian nobleman of recent creation. He has been known in Quebec for some time, chiefly as an importer of horses; and became a close friend of Mr. Prevost and other Liberal ministers. He was made a representative of Quebec at the Liege Exhibition by Mr. Turgeon, and has rendered services to the Quebec ministers by introducing them to people of influence in Europe. Trouble over the outcome of such services constituted one of the sensational incidents of the last session of the Legislature when a committee of the House brought in a report favourable to its own ministers.

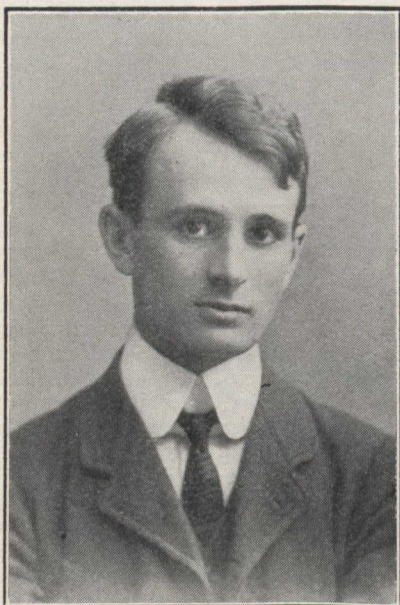
The Syndicate's first idea was to take 200,000 acres, but, after investigation, they decided to go up to 500,000 acres. The Baron's startling evidence is to the effect that Hon. Mr. Turgeon told him that the Syndicate would have to pay a dollar an acre for these lands, seventy cents to go to the province and thirty cents to the Liberal campaign fund. As 500,000 acres were involved, this meant a gift of \$150,000 to the campaign fund. He swore that he had already offered \$40,000 to Mr. Turgeon, who declined it saying that \$60,000 was required—to pay the newspapers to defend the transaction, he understood. An effort has been made by the Crown to discredit the Baron's evidence on the ground of atheistical views and declarations, but Mr. Justice Bosse has ruled against admitting testimony of this nature.

The defence of the ministers has been an emphatic denial that they ever asked the Baron to contribute anything to an election fund—indeed, Hon. Jean Prevost has gone further and denied any knowledge of such a fund. There had been no secret negotiations with the Belgian Syndicate nor anyone else, he said, and Mr. Asselin's statements to the contrary notwithstanding, everyone had been treated on an equal footing in the matter of permits.

Hon. Adelard Turgeon denies positively that \$40,000 was ever offered him by any member of the Belgian Syndicate, nor had there ever been any question of contribution to an election fund. If such a matter had been hinted at, negotiations would have been stopped immediately. He admitted having known the Baron since 1902 and had made use of him in the importation of Belgian horses.

Other ministers who have testified for the Crown are Hon. R. Roy, Secretary and Registrar, Hon. W. A. Weir, Minister of Public Works and Labour, and Hon. J. C. Kaine, Minister without Portfolio, all of whom have denied knowledge of an election fund.

The end of this sensational case was a disagreement of the jury. This result was announced after less than an hour's deliberation, before a crowded courtroom, for the case has excited unusual interest from first to last. The members of the jury appear to have had pronounced convictions for it is reported that they stood six for conviction and six for acquittal. Among those who were present in court to hear the judge's charge to the jury were Premier Gouin, who has but recently returned from Europe, and several members of the Cabinet.



Mr. Oliver Asselin,  
Editor "Le Nationaliste," Montreal.