

MR. FOSTER TO THE RESCUE

As the result of these negotiations the Pope-Fowler syndicate got an option on some 200,000 acres of C.P.R. land. The price was to be \$3.50 per acre. \$20,000 was to be paid down, \$40,000 more on May 13th, \$56,666 on June 1st, 1903, the remainder in annual instalments of \$116,666 and interest.

But like the previous hunch this syndicate had no money. This appears to have been the chronic condition of the gentlemen who came to do "business" with the Union Trust—until after they had done the "business" and, incidentally, the Company. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Lefurgey indeed claim they put a few thousand into the deal. This is probably correct and goes to show that their partners, who never put in a cent, had not even the "honor that exists among thieves." They deceived their confederates as well as their victims.

But the lack of money did not long trouble them. They just marked the land up \$1.00 per acre and resold it to the Union Trust. That is, they sold it and the Union Trust paid them their profits and became liable to the C.P.R. for the original price. But the Union Trust did not get the land. That was where Mr. Foster got in his paw, as will be shown in the succeeding chapter.

In the meantime:

Mr. Fowler declared in the House of Commons that his syndicate got no unusual favor in the matter of price from the C.P.R. But when Messrs. Pope, Fowler, *et al*, approached the Union Trust Company with their option two alternatives lay before the Union Trust. The Company could either buy the \$4.50 land from Messrs. Pope, Fowler, *et al*, or could buy equally good land from the C. P. R. at \$3.50 per acre. This on the statements of Mr. Fowler and his friends that they received no favors whatever from the C.P.R. in regard to the price of the land. If this be true the Union Trust could have obtained 200,000 acres of land from the C.P.R. for \$700,000, could have secured the title outright, and stood to gain whatever profits might be made on the sale. Supposing, then, that western land was considered a sound and desirable security for the investment of I.O.F. funds, it surely was the business of the investing department of the Order to secure the land at as low a price as possible, and according to Mr. Fowler and his associates, it could have been secured for \$3.50 per acre.

But land was not bought at the lower price. The option of Messrs. Pope and Fowler was purchased at an increase of \$1.00 per acre over the C.P.R. price. Thereby these gentlemen appear to have been released from an embarrassing, not to say precarious, position. Their option had been secured on April 24th, by a cash payment of \$20,000. Another \$40,000 was due on May 13th, and another \$56,666.66 on June 1st. The available cash assets of the syndicate appear to have been sadly out of harmony with its ambition. Of the \$20,000 down payment, \$4,000 cash was put up, \$2,000 more was raised on private notes, and the balance of \$16,000 was raised on joint notes of Messrs. Pope and Fowler, endorsed by Mackenzie & Mann. The second payment of \$40,000 was raised in the same way, on notes endorsed by Mackenzie & Mann. There was still the \$56,666.66 coming due. Plainly time was the essence of the transaction. If the option could be sold before this came due, all would be well. Otherwise, things looked blue. The \$4,000 cash was at stake; the money raised by notes would have to be repaid some way, and if things went by the board the hope of profits was also gone. Something must be done and done quickly.

At this pregnant moment, Mr. Foster appeared on the scene with the ample funds of the Foresters. At his coming, darkness and shadows fled away, and rising stars brightened the sky of the stranded syndicate. It was a timely rescue and gallantly done. Pressing needs were first considered—the money was advanced to meet the coming payment. The good work did not stop there. The \$4,000 at stake was refunded; funds were provided to take up the notes, and the profits which heretofore had glimmered only as a distant and uncertain hope