

Two years for Captain Harbottle—Stole from Inland Revenue and goes to Alberta Penitentiary.

Edmonton, June 2.—Captain Neville F. Harbottle was to-day sentenced by His Honour Judge H. C. Taylor, at the district court, to two years' imprisonment in the Alberta penitentiary, for the theft of \$6,918.44 from the Department of Inland Revenue at Edmonton.

W. A. Greisbach, counsel for the accused, drew attention to the fact that Harbottle had voluntarily returned and given himself up. Public sentiment was strongly in favour of clemency. Captain Harbottle took his sentence very calmly.

Here is an incident in the Inland Revenue Department which only came to light three or four weeks ago; and within that short space of time the man is bound to make full restitution of the \$6,000 odd and is brought into court and sentenced to the Alberta penitentiary for two years for his defalcation. But the Minister of Customs comes down two years after a defalcation occurs in his department and in the tenderness of his heart asks the House what they think ought to be done about it. Surely that is begging the question. Each of these cases must be dealt with on its merits, and it is up to the Minister of Customs and his department to make a full investigation into this Huntingdon affair. The minister can find out who shielded this man, how a settlement for \$4,200 came about when over \$6,000 should have been paid; and he can find out, and the member from the district should know, who were the parties that became bondsmen for this man, and furnished him \$6,000 to pay his indebtedness. That no doubt is common knowledge in the city and can be ascertained. Let this whole thing be investigated, and let the minister not shield wrong doing when it is brought home to any one in his department, and thus set an example before the civil service of this country that no one for a moment can stand for. It ought to be given out to every department of this country that if a man is the subject of any defalcation, he will immediately be visited with condign punishment, as his crime deserves. We have every regard for those who in a moment of weakness or in some inadvertence may take a few dollars which is not their own with the intention of immediately restoring it; but that is different from defalcations that go on for years. In this case the Minister of Customs has shown weakness in the extreme, and I can only agree with the leader of the opposition that it was the party machine and those behind it who shielded this man who had defrauded this country out of a large amount of money. It is up to the Minister of Customs, if he wants to clear his skirts and to show that he did his full duty, to let the 1,800 employees of his department know that if any man in that department takes money belonging to the

people of this country and appropriates it to his own uses, he is subject to the laws of the land the same as any other man. Why should the man who defrauds the country of \$10,000 be excused when a poor widow who takes a loaf or a poor man who takes a coat or a pair of pants has to pay the full penalty? I say it begs the question for the Minister of Customs to come down and ask this House what ought to be done about it, and he should have taken action upon it two and a half years ago. So much for the Huntingdon case.

The next item which I wish specially to draw to the attention of the Minister of Customs is one which I have made the subject of considerable inquiry and in connection with which I moved for papers; that is, the customs seizures. It is a very voluminous document which I hold, covering all the seizures that have taken place in the Customs Department for the last three years. Whether the minister intended to forestall any criticism or not, he seems to have taken a little notice of the matter the other day, as will be found on page 9819 of 'Hansard,' where he deals with the officers who do the seizing for him. I hold here some fifty pages of foolscap, giving the various seizures that have taken place in the Customs Department for the last three years. The amount involved is very large. If justice had been done in all these cases, that branch of the department must have been kept very fairly busy. The particular features which I wish to point out in connection with these seizures are the various causes which have led to the seizures, the amount of money that has gone to the informer, the amount that has gone to the officer making the seizure, and the final adjustment. The minister the other day said that I was wise in not asking for the names of those who were guilty. I agree with him, that it would be very unwise to place on the pages of 'Hansard' the names of merchants who might inadvertently have been found guilty of an infraction of the customs laws. But there are many cases where that cannot be urged as a reason why the names should not be given; and unless matters improve in the Customs Department in the near future, I think it will be necessary to publish the names of all those offending, as is done in the Inland Revenue Department. The Minister of Inland Revenue is not so sensitive about hurting anybody as the Minister of Customs; because if he finds a pound of spice in a grocery which is not pure, he publishes the name of the grocer as that of a man who is selling spurious goods. Many men have been punished for that very thing when they have had nothing to do with putting up the goods, and did not know they were selling anything but pure goods until they were inspected by the government. The Min-