

Now I propose to read what purports to be a copy, and which I believe to be a copy, of the telegram sent by the Minister of Customs from Norwood. If this was a forgery, then this office was offered on the strength of a forgery to Mr. Atkinson. Mr. F. B. McCormick told people on the Island that he had been removed, and he at once left the Island. He was to report at Windsor, but instead of doing so I saw him on nomination day at Kingsville, and I found that he was going up and down the township lines and the side lines of Essex working for the party that had removed him from office. If he was ordered to report at Windsor, he went to Amherstburg, and he said he was going to discharge duties in that office, where they have already three collectors, though the business is less than it was when one collector did the whole work. This is a copy of a letter which confirms the telephone message upon which the office was given to Mr. Atkinson:

"COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,
"WINDSOR, ONT., 21st July, 1891.

"J. H. C. ATKINSON, Esq.,
"Pelee Island, Ont.

"SIR,—I telegraphed you this morning informing you that the hon. the Minister of Customs had appointed you Customs officer on Pelee Island, and I now send copy of his telegram to me:

"NORWOOD, February 20, 1891.

"TO COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Windsor.

"Inform J. H. C. Atkinson that he has been appointed Customs officer on Pelee Island in place of McCormick removed, and order McGlashan back.

(Sd.) "M. BOWELL."

"I remain, your obedient servant,

"MILES COWAN,

"Acting Collector."

This is the telegram on the strength of which the Customs collector stated that McCormick was removed and Atkinson was appointed. McCormick announced that fact on the Island and on the mainland, and every effort was made, and I suppose with a great degree of success, to secure for the Administration voters who were antagonistic to the Government on account of this appointment. This is an extraordinary spectacle. If it be not true, if these despatches are forgeries, the Customs collectors knew that there was a usurper on Pelee Island. On the strength of these messages, the office was handed over to Mr. J. H. C. Atkinson, and I say that the conduct of the hon. Minister on that occasion was unprecedented. We often hear hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the House talk about British precedent. Why, Sir, do people imagine or believe that a member of the British Parliament, a member of the British Government, Lord Salisbury or any other distinguished man, during an election contest, would trample upon the appointing power in this way, and make an appointment for the purpose, as I believe, of deceiving the electors? Such, Sir, I believe to be the conduct of the Minister of Customs on that occasion. It will be his duty to explain the extraordinary haste with which he made this appointment; it will be his duty to say why this telegram was sent at a time when he was, probably, stumping his own riding, or the riding adjacent to his. I believe this extraordinary telegram was sent in order to influence the honest electors of Pelee Island after they had declared, a large number of them, that they would not support the Government candidate

Mr. ALLAN.

as long as that appointment continued. They had assurances of prominent men in that riding, they had the letters that I have mentioned, they had also the statement and the action of the Customs authorities of Canada, removing, apparently, the old collector and substituting J. H. C. Atkinson in his place. Now, the next information we have in reference to this matter is a letter written by Mr. Atkinson to George Gott, collector at Amherstburg, who has authority over this office. Pelee Island is an outport of Amherstburg, and after taking possession of the office, it seemed to be Mr. Atkinson's aim and effort to secure proper instructions as how to conduct that office. He says:

"I wrote to Geo. Gott, Esq., Collector of Amherstburg under whose survey this port is, on the 3rd May, 1891, for instructions. I received the following letter:—

"CUSTOMS, CANADA,
"COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,
"AMHERSTBURG, 14th March, 1891.

"J. H. C. ATKINSON, Esq., Pelee Island, Ont.

"SIR,—I beg to acknowledge yours of the 3rd instant, and in reply to state: I have no official knowledge of your appointment to the office at South Port. I direct all papers to the sub-collector, therefore if any change has taken place without my knowledge, the proper person receives the letters, papers and packages. I was astonished at the time I heard of changes being made, that I, the collector under whom said port is operated, and in whose survey South Port is situated, not being made acquainted with the matter. If any official orders should be received by me from the department in regard to the appointment, you will be immediately apprised thereof.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"COLLECTOR."

That purports to be a copy of a letter from George Gott, Amherstburg, who expresses his surprise that any change should be made in the office of collector at the outport, which is under his district. Now, Mr. Gott, no doubt, was very much astonished when he addressed his complaint on that occasion to the wrong party, when he knew that some person had got possession of that office in an illegal way, and I think it was his duty to have called the attention of the Minister to that circumstance at that time. But, as a matter of fact, Collector Gott and all these collectors were in the ring, they understood the plot, they were working in order to secure the vote of the electors of Pelee Island, and he purposely, no doubt, kept quiet on this subject until long after the election. The next document I will present consists of notes communicated to Mr. Atkinson:

"Having received no instructions from either Ottawa or Amherstburg, at the opening of navigation I went to Windsor on 7th April, and called at Custom house; could get no instructions there; telephoned Collector, Amherstburg, who informed me that he could give me no instructions. I then wrote to the Minister of Customs as follows:—

"HON. M. BOWELL, Minister of Customs,
"Ottawa, Ont.

"DEAR SIR,—On the 21st day of February, 1891, I received the following telegram from Mr. Miles Cowan, acting Collector of Windsor, viz.: 'The Minister of Customs has ordered me to inform you that you are appointed Customs officer at Pelee Island in the place of F. B. McCormick.'

(Sd.) "MILES COWAN."

"I also received a letter from Mr. Cowan stating: 'Your telegram dated at Norwood, 20th February, 1891, which read as follows, viz.: Inform J. H. C. Atkinson that he has been appointed Customs officer on Pelee Island in place of Mr. McCormick removed, and order McGlashan back.'

(Sd.) "M. BOWELL."

"For MILES COWAN, Acting Collector."