

## REPORT ON CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr Borden Demands a Statement From Government.

Sir Wilfred Says They Will Act in Good Time.

Mr. Foster's Motion on Purchase by Contract.

Ottawa, March 30.—The fight over the Civil Service Commissioners' report commenced in the House to-day.

Bayonet for Ross Rifle.

Hon. Sydney Fisher, in the absence of Sir Frederick Borden, informed Lieut.-Col. Worthington that the Militia Council had approved in December last of a sword bayonet for the Ross rifle. The question as to who would manufacture the weapon was under consideration by the Governor-General in Council. The Ross rifle is now in use by the Canadian Militia numbered 8216.

Sir Wilfred Laurier, answering Mr. Taylor, said that during the past ten years twelve United States warships had gone through the St. Lawrence Canals, four out and eight in. These ships were for the training of the naval militia. Canada had one training ship in the great lakes, namely, the Vigilant. On February 15th this year the Government gave permission for the United States gunboat Nashville to pass through the St. Lawrence Canals and River.

Purchase Supplies by Tender.

Hon. George E. Foster moved the following resolution: "That all the supplies purchased for the use of the various departments of the Government should be on the basis of public tender and contract, under the direction of a competent purchasing commission, and with regard primarily to quality and price."

This has been on the order paper in his name for some time, but, as he explained in his opening remarks, he had waited until the report of the Civil Service Commission was brought in before discussing it. He intended, he said, to speak to the resolution in a non-partisan manner. As soon as one made the plea to apply modern business methods to a Government he was met with objections of various kinds, many of which were familiar to his hearers. But there was really no reason why modern business methods should not be applied to the administration of a Government, even if it meant the crumbling of old traditions. Incidentally he expressed the opinion that those whose fortune it was to provide for the country were being treated in a non-partisan manner. As soon as one made the plea to apply modern business methods to a Government he was met with objections of various kinds, many of which were familiar to his hearers. But there was really no reason why modern business methods should not be applied to the administration of a Government, even if it meant the crumbling of old traditions. Incidentally he expressed the opinion that those whose fortune it was to provide for the country were being treated in a non-partisan manner.

Mr. A. K. Maclean, on a point of order, objected to Mr. Blain reading at that stage from documents which were not before the House.

The Speaker sustained the objection, but, despite this ruling, Mr. Blain reverted to the subject of the bookkeeping of the Marine Department, and was charged by Mr. Maclean with making statements that were fabrications.

Mr. Blain next criticised the methods of the Militia Department, and complained particularly of the purchase of the sub-target guns at \$250 each. It had been stated, he said, that the Whitney Government had entered into a contract for sub-target guns at \$250 each, but the report showed that it was the Ross Government that had purchased the guns.

He moved an amendment to the effect that all supplies should be procured on the basis of public tender and contract, except in cases of unforeseen emergency and necessity, and that the present system of purchasing from middlemen at excessive prices should be immediately discontinued.

Dr. Roche.

Dr. Roche (Halifax) said it was a melancholy fact that Mr. Foster was once Minister of Marine, and there was no record that he carried out any form when he was in office. He seemed to have the opportunity to carry out reforms that Mr. Foster became a reformer. He was not aware that Mr. Foster's administration of the Marine Department was distinguished by a system of purchase by tender and contract. Neither did he think that the administration was creditable to him, for on the advent of Sir Charles Tupper as his successor one of the things upon which he was congratulated was that he corrected the disorders and abuses which, if Mr. Foster had not created, he had perpetuated. It seemed very odd to Dr. Roche that after enjoying eighteen years of patronage the Conservatives should be so eager to deprive their opponents of that privilege.

Roche contended that the appointment of a purchasing board, such as Mr. Foster advocated, would lead to the worst possible form of corruption, because its members would be responsible to no one for anything they did. He contended that such a board would be appointed. Was the Government to select political foes or its political friends?

Hon. Sydney Fisher.

Hon. Sydney Fisher had hoped that the example set by Mr. Foster of non-partisan discussion of such an important question would have been followed. Fully three-quarters, if not 90 per cent, of the supplies for the departments were bought by tender and contract. The proportion not so bought was very small.

Mr. Blain asked why the supplies bought from Morfin had not been purchased by tender and contract.

Hon. Sydney Fisher replied that the matter having been fully discussed and voted upon in the House, he did not propose to go into it now, nor into any of the details.

Mr. Borden.

Mr. Borden, in briefly supporting the resolution, thought the fact that the Transcontinental Railway Commission were disbursing large amounts was a sufficient answer to the Prime Minister's objections. Whatever might be said in favor of the merits of the present system of purchasing supplies, there was no doubt that its practice was open to criticism.

Hon. W. S. Fielding.

Hon. W. S. Fielding, while commending the purpose of the resolution, emphasized the point made by Sir Wilfred that individuals as a rule did not resort to tender and contract in their business affairs, nor, to the best of his belief, did great corporations. For example, he did not remember seeing the C. P. R. advertise for tenders, and, according to his knowledge, it was not their practice to purchase by tender and contract. The National Transcontinental Commission had been mentioned by the leader of the Opposition as a precedent for Mr. Foster's proposition. He had overlooked the fact that that commission could not spend one dollar without the authority of the Government, and that the ninety per cent, of the supplies had been purchased by tender and contract. The investigations and revelations, he contended, showed that this was not the case, and he then proceeded to make a strongly critical analysis of the goods purchased by the civil service commission's report.

Mr. Boyce followed in the same strain, charging the Minister with attempting to evade responsibility for the present system.

Dr. Sproule.

Dr. Sproule thought that the Minister of Agriculture was dealing in fiction when he claimed that probably ninety per cent, of the supplies had been purchased by tender and contract. The investigations and revelations, he contended, showed that this was not the case, and he then proceeded to make a strongly critical analysis of the goods purchased by the civil service commission's report.

Mr. Fielding's Amendment Carries.

Mr. Fielding's amendment was lost by 90 to 43, and on a third division the motion as amended by the Finance Minister was carried by 99 to 44, the Government majority being thus 45.

Sir Wilfred Laurier moved the adjournment of the House until the morning.

Members were preparing to disperse when Mr. Borden, nettled apparently by the substantial Government majority, rose and in indignant tones demanded to know what course the Government proposed to follow in regard to what he described as the serious and very grave charges against them in the Civil Service Commission's report. He characterized the action of the Government in whipping up absent members to-night as silly and undignified. He did not think the House should adjourn until the Prime Minister had given some idea of his policy in regard to the thorough and absolute demoralization of the public service which, he declared, had been brought about.

other of the old matters which had been raked up. The public which the hon. gentlemen opposite were so fond of picturing as being outraged by the Government's course had shown its feelings by returning Liberals in all but three or four of the nearly forty by-elections. He read extracts from the report of the commission which made the investigation during the time that Mr. Foster was a member of the late Conservative Government, to show that the Government of those days frequently made purchases without tenders, and also maintained the principle of ministerial responsibility in these matters, just as the present Government was doing and proposed to continue to do.

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Government Repaired.

Hon. W. S. Fielding replied that the House had occasionally stated to a later hour than that reached (12.05), and could, if necessary, do so again. He much regretted that his hon. friend had found the discussion and votes of the night so disagreeable. For himself, he could not realize that there had been anything that should have created so great a disturbance in the mind of the hon. gentleman. The question as to when the report would be ready was a matter for the King's Printer. The motion carried, and the order of the House was that the report be printed forthwith, and he had no doubt that it would be complied with by the King's Printer. When the report was brought down and distributed they would have a chance to discuss it in the proper order.

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Hon. Geo. E. Foster held that it was not a matter as to what the King's Printer was going to do, but as to whether the Ministers were going to do their duty or not. What was the Minister of Marine and Fisheries going to do, for instance? He stood as an accused person before the whole country; he was held up to the scorn and contempt of this country. (Liberal cries of "Oh! Oh!") The Minister had lost no time in attacking a commission which he and his Government had appointed. He and the Prime Minister had made promises at one time, nothing further had been heard. Mr. Foster charged that two years ago Mr. Brodeur had made a strong defence of his department by holding up the body of his colleague, just dead, and saying that the Opposition was attacking the dead. Now he was claiming that all this trouble was due to those who had preceded him.

Sir Wilfred Counsels Calmness.

Sir Wilfred Laurier thought it as well that members of the House should try to be calm and not be carried off their feet by excitement or temper. He did not think the House should be carried off by good feeling or by the proper conduct of business to have such words used as "scorn," "contempt," and "silly." On a previous occasion he had expressed the view that there was enough in the report of the commission to warrant further action. What action should be taken, whether by Royal Commission or in some other way, he was not prepared to say; neither was Hon. Geo. E. Foster, who had expressed similar views at the time. The necessity of some action was obvious. There was only three days ago. Every hon. gentleman knew that there were many matters to engage the attention of the Ministers. They had to divide their time between the House and their departments. Saturdays, as all knew, were devoted to Council meetings. Was it extraordinary that after three days the Government was not prepared to say what action should be taken? That action must and would be taken they all agreed, but it was unreasonable of the leader of the Opposition to demand at 12.30 in the morning that the Government immediately say what action it is prepared to take. Sir Wilfred was not yet prepared to say what course would be followed, but he reiterated "action must and will be taken." The report of the commission would be printed and distributed as speedily as possible. More than that, he would say that he was not afraid of the report. (Prolonged Liberal cheers.) The Government had appointed a commission of men of independent character, because it had desired to probe the whole question of the civil service and its condition. When the report had been printed and distributed the Opposition would find the Government ready to face it and to give the explanations required. (Renewed cheers.)

Mr. Barker tried to make the point that the Government had held back the report.

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Hon. Mr. Fielding.—The report makes no charge against the Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

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Dr. Reid declared that he knew two years ago that men were getting rakes-offs from the Marine and Fisheries Department.

Mr. Brodeur said that if Dr. Reid were to mention the name of any official who was getting a rake-off he would immediately suspend him.

Dr. Reid declined to accept the challenge.

Mr. Macdonald (Pictou) twitted Dr. Reid with repeating time and again insinuations without having the pluck to make a charge. He could tell the Opposition that if the Government was brought into discredit it would be because certain officials who had been appointed by the Conservative Government to the departments had been permitted to remain.

The House adjourned at 2.15 a. m.

## EAT ORANGES

IF YOU WANT TO KEEP WELL

Careful tests have proved beyond question that orange juice has clearly defined medicinal virtues. Those who suffer with indigestion are compelled "to diet" find that after eating oranges regularly for breakfast there is no distress, no palpitation.

Where there was a tendency towards constipation, the eating of oranges regulated the bowels.

In skin troubles, those who began the morning meal with an orange were noticeably improved.

There is, however, a quicker way to get better results. This is to take one or two "Fruit-a-tives" tablets at bedtime in addition to the juice of an orange before breakfast the next morning. "Fruit-a-tives" are the juices of oranges, apples, figs and prunes, in which the medicinal action is many times intensified by the special way of combining them. Valuable tonics are then added.

Take the juice of an orange before breakfast—take "Fruit-a-tives" at night—and you will quickly be rid of Indigestion, Stomach Troubles, Constipation and Biliousness. "Fruit-a-tives" are sold by all dealers at 50c a box—4 for \$2.50. Sent on receipt of price by "Fruit-a-tives," Limited, Ottawa.

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