

THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF THE NORTH WEST

Hon. David Laird Indian Department Adviser Visits City With Early Days in Western Canada.

Among the many distinguished men of science who were in the 175 members of the British Association to visit Edmonton Saturday was one whose name will always be closely identified with the early history of Northwest Canada. It was Hon. David Laird, now chief adviser in the Department of Indian Affairs at Ottawa, the first governor of the North West Territories, and Minister of the Interior, the second to fill the office.

Speaking of Indian conditions in the West Mr. Laird said that as a result of the treaty reserve system the Indians of Canada are now cultivating over 50,000 acres, raising annually a million and a half bushels of grain and roots. The value of their farm produce, wages and earnings total five millions a year. They own one hundred and seventy thousand animals and have \$22,000 in the Savings Bank.

It was in the early construction period of Western Canada that Mr. Laird took a prominent part as a foundation builder and a pioneer representative of government, and it was in his dealings with the Indians as superintendent of the Indian Affairs and Indian Commissioner in 1876 and 1878 that his administration has been most beneficial.

Controlled Vest Domain. Never had a public man so large an opportunity to negotiate for the acquisition of an almost unexplored land, for in 1873 there was practically no Winnipeg, nor Edmonton, nor Calgary. Not a mile of road had been laid on the floor of the prairie and the wheat growing possibilities of the west had not even been discovered.

It was at this time that Hon. David Laird entered upon a new career of usefulness to his country. One of the most pressing problems facing the Minister of the Interior was the Indian. The majority of the hundred thousand Indians who were west of Lake Superior, and some system of governmental control of the Indian was needed. It was indeed fortunate that it fell to the lot of a man of high government rank to negotiate some of the principal treaties with the western tribes. No more fitting enunciation could be made by Laird than that of the red men themselves, who, with their unerring insight into human nature, gave him the flattering name of "the man-whose-tongue-is-not-forked." Another name applied to him was that of "Big Chief."

First Resident Governor. In the year 1876, the North West Territories were organized, with Mr. Laird as their first resident Lieutenant Governor. Battleford became the capital of the country, now the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and from the Executive Mansion of this then isolated centre, the government of Canada exercised a more direct sway over both white and red men and half-breeds than had before been possible.

During the succeeding years, Mr. Laird, in his position of Lieutenant Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was in constant contact with the Indians. Deputations of the dusky sons of the plains were frequently encamped on the Battledore outskirt, and there and at other points in the Territories he met with the great Indian leaders, such as Crowfoot, the famous chief of the Blackfoot nation, a man of remarkable native genius for government. On numerous occasions the tall chief for Mr. Laird exceeds a six-foot stature, smoked the pipe of peace with his bronzed brothers.

It was in 1877 that Treaty No. 7 was concluded by Mr. Laird with the Assiniboines and Blackfoot, the most powerful of all the prairie tribes. Under it and previous treaties the whole of the country from Lake Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains and north to the Athabasca River was ceded to the government leaving the red men at a later period a much more difficult task owing to their inaccessibility and long independence from control.

Trip to Peace River. In the year 1899 Commissioner Laird concluded the great treaty known as Treaty Eight, with the Crees, Beavers and Chipewyans of the Peace River and contiguous country. It was another remarkable agreement in which the red men signed away forever their blood rights in a territory five hundred miles in length from the Athabasca River to Great Slave Lake, a treaty that, in the picturesque language of the documents, is to last "as long as the sun shines and water runs." The journey of the Treaty Commission with Mr. Laird at its head, was a notable one. It was notable in that it was a contrast. Whereas in the 'Seventies, he

had to cover the distance between Winnipeg and Battledore by cart or on horseback, across great stretches of unoccupied and untilled lands, on his journey the railway had reached Strathcona, with all the changes and developments involved in its building. From Edmonton northward, however, the primitive overland trail had to be taken to Athabasca Landing, and thereafter covering rivers, lakes and land as they form the two thousand mile route by the Peace River north and return by the Athabasca.

Gathering at Slave Lake. Reaching Lesser Slave Lake, a memorable gathering took place, which hundreds of tribesmen, with their chiefs, formed a great tented city surrounding the whiter tents of the Treaty Commissioners. It was a significant day, too, for the red men, for they were asked to part with their rights in an area as large as an Empire—three years ago.

Possessing a nature in which fairness and firmness met, as Mr. Laird has been happily characterized, he and his fellow commissioners conducted the negotiations so tactfully and successfully as to secure the consent of the Indians to the proposition and the symbolic signatures of their chiefs to the important document. Addressed through the interpreter, his "Red Brothers," Mr. Laird explained the terms, by which every one would receive \$15, for each year every year afterwards \$25, for each person, received \$25, a silver medal and a flag, and counselors \$15, with suits of clothes for both dignitaries. 325 acres of land were also offered to each Indian in reserves, the government promising to further help them with farm implements, and grains or cattle if they preferred stock raising. Schools were also promised. Today there are a hundred schools in the West accommodating ten thousand Indian children.

Has Rendered High Service. Thus at the most critical period of its history, the Hon. David Laird has rendered high service, not only in formulating a beneficent and humane policy regarding the Indian, but in the general development of the great land. The trackless prairie of the 'Seventies has become the Mecca of the world's surplus peoples; the unknown West has become the gold West; the parish of a single administrator has been made into two great provinces, and all this transformation has taken place since Mr. Laird himself went west thirty-three years ago.

Mr. Laird was earliest identified with politics in Prince Edward Island. He entered public life while a young man as member of the Legislative Council and was afterwards a member of the provincial government. In the latter capacity he was a commissioner to negotiate for the entrance of the Island province into Confederation. After the union in 1873 he was elected to the Federal House and chosen minister of the Interior by Hon. Alex. MacKenzie.

SAYS COOK KNEW OF HIS SUCCESS

(Continued from Page One.) asserts that Commander Peary took the furs, forced him to open Dr. Cook's trunk and held him a virtual prisoner for a time. Upon his return to the country Francke says he was advised to write a complaint to Mrs. Peary as a protest and to protect Dr. Cook's legitimate rights should he wish to begin suit for the value of the property alleged to have been taken.

Sent by Registered Mail. Francke states that his letter was first written in German and sent to Mrs. Peary. Three persons had knowledge of the letter and Francke preserved a copy. When he did not receive any reply from Mrs. Peary he consulted with his friends. It was suggested that Mrs. Peary might not be able to read German, so a translation was made of the letter and sent her by registered mail. Francke says the object of the letter was simply to register his protest at the first possible moment, against Commander Peary's actions. One of the persons who knew of the letter being sent by Francke is Henry Johnson who was a member of the Roosevelt's crew and who has made an affidavit that Francke was put off the Roosevelt about food when he first came aboard.

Canada Claims Timber. Ottawa, Sept. 12.—As a result of the discovery of the North pole and the planting of the American flag there the question has been raised in the British House of Commons by Sir Gilbert Parker as to ownership of all lands intervening between the pole and the territory now marked as Canada on the map. An answer will be given to the question in the British House tomorrow. It is understood that the matter was under discussion at the last meeting of the cabinet council here and that a statement has been sent to the colonial office intimating that Canada claims all the land intervening between the North American border and the North pole.

So far as is known all the islands in the Arctic ocean, west of Greenland, have already been formally claimed by Canada, one of the objects of Captain Bernier's expedition in the Arctic two years ago being to formally take possession of and plant the British flag on all islands to the north.

Commander Peary in his report of his trip to the pole did not tell of finding any land north of Greenland which is recognized as Canadian territory. From there the pole is evidently an ice covered ocean. Consequently although Canada claims all lands as far north as the pole as being part of the Canadian hinterland, there is not likely to be any basis for any rival United States claim to ownership. The pole itself, being two miles above water, belongs to all nations.

Not Accustomed to Second Place. London, Sept. 12.—Commander Peary's discovery of the North pole has stimulated British desire to gain an equal success in the South, and Cook's supplies and was instructed if he did not hear from the explorer within six months, to get back to civilization in any way he could. He was taken aboard Commander Peary's ship when she touched at Etah. John R. Bradley states that he received a bill of \$100 from Commander Peary for Francke's passage. Capt. S. B. Osborn, secretary of the Arctic club, says that Commander Peary gave Francke \$30 to pay his passage from St. John's to New York and that Mrs. Cook sent the \$50 to the secretary of the Peary Arctic club.

After listening to the story Francke had to tell and in which he was backed up in many particulars by White and Johnson, Mr. Bradley and Capt. Osborn had the young man make affidavits. These relate to Commander Peary's actions regarding letters entrusted to Francke by Dr. Cook and to Commander Peary's attitude toward the collections made by Dr. Cook.

He has been instructed by friends of Dr. Cook not to reveal the nature of these affidavits at this time, said Captain Osborn. They will be made as necessary as soon as Dr. Cook and will be a boonish to Commander Peary and his claim. Letters written by Dr. Cook were opened and then ressealed. Commander Peary sent friends in all parts of the country fox skins secured by Dr. Cook and then forced Francke to sign a letter excusing his conduct. The affidavits will show that this was done under duress.

Still at Battle River. Battle Harbor, Sept. 14.—Captain Bartlett of the Roosevelt, is extremely anxious to weigh anchor and return to civilization but as there is great danger of encountering the storms so prevalent in this season of the treacherous Labrador coast, every precaution will be taken to keep the Roosevelt in as seaworthy condition as possible. Under the best of commanders the steamer is bound to make a slow run to Sperry, probably not more than five knots an hour.

Commander Peary is also anxious to reach New York first, although he adds that the Brooklyn explorer's attempt to induce scientific to believe his story will be futile. Peary is Nervous. Commander Peary's appearance is that of a man who has gone through a tremendous strain, with high strung nerves, but is now in the pink of condition. He feels equal to repeating the journey under similar conditions, with every hope of again reaching the pole. He attributes the success of his expedition to the personnel of his party, which he says was the finest that ever tramped across the polar sea. His impetuous and energetic sledges aided in his success together with his magnificent dogs and strong young Eskimos. The Roosevelt is decorated with a day in honor to the birthday of Peary's daughter, Maria, born in the Arctic in 1875.

Did Cook Miss Pole. Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 12.—Did Dr. Cook miss the pole by 300 miles? John N. Stockwell, A. M. Ph. D., a Cleveland scientist, says, his data as published, shows a big error. For the main purpose of the expedition Prof. Stockwell disregards all data obtained by the use of instruments and takes only the physical facts. Dr. Stockwell says: "Dr. Cook tells me that he was always on the level, and if he says he reached the pole every one can be sure he did."

The Trouble Over Supplies. Copenhagen, Sept. 13.—A remarkable letter giving Dr. Frederik Cook's version of the trouble with Commander Peary over supplies appears in the newspaper Politiken. The letter was written by Dr. Norb. Hansen, a prominent Danish physician, who was several times at Greenland to study eye diseases which

he has made a specialty of. Dr. Cook told the same story to one of his closest American friends just a week ago before Commander Peary reappeared on the scene, but said that he did not intend to make it public because it might lead to unpleasantness. Dr. Hansen was with Dr. Cook for some time in Greenland and returned with him on the Danish Government steamer Hansaged. In his letter he says: "Now that Dr. Cook has gone I am no longer under any obligation to keep silence and will exercise my rights to publish the story about the house at Annotok, a story which Mr. Cook himself had too much delicacy to relate to the world. I write it according to my memory, in the same manner that Dr. Cook in Egedesminde told it to me and I am fully convinced that in no means are my recollections wrong."

Dr. Cook had built his house for stores at Annotok north of Etah and it was there that he started to reach in February 1906, crossing Smith Sound. It was a pretty large house, the walls being built of heavy timber. It was built by Dr. Cook and when this important point was reached everything was safe. He had before the start arranged with a young friend named Whitney that he have the right to use the house while hunting muskox for sport in the winter of 1906-07. When Dr. Cook and his two Eskimos exhausted and half starved came within a short distance of the house in Annotok young Whitney came out to bid him welcome but inside the house was a stranger, a giant Newfoundland boatman, calmly watching. This man had been placed in Dr. Cook's house by Com. Peary when the latter passed Etah with his ship north.

Kept Cook Out of His Own. Commander Peary had given the boatman a written order, which began with the following words: "This house belongs to Dr. Frederik A. Cook, but Dr. Cook is long ago dead and there is no use to search after him. Therefore I, Commander Robert E. Peary, instill my boatman in this deserted house, which could neither read nor write, exhibited to Dr. Cook and the latter took a copy of this wonderful document. This copy however, he does not intend to publish if Commander Peary's course does not force him to do so. Dr. Cook gave me a lively account of how the young millionaire, Mr. Whitney, during the whole winter was treated like a dog by the giant boatman, and how he had calmly witnessed the sailor bartering Dr. Cook's provisions for fox and bear skins for himself."

Dr. Cook also had to put a good face on the unpleasant. He had to get into his own house and had to make a compromise with the boatman with strong fists. Dr. Cook made a present of the house with all its contents to his two faithful Eskimos, with the proviso that Whitney was to have the use of the house as long as his hunting trip lasted. But he was compelled to let the Newfoundland boatman continue his watch. The boatman, however, received strict orders not to exchange any more of the provisions or guns. Now I suppose the sailor will celebrate his triumphal entrance into New York harbor aboard Commander Peary's ship, while Whitney is aboard his own yacht Jeanne, or perhaps he has not wanted to wait for his own boat and has gone aboard Commander Peary's ship.

To Mr. Whitney, Dr. Cook gave his instruments and his observations, as he thought those precious things were safer there than on the long sled trip in the spring across Melville Bay, but all his notebooks and greasy and soiled record books, which have been so closely written upon, he kept and carried with him. To me, who understands only a very little astronomy, the records written down so closely and in all directions were very hard to read, but what is the record? The two men, Commander Peary and Dr. Cook, their character, their conduct that is what interests us and every little item throwing a side light upon their natures is valuable.

Believes Cook Got There. Menominee, Mich., Sept. 12.—Captain W. K. Perry, of the revenue cutter Taconara, has an interesting story to tell regarding the first start made by Dr. Cook, two years ago, for the Pole. "About two years ago," said the captain, "I was in Newfoundland in the revenue service, when one morning we met a large full-rigged schooner which we boarded and overhauled. It proved to belong to a man named John R. Bradley, who was returning from Greenland, where he had been on a hunting trip. Mr. Bradley stated, in a casual manner: 'When at Greenland I handed a man named Dr. Cook, who is going to the Pole, a large quantity of provisions and discover the North Pole.' 'We all smiled at the matter of fact way in which he mentioned the feat and he continued and he is going to discover it, too.' 'I believe Cook discovered the Pole. From what I have heard of him he is a conscientious, quiet sort of man and a thorough gentleman. I admire his method of getting to the Pole more than I do Commander Peary's. It would be impossible for any man to fix up a set of observations so as to deceive the scientists, and all that is necessary to find the North Pole is the sextant, which can be carried in the pocket.'

Montreal, Sept. 13.—Theodore E. A. Cook is regarded along the Labrador coast as a man of strict honor, while Peary, through certain mean traits in his character, did not enjoy the esteem or respect of the seamen and explorers there, was the statement made by Bert Chesterfield, fur trader and sub-Arctic traveler, who is in Montreal for a few days. "I thoroughly believe Dr. Cook discovered the North Pole," he said, "and perhaps Commander Peary may have done so, too, although I entertain doubts about the fact. But whether Commander Peary was successful or not, this recent declaration, through the press, that Dr. Cook's words are to be accepted as the proof of his declarations, now as being a true expression of his Arctic travels will rouse great feeling and disgust among the explorers and traders in the north."

Chesterfield has just returned from a long trip along sub-Arctic ice and test his length of stay. "Chesterfield's personal interviews with Dr. Cook found him open-hearted, filled with enthusiasm about the work and while he was always ready to talk about travels, he did so in a dignified manner that filled his hearers with trust. Chesterfield expects when Commander Peary meets Dr. Cook he will be restored to himself through contact with society, and will grasp the explorer's hand with a word of congratulation, and apology. "But if Commander Peary, more widely known, and therefore more popular here, continues to assert that Dr. Cook with two ignorant Eskimos did not reach the Pole, and that he himself, with an equally ignorant negro and Eskimo did, the dispute will end up by disbelieving them both."

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