

when they interrupted Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen on the floor of the House of Commons on March 27 was revealed three weeks later when, on April 16, Chief Justice Harrison Andrew McKeown, of New Brunswick, held his first session as Royal Commissioner to inquire into and report upon the affairs of the Home Bank of Canada.

The first witness called by H.J. Symington, K.C., junior counsel for the Dominion Government, was John Roberts, secretary of the Dominion Department of Finance. This witness produced sixty-two exhibits, which he said had been taken from the files of the department. They included correspondence and memoranda in regard to the Home Bank affairs in January and February, 1916. Reproduction of these exhibits takes up 97 pages in the printed report of the proceedings of the McKeown Commission.

ALL WAS AVAILABLE.

All this material was, according to the sworn testimony of the secretary to the Finance Department on the files of the department, and therefore was available to the King Government.

In outlining his case to the Commissioner, R.J. McLaughlin, K.C., counsel for the Home Bank depositors, emphasized the fact that in January, 1916, a representation was made on behalf of the three western directors, Hon. T.A. Crerar, John Kennedy and John Persse, to Sir Thomas White, Minister of Finance.

This letter, which was written by James Fisher, K.C., stating that the condition of the Home Bank was not satisfactory to the three western directors was on the files of the Department when the two Liberal Ministers made their statements in the House of Commons and was produced by Secretary Roberts at the first session of the Royal Commission.

Despite the fact that Hon. E.M. Macdonald made a statement in the House of Commons that "there was no such record in the department," John Roberts was able to produce confidential memoranda to the Minister of Finance concerning the Prudential Trust Co., and the Barnard Loan. He also filed a copy of letters from General Manager Mason to Hon. T.A. Crerar and from Mr. Crerar to Gen. Mason, also letters from the western directors to General Mason. There were also produced by Mr. Roberts copies of letters written by Sir Thomas White to General Mason, by A.W. Anglin, K.C. to General Mason, and from General Mason to the Minister of Finance.

In addition to the above, there was in the files of the department the report of John Adair concerning the Toronto branch of the Home Bank of Canada, made July 1, 1915, and also a statement showing the indebtedness of A.C. Frost Co., in Sept., 1915.

WHY WAS IT DONE?

The question now asked in political circles in Ottawa is: "Did the two ministers when they interrupted Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen on the floor of the House of Commons on March 27 last, wilfully and deliberately try to mislead the people of Canada, or was the King Government woefully ignorant of the information in regard to the affairs of the Home Bank of Canada which lay in the files of the Department of Finance."

The general impression in Ottawa is that the Government could not help knowing that these records were on the department files, and that the attempt is now being made to shift from the shoulders of Rt. Hon. W.S. Fielding and his colleagues in the Liberal Government, the responsibility which is rightfully theirs.

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