

Minister of Finance, and in that capacity he had supervision of the insurance companies of Canada. As Minister of Insurance he was obliged under the oath of his office to see that the insurance laws were properly observed by insurance companies. In 1900 the hon. gentleman was defeated in the city of St. John, N. B., and he decided to shake the dust of his native province from his feet and he went to the province of Ontario. Mr. Foster then naturally desired some employment and he was asked to become the general manager of the Union Trust Company, which is controlled by the Independent Order of Foresters; it handles the securities of the Independent Order of Foresters, so that you may fairly call the Union Trust Company, the Insurance Company. The Independent Order of Foresters, being in need of a manager very naturally thought the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) would make a very good man for the position, and I have no doubt they were right in that. And so they asked Mr. Foster to become manager of the Union Trust Company. Well, Sir, it would be just as fair and as honourable for me to say that during the days when Mr. Foster was Minister of Insurance he was winking one eye at some of the business transactions of this insurance company and he was preparing a soft bed for himself when disaster reached his party, as it is for these gentlemen opposite to make the charges they do against Mr. Smart. But I do not charge the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) with any such thing. I do say, however, that if he had never been Minister of Finance he would never have had any subsequent connection with the Independent Order of Foresters or any of its subsidiary companies. I also say that it is quite true in all human probability, that Mr. Smart never would have been asked to act as Canadian agent of the North Atlantic Trading Company if he had not had some official relations with that company when he was deputy Minister of the Interior. Things have come to a pretty pass in this country when a gentleman who, having once been an officer of a department and afterwards engages in business relations with those with whom he had official relations in previous years; things have come to a pretty pass if such a man is to be termed a criminal, and on that account alone, to be accused of official wrongdoing during the time he was in the employ of the government.

Another point that was sought to be made against Mr. Smart, by gentlemen opposite, was the fact that he burned his private correspondence a year after he left the department. Surely no fair minded and self respecting person in Canada can believe a man guilty of any improper act simply because he burned his correspondence in this way. I wonder if the hon. member (Mr. Foster) has preserved all his private correspondence between the years 1882 and 1896. I have not

the slightest doubt in the world that he had private correspondence with many corporations and many individuals with whom he had also official correspondence; has he preserved it at all? I believe it is but the ordinary practise for persons once in a while to destroy their personal correspondence or the correspondence which they do not consider it necessary to keep. Even if Mr. Smart's correspondence were placed before the House there would be no reason in the world why any hon. gentleman should draw from it any inference of wrong-doing in connection with this contract. Mr. Smart under oath has declared that he only had two or three letters with these parties; he had been in Europe and had met one or two of the gentlemen composing this syndicate; he had pleasant social relations with them, and he stated under oath that in the last of his letters he did mention that he was about to leave the Department of the Interior, but that none of this correspondence related to the contract.

Let me now for a moment refer to a matter which has been mentioned by the hon. gentleman from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) and by the hon. gentleman from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). The hon. gentleman from North Toronto, at the commencement of his speech on this question undertook to express the opinion that Lord Strathcona had nothing whatever to do with the making of these contracts; that he personally knew nothing about them, and that the friends of the administration were using Lord Strathcona's name for the purpose of hiding the sins of other people. The hon. gentleman from Jacques Cartier in discussing this question said:

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are few members of this House, and I readily understand it, who have taken the trouble to peruse the immense mass of papers that were thrown down before the Committee of Agriculture and the Committee of Public Accounts this year, and that refer to this transaction. They are numerous, and they are not classified in a way that invites inspection. But I have taken the trouble to examine those documents, and there is not one member of this House who looks through those documents who can arrive at any other conclusion than that Lord Strathcona had nothing whatever to do with the making of this contract from the beginning until the end. The letters that are among those papers—and we have a right to presume that they are the only papers—disclosed on the contrary that from beginning to end Mr. Preston and Mr. Preston alone with the deputy minister at that time Mr. Smart, carried on negotiations with the mysterious parties who subsequently became the beneficiaries of this contract visited the continent, conferred with these parties unknown to Lord Strathcona.

I submit that this, Mr. Speaker, is another sample of misstatement of facts. There is nothing in the records placed before the committee to justify that statement; there is not a shadow of a shade of reason or