

OTTAWA LETTER.

The Bourassian System of Philosophy Goes to the Capital.

Clarke Wallace Shows How Blair Patronizes the Yankees in Preference to the Canadian Workman.

Tarte Turns Blair Down—A Record That Disgraces the Government and the Party

OTTAWA, June 24.—It was probably Mr. Tarte's farewell speech for the session in which he excused his department for ignoring the rules requiring contracts to be let by tender. Mr. Tarte cited by way of illustration a considerable number of cases, such as the dredging contracts, the Ottawa park fence, the western block and the electric lighting contract. Mr. Tarte set forth the reasonable proposition that if the law requires all contracts to be given by tender, what is possible, the law ought to be obeyed even by ministers of the crown. He showed that frequently material had been bought at private sale at prices fifty per cent above the market rate. In his speech closing the debate, Mr. Tarte showed that not only was money lost by these private transactions, but they offered a temptation to ministers and their friends, which the ordinary politician found hard to resist, and which were not always resisted by the present government.

Mr. Tarte pleaded extenuating circumstances. He had not given all his contracts for dredging to friends of his own by private arrangements. Often he gave them to the lowest bidder. In two cases he overruled the report of his engineer and gave it to the lowest bidder. He said that he had expressed the opinion that the man was not able to do it for the money. In one case a contractor had failed; in the other the work had been greatly delayed. In both it would have been better to have taken a higher tender. Mr. Tarte said that he was not a contractor, but that he was a minister of the law and that it is perhaps the reason he breaks it so much. He does not even see the necessity of making contracts. His own favorite method, and he openly declares it, is for the department to hire men by the day to carry on public works. He did that when he was rebuilding the Western Block and is well satisfied with the result. Mr. Tarte says that he dealt with the labor organizations and that the men were much better treated than they would have been by a contractor. After all the remarks, the tendency was strongly for day's work and what difference does it make whether the men are hired by a contractor or by a minister?

According to current opinion Mr. Tarte's illustration is a very happy one. The Western Block cost a prodigious amount of money. The building fairly swarmed with men during a by-election which was going on over the river, and Mr. Taylor remembers that it took four men to hold up a ladder while one man worked at the top. Mr. Tarte explains that when he pledged himself to rebuild the block he intended to install a plant. Afterwards he changed his mind and made the arrangement with the electric company on private terms, under which it is said that the country is paying more than twice as much for the same amount of service. It strikes Mr. Tarte as quite the right thing to break a promise if he has changed his mind after he made it. This is what Mr. Tarte describes as "the Bourassian system of philosophy." Mr. Tarte is one of the brilliant young liberals in the parliament, developed that idea at some length in his speech on the address. He explained that there was no falsehood and no ethical fault in a man acting according to his beliefs and changing his mind. He said that his practices as often as he changed his mind. If we accept this principle we may as well give up accepting assurances from ministers. The Bourassian philosophy would vitiate all contracts, destroy the value of notes of hand and cause general financial scepticism.

But the Bourassian philosophy goes to Ottawa. The government promises to destroy the national policy. Ministers change their minds and retain it. Public promises are given and then national expenditure. They change their minds and increase it. A premier solemnly says that he will not dismiss civil servants without an investigation. Within a week he commences the work of dismissal without investigation, and continues the business for years. The leader of a government declares in the house one afternoon that he will bring in a public document the next day. The following afternoon he refuses to bring it down. A minister of railways asks for a vote of money for an experiment, promising to report the result. He afterwards refuses to keep the account or make the report promised. A minister of public works takes a vote with a solemn declaration that he will not expend the money without investigation, and giving the contract to the lowest offer. Immediately after getting the money he makes a private contract with a friend for the service and never gives anyone else a chance. This is the Bourassian philosophy in operation.

Mr. Foster showed how the minister of marine works out the private contract system in his Traverse, light-house. He knew a year ago that his lights were old. He knew last autumn that he was going to put up a building. Parliament met in March, but the subject was never mentioned. In May or thereabouts the work was begun without authority of parliament, without tender, and without a vote of money. In June the house is asked to vote \$20,000 to pay for timber,

bought at private sale, without authority from a parliament that has been sitting three months, and to pay for building a crib on private terms in the placid waters of the Princess Louise dock. Sir Louis Davies says that everything was done on the advice of his engineer, but yesterday he was obliged to acknowledge that the engineer was rather the adviser than the adviser. The engineer had been sent out circulars asking for half a Mr. Dobell, who recommended the foreman, an old employee of his own and who, no doubt, recommended the men from whom the timber was purchased. There was no urgency about this job, seeing that the facts were known and the conclusion reached last year.

Mr. Clarke Wallace shows also that there was no urgency about the Intercolonial rolling stock. Mr. Blair justifies the purchase of cars in Buffalo by stating that the Canadian shops would not agree to furnish the cars in the time required. That is no doubt true. It is the simplest thing in the world to get money voted in May, to keep quiet till Christmas, and then sent out circulars asking for half a million dollars worth of cars in time for the next spring's business. If a minister wanted to give a job to friends in Buffalo who were associated with him in various speculative enterprises, that is probably the way he would go about it. But there is no doubt that every car now on the Intercolonial railway could have been built by Canadian labor after the money was voted and before the cars were needed. No person can take the cars and conclude that it was necessary to go abroad for them. But they are here and are paid for at a price that seems to be excessive and every part of them is the product of United States labor. We bring these cars in duty free and at the same time if a Canadian workman wanted to go to Buffalo to get a day's work making these same cars he would be headed off by some De Barry under the provisions of the Allen Labor Act.

Senator Almon of Halifax is overruling John Charlton. He has given notice of an amendment to Mr. Charlton's seduction bill. Charlton's bill raises the age of consent from 16 to 18 years. It provides that no girl under the age of 18 shall be held to have been a consenting party to the sacrifice of her virtue. The measure has the support of the W. C. T. U. and several other societies of women, and has been carried by a large majority in the commons. The minority urged that the law would give opportunity for young women of bad character to blackmail thoughtless youths, and argued that girls over 16 were sufficiently mature to have understanding in such matters. Senator Almon's amendment proposes to raise the age of consent to 16 years.

Mr. Flint is not making much disturbance over his prohibition bill. He took the matter in charge at the Dominion Alliance meeting at which the division took place over the question of the results of the plebiscite. Mr. Flint may be taken as the leader of that class of politicians who do not think that the government is under obligation to carry out the request of the Canadian people as declared by the plebiscite vote. He apparently endorses this break of faith on the part of the government and compromises by adopting the scheme for prohibition within provincial areas.

But even this scheme is rather discouraged by the premier, and so Mr. Flint has not worried the house over it. The order for his resolution was lowered down on the paper than several others, and Mr. Flint did not until yesterday take any steps to obtain the preference for it. At length however Sir Wilfrid Laurier has promised to have a day set apart for the redistribution bill has been proposed. If we allow only so long a time for the gerrymander bill as was occupied by the similar measure of 1892 it will be the middle of July when Mr. Flint gets his day. He will not have a large audience in the house after the other public business has been done, and the postponement of the Flint measure to the end of government business is virtually shelving it altogether.

Meanwhile the senate has been examining the record of Mr. Fraser, the gentleman who reported to the Dominion Alliance the plebiscite frauds in Quebec. Mr. Fisher denounced Mr. Parent some weeks ago, showing that he was a liar and a perjurer. It remained till afterwards to be discovered that the same Mr. Parent had been engaged in the last election by the liberal organizer in Quebec to deliver campaign speeches in favor of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Mr. Dandurand, who employed him, has since been made a senator. S. D. S.

OTTAWA, June 21.—Dr. Bethune, M. P. for Victoria, Nova Scotia, who was elected as a conservative and went over to the other side, explained yesterday why he did it. The explanation he made was that he had been somewhat deferred, as the transfer took place more than a year ago, at the beginning of last session. It probably would not have been made yet if it had not been forced from the deserter by a train of circumstances over which he had no control. Hon. Wm. Ross, ex-minister of militia, ex-collector of Halifax, and member for Victoria, was the occasion of the whole affair.

It seems that there is some dispute about federal patronage in Victoria county. Dr. Bethune says he never asked for it and in fact refused it because the government would not meet the conditions he imposed. Some one else must have asked for it and must have claimed it, for Mr. Ross has felt obliged to write a letter to the press to explain where the patronage is. Mr. Ross is neither a member of parliament nor a recently defeated candidate. But the patronage has been endorsed over to him and he desires the public to know that he is managing the business. That is why Mr. Ross wrote to a paper a letter containing an extract from one received by him from Mr. Fielding. In this letter Mr. Fielding set forth that the patronage of the county had been placed by him in charge of Mr. Murray, the premier of the province. Mr. Murray treated the patronage as a negotiable instrument

and transferred it to Mr. Ross. Mr. Ross wrote to the local paper to show that he had not re-endorsed the patronage and was still administering the affairs of the dominion government in Victoria county.

Mr. McDougall read these papers and pointed out that the people of Victoria, by electing a member supporting the government, were obliged to refer public matters to a man who is walking the streets of London and who never had a seat in this house. Mr. McDougall supposed that Mr. Fraser of Guysboro had something to do with the transfer. Mr. Bethune to the government camp. In evidence he read another letter from Mr. Ross, in which the latter spoke of a "rotten alliance" between Dr. Bethune and Mr. Fraser, and referring to a meeting which was to have been held to discuss certain matters. He described Mr. Fraser and Dr. Bethune as "a pair of beauties," and observed that the scheme was on foot to make Dr. Bethune a liberal member. Mr. Ross regarded this as an corrupt arrangement, spoke very contemptuously of the lawyers in the province, and he much more corrupt than John A. Macdonald, the previous conservative leader in the county. These extracts from Mr. Ross's letters were highly amusing, especially with reference to Mr. Fraser's style of severity.

Mr. Fielding explained. He said it was a well understood rule that members opposing the government did not have patronage, and observed that Mr. McDougall of Cape Breton was in that unfortunate position. Mr. Fielding went on to explain that the defeated candidate in Victoria had been appointed to office and could not advise the government any more. The minister therefore looked for another man and found him in the provincial premier, a man every way worthy. Dr. Bethune's support had come to the government unasked and without shadow of inducement. The doctor was well aware that the patronage would remain with those who had supported the liberal party in the past. He did not join the liberals for any consideration of patronage, but for his own party principles. There was a considerable sign of amusement on the opposition side at this declaration. Mr. Fielding's supporters did not suppress a smile as they heard this eulogy of their new associate who has not received an effusive welcome from the men on the speaker's right.

Sir Charles Tupper said he had no fault to find with the course of Mr. Fielding in taking advice from Mr. Murray while Dr. Bethune was an opponent. But he could not understand how it was that when the member for the county was supporting the government he should not be consulted in government patronage in his own constituency. As to Dr. Bethune himself, Sir Charles would only remark that he had gone over to the other side when his own proved to be in the minority, and had never given any reason, public or private. He had not thought it worth while to announce his intention or explain his actions to any of the former associates who had assisted him in his campaign. Sir Charles himself had asked him no questions, not deeming the matter of sufficient importance to require his interference. The government seemed to share this view of Dr. Bethune's position, as it deprived him of the consideration usually accorded to friends. This not only placed him in a position in regard to federal service inferior to that of Mr. Murray, but even when Murray was away it refused to consult him with the patronage, but passed it over to Mr. Ross. Mr. Fielding had boasted that the conservatives were beaten in the local election since 1896. Sir Charles would not deny that, but remarked that the finance minister "had purchased the seat by."

This is as far as Sir Charles got, when a question of order was raised requiring a good deal of discussion. Sir Charles waited calmly until the speaker had finished, and then he could not charge another with purchasing a seat, and then went on to say that Mr. Fielding for the purpose of purchasing the seat for the local government, had announced in advance of the budget that he had abandoned the liberal policy in regard to the duties. It had been suggested that he and Mr. McDougall were not likely to be elected again. This boast came badly from a minister who had abandoned his own constituency and provided himself with a seat by appointing a friend to the seat. He was understood now to be looking for another seat. Mr. Fielding interrupted by asking if Sir Charles himself was not doing the same. "I can settle that question at once," said Sir Charles. "If I come here again I will represent the government in my constituency by which I was twice elected by a large majority, and it will take a much stronger man than the finance minister to drive me from that constituency."

Then Mr. Fraser of Guysboro took up the parable. Mr. Fraser said that he did not bargain with Dr. Bethune. He had always, however, hoped that the doctor might reform, as he had come of good stock and gave promise of better things. Mr. Fraser held that Sir Charles Tupper had no cause to find fault with the diversion of patronage from Dr. Bethune, as he himself had explained that the doctor was not worthy of attention. Sir Charles gravely interposed here that if Mr. Fraser offered that explanation of Mr. Fielding's course he was willing to accept it. Mr. Fraser then explained that the meeting which led Mr. Ross to describe him as one "of a pair of beauties" was not a political meeting at all. Referring again to Dr. Bethune as a convert Mr. Fraser, with the unctious of a Presbyterian sinner, intimated that he had "bathed in the pool of Sileam and been cleansed." Mr. Fraser would not however admit that he put Dr. Bethune into the pool.

Mr. McDougall offered a few more observations as to a boast Mr. Fielding had made that the liberal party had captured a seat in the municipality council of Cape Breton. It was not a very big matter, but Mr. McDougall observed that it had been proved in court that 17 names were forged on the electoral list; that the sheriff who revised the list had fixed the date for

revision, and when conservatives appeared to be registered they found that the date had been changed and the whole matter attended to in their absence, only one party having received notice of the election. He said that forty-two men had been engaged to do twelve men's work on the railway in that vicinity, and that the Nova Scotia premier's partner had assisted in effecting the escape of parties accused of forgery in connection with the list. Mr. McDougall further remarked that he had been 21 years a member for Cape Breton in this house or another one, and that he wanted no better fun than to meet the premier himself in that county.

Mr. Gillies remarked that he had visited Victoria county and had done what he could to elect Dr. Bethune. The previous member, Mr. McDougall, a reliable conservative, had retired for professional reasons, and had lent his best aid to the present members. "We should have," said Mr. Gillies, "and when he came here we should have marked that he had been elected by the conservative party as a conservative candidate." For the same reason the finance minister and Premier Murray had done all they could to accomplish his defeat. Dr. Bethune had flitted from the associates who had fought with him and had gone over to those who denounced him. He was now sitting on the same side as the other member of Mr. Ross's "pair of beauties." Mr. Gillies remarked that he thought both Mr. Fraser and Dr. Bethune were sitting for the first time in this house. Mr. Fraser himself appeared to be of that opinion, for he had been tramping over the whole dominion looking for a place. He would have gone on the bench in British Columbia but for the vigorous remonstrance of the lawyers in that province, who said that they wanted a good lawyer for a judge. Mr. Gillies would have been glad if that obstacle had been overcome, as in common with the profession of Nova Scotia he had been afraid that Mr. Fraser might be made a judge in his own province.

Mr. Morrison, a government supporter from British Columbia, who happened to be sitting at the same desk as Mr. Fraser, asked Mr. Gillies if he did not know that Mr. Fraser, who was not a member of the British Columbia bar, could not be appointed to the bench of that province. "Oh, yes," said Mr. Gillies, "I know it, but the member for Guysboro did not until Mr. Morrison and the other British Columbia lawyers convinced him of the fact." Mr. Gillies, taking advantage of the ruling of the deputy speaker, pronounced Mr. Fielding a "bug." He was an economist who plunged Nova Scotia in debt, a federal minister who had tried to smash the union, a local minister who floated a new loan for campaign purposes before every election. On the whole Mr. Gillies was not surprised that Mr. Fielding should have sought the support of Dr. Bethune.

And now comes Dr. Bethune's explanation: "I came over to this side because I liked it better." The doctor went on to say that he had not only liked the side better, but he had liked "the cause I liked the policy." In fact he said, "the policy is the same as I advocated when I was a candidate." This acknowledgement was rather confusing to the finance minister, but it was not surprising that Mr. McDougall had given him reasons for leaving the party. Mr. McDougall had spoken against his leader. At this point Mr. McDougall rose and observed, "What the hon. gentleman is saying is absolutely untrue." Here arose another discussion of the order of the day, and Mr. McDougall was ultimately instructed from the chair to put it in another way, and revised his statement by declaring that every word Dr. Bethune had said "was contrary to fact." Dr. Bethune went on to explain that he did not want the patronage for Victoria. He had received it. This announcement came somewhat in conflict with a statement of Mr. Fielding, who had declared that the government had intended to continue the patronage with the persons who had supported them in the past. The doctor went on to state that Sir Charles Tupper had never spoken with him about his course, though a conference had been arranged to take place between them before the Yukon vote. Sir Charles Tupper had never come to Dr. Bethune's seat, though he had waited there for him till five o'clock in the morning. This corroborated the statement of Sir Charles Tupper that he had not deemed the matter of very high importance.

"We never know where we are with this minister," said Mr. Foster on the discussion of the supplementary vote for militia. There is something very extraordinary about Mr. Borden's proceedings. Last year he took a vote for all the money he expected to want for militia purposes. Now at the end of the year he wants \$74,000 more to help him out. For some items he wants 75 per cent more, some 50 per cent and some 25 per cent more than he expected to need when he took the appropriation at the beginning of the year. Now that he wants the additional vote he cannot give any satisfactory explanation of many of the items. He wanted \$30,000 for transport and finds that he needs \$45,000. He has asked for an additional \$10,000 for miscellaneous and unforeseen expenses. Notwithstanding the extraordinary nature of his request he comes to the house almost entirely ignorant of the purposes for which the money is required. At least his information does not go at all into matters of detail.

Dr. Borden is a fortunate minister. He has not made himself obnoxious to the opposition, and there is no personal feeling against them. In fact every member of the house would help him out if he could do it reasonably. He is at the head of a department which every member is anxious to support and to render as efficient as possible. But he is as Mr. Foster says "so great a sinner" in exceeding his estimates, in spending money without authority, and in utter want of knowledge of the financial details of his administration that the ordinary duty of a member of parliament requires him to undergo a severe examination in

parliament. The awkward feature of it is that Dr. Borden admits everything. He agrees that the money ought to be voted before it is spent, that the estimates ought to have been more accurate, and that the explanation ought to be more full. He condemns his own administration by admission and confession, and promises amendment, which promises he never performed. Parliament spent several hours with him yesterday, and finally had to refuse to allow his vote to pass until he could find out something about the service for which it was intended.

There is also something peculiar about some of Dr. Borden's contracts. For instance there is a contract for blankets which was entered into by tender in the usual way for a \$2,000 job. This contract has been extended without tender so that it covers \$18,000 worth of goods. The department has been paying 40 cents a pound for grey blankets and 47 1/2 cents for heavy white ones. The price is the same as was paid by tender for a small lot in a previous year. But in the meantime the farmer members from Ontario say that the price of wool has declined one-third, and the shop-keeping members declare that the price of blankets is very much higher for this large contract than the value of the articles at retail.

Mr. Tarte is about to sail for England in the interest of his health. The interests of his pocket he has been made a member of the Pacific Cable conference, to be held presently in London. Lord Strathcona and Sir Sandford Fleming are the other delegates. The imperial government only asked for one, and Sir Sandford Fleming is properly selected as the man who has technical knowledge and understands the matter the best. Mr. Tarte, though he may not contribute much to the consideration of the question, will have the expenses of himself and family paid, and will thus come out of the affair all right.

It is announced that the Laurier testimonial is now making fair headway. The \$100,000 is already in sight, so it is announced by the Montreal Herald, who says that the only difficulty met is the work of inducing the premier to accept the money. If this is the only obstacle it is safe to say that the enterprise will be a complete success. The Herald states that Sir Donald Smith has endorsed the movement and offered to contribute \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000 towards the fund. This is generous, but if Sir Wilfrid will refer to his own speech in 1891 and to the motion which was carried that year by the unanimous vote of parliament, this money cannot be accepted. It was emphatically declared then by Sir Wilfrid that no minister could honestly receive contributions of a testimonial either from persons receiving salary from the dominion or contractors or members of corporations having business relations with the federal government. Sir Donald Smith is in receipt of a salary, the amount of which is not known, from the Government of Canada. He is a member of two corporations which have intimate relations with the federal treasury. S. D. S.

OTTAWA, June 22.—The affair of the Northern Commercial Telegraph Co., in which Mr. Blair's department and Mr. Tarte's department each played a lone hand, was further exposed in yesterday's debate. The first chapter of this interesting episode was given a few days ago in one of these letters. It will be remembered that Dr. Haley and his friends in the government against the breach of faith involved in the construction of the Yukon telegraph line to the Yukon for the government. Mr. Tarte's reply was that the department of public works, which had this telegraph business in charge, did not know anything about the Roche-Domville-Haley Co., and therefore had gone on building. If the company had suffered, Mr. Tarte said it was altogether its own fault, in not keeping Mr. Tarte's department informed as to its position and intentions. In vain did Dr. Haley write that the company had kept Mr. Blair informed, but Mr. Tarte assured the member for Hants that it was the department of public works alone which had anything to do with this matter.

The story told in the previous letter was gathered from correspondence brought down in reply to an order of the house. It turns out now that the order was not obeyed, and that the most interesting letters were withheld. The public might never have known about these letters if there had been no other source from which to procure them except the ministers who wrote or received them. An order of parliament or a ministerial promise to produce all papers in all departments on bearing on any subject might be supposed to have force, but it has often been proved that no matter how explicit the order, or how solemn the promise, the house and the public have no certainty that when a record is brought down it is complete. Allowances are always made for suppression and withdrawal of papers from the files, and it may be said a double allowance must be made for distinct and positive falsehoods from the heads of certain departments, though not all of them. In this case the order was that the government failed to bring down the other party to the controversy has made available. We have now, in spite of the attempted suppression, something like a complete record from which the story may be told.

In 1897 there was a considerable agitation about telegraph connection with the Yukon. In November Mr. Hosmer of the Canadian Pacific Telegraph company had some discussion with the government. In the session of 1898 the Northern Commercial company was incorporated. Two of its promoters, Dr. Elsiey and Col. Domville, at that time had several interviews with Mr. Blair, who was assumed to have charge of that department of public business. This mistake seems to have grown out of the fact that the charter bill was referred to the railway committee, in which Mr. Blair represents the government. Whatever error may have occurred in that regard seems to have been promoted by Mr. Blair himself, for he took up the negotiations and carried them forward without reference

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to the government. Mr. Roche of the English house of commons, representing capitalists in the mother country, came to Canada, and the company which he with Dr. Haley were leading members, entered into direct communication with the department of railways. They had many interviews with Mr. Blair, who does not appear to have mentioned Mr. Tarte or his department in that connection. Having obtained their charter, the company set about the financial arrangements.

In October Dr. Haley visited Mr. Blair at Ottawa and had an interview in which Mr. Tarte now explains, he promised to write a letter to the company. This letter was written on the 6th of October, 1898. Mr. Blair wrote to Mr. Roche as follows: "I am very much pleased indeed to learn that it is your intention, representing the Northern Commercial Telegraph Company, to proceed without unnecessary delay with the construction of the telegraph line from the coast into Dawson City, to be followed thereafter with reasonable despatch by the laying of cables or cables from Vancouver to the point of connection with the line. Mr. Blair added that the government was extremely desirous that the enterprise should take up this work and assured Mr. Roche, "You may rely on the assistance and approval of the government."

About the same time Mr. Blair wrote another letter to Mr. Roche, also addressed to New York. This letter Mr. Blair now says was private and that Mr. Roche showed that he was a gentleman by making it public. This is what Mr. Blair said in the private and confidential letter of October, 1898: "Since you were here I had a call from a representative of the other company incorporated. He came in consequence of a cable. "I mention this so you may know what it is moving to urge you to activity." This may not be verbatim, but it is as nearly the exact words as they could be caught. The remainder of the letter quoted is in Mr. Blair's exact words: "I told this gentleman very frankly that my department was not understanding with you and that we were giving you the preference at least until we were satisfied that you were dealing in pushing the work unduly, and I said that upon that point we would be in no position to form an opinion till next spring."

With these assurances Mr. Roche went to England to complete arrangements. It will be seen that he had authority from Mr. Blair to suppose that Mr. Blair's department had authority to deal with the Yukon telegraph line.

That an accepted official understanding existed between Mr. Blair's department and Mr. Roche.

That the government was informed on the whole matter and was prepared to give support and assistance to Mr. Roche's enterprise.

That the government was favorable to the land and the cable route projected in detail by Mr. Roche.

That the government desired particularly that the line should be constructed as a private enterprise.

That Mr. Roche was to have the preference over all other enterprises. And that no other arrangements would be made until the government was satisfied that Mr. Roche was delaying the work.

That he would have until the following spring to convince the government of his ability to carry it through.

If there were in England any persons who raised questions on these points, Mr. Roche has Mr. Blair's letters to satisfy them. For instance, if it was suggested that not Mr. Blair but Mr. Tarte had to deal with, there was Mr. Blair's own letter explaining that "my department had an understanding with you. If there were any to suggest the enterprise before spring, Mr. Blair's letter was used to assure them that the government had considered the question and preferred to have the work done by private enterprise, and moreover, that there would be no intervention by government or rival company until the following spring.

Naturally the company felt safe on the matter. Mr. Roche went to work in November on his return from America, and completed the organization of his company, taking in men, with capital sufficient for all purposes; he made his financial arrangements; got money enough paid up for the construction of the line; purchased supplies, including telegraph wire; and by March was pretty well ready to go ahead with the work of construction. At this stage the company in England received the astonishing and sudden information that the government had abandoned its policy and had started out to construct the line as a government enterprise.

Now we take up the story again at the Canadian end. Either we have not heard from Mr. Tarte. He was not effaced. Neither was he alone. Those who were acquainted with Quebec political history will remember a certain Mr. Charleson who was a somewhat extensively figured and financially transactions of the government. In fact there is a family of Charlesons whose names are to be found in the public accounts of Quebec and more recently in those of the dominion. Mr. Tarte, as the world knows, was also behind the scenes in some of these affairs. Some large notes of his were paid out of