

LAURIER ALARMED AT HOSTILE FEELING AGAINST G. T. P. GIFT

Sectional Appeals Made to Western Opposition Members—Mr. R. L. Borden Collecting Data For His Presentation of the Matter in the House—Grand Trunk Already Indebted to Canada For About \$75,000,000—Crisis in the Nova Scotia Political Camp—Premier Murray Riding For a Fall and Would be Well Pleased to Have Conservatives Take Over the Reins of Government.

Ottawa, March 19.—Interest continues to grow in the proposed loan by the government of \$10,000,000 to the Grand Trunk Pacific.

The announcement that the Opposition intends to make a vigorous fight has already alarmed the government, and appeals are being made to individual members of the opposition, especially from the west, to consider their position.

It is understood that a compromise is already proposed, by which the company will give \$10,000,000 of its common stock to the government as a bonus.

Meanwhile Mr. R. L. Borden is collecting material for his speech upon the resolution, which promises to be one of the most notable efforts in the history of parliament. An immense array of facts and figures must be examined and analyzed by the conservative leader before he will be prepared to make his statement to the house and the country.

Grand Trunk's Indebtedness to Canada.

One important thing to determine is how the account stands at present between the government and the Grand Trunk Pacific, especially in view of the fact that the guarantee of the G. T. P. is relied upon as a security for this loan to the G. T. P.

Yesterday Mr. Fielding spoke of this debt as \$25,000,000. As a matter of fact the debt is nearer \$75,000,000.

The following statement may be instructive, as being an official statement secured by Mr. Borden in 1903. Needless to say, the amount is much larger now, as nothing has been paid and interest has been going on. The statement follows:

Original loan to the Grand Trunk, 1855-57, \$15,142,633; simple interest due at Confederation, \$10,457,458; simple interest 30th June, 1903, \$22,708,088; total interest, \$43,165,546; total principal and interest, 6 per cent, due 30th June, 1903, \$58,308,179.

Bonuses to Grand Trunk.

In addition to these sums advanced the G. T. P. and its amalgamation received the following amounts:

Dominion govt. aid, \$2,850,843; Provincial aid—Ontario, \$2,671,333; Quebec, \$1,354,737—\$4,026,909; Municipal aid—Ontario, \$5,723,004; Quebec, \$293,774—\$6,017,728; Total, \$71,202,880.

Amount given to Great Western, when debt was compounded in 1869, \$1,125,568.

Amount given to Northern Railway in 1877, \$3,258,760.

Grand total, \$75,614,208.

\$10,000,000 Not Enough.

A western Conservative member, who is quite familiar with the construction work upon the G. T. P., is authority for the statement that this \$10,000,000 will not be the last application for aid to the government. He is of the opinion that no less than \$20,000,000 will be required.

Political Crisis in Nova Scotia.

The Toronto Mail this morning published the following telegram from Halifax: There is reason to believe that the provincial government of Nova Scotia is facing a crisis and there is no question but that Premier Murray is looking anxiously toward Ottawa. His own preference would be to have A. K. McLean, M. P. for Lunenburg, take charge at once as Premier of Nova Scotia, but some of his colleagues in the cabinet oppose this bitterly. He is quoted as saying, "I think I will ride for a fall." This he may do by openly antagonizing the strong prohibition wave now sweeping over Nova Scotia.

The acute trouble with Mr. Murray is the failure of the Halifax and Southwestern Railway, which runs from Yarmouth to Halifax, to earn enough money to pay the interest on its bonds guaranteed by the Nova Scotia government.

It is understood that the bonds have all been disposed of and that the bondholders are demanding their interest from the provincial government. Meanwhile the service on the road has been much curtailed. What can the province do? It might take over the road, but what would it get? While the bed belongs to the Halifax and Southwestern Co., every piece of rolling stock belongs to Mackenzie & Mann. The province could only take over the roadbed, and it would then be hard driven to equip and operate it, to say nothing of building the absolutely necessary extension from Halifax to Canso. It is therefore no wonder that Mr. Murray is anxious to get out, and if possible to secure a place on the Dominion Railway Commission.

History of the Transaction.

The history of this road is that the builders got subsidies from the Dominion and Provincial governments aggregating \$9,000 a mile. On top of this was the Provincial bond guarantee of \$10,000 a mile. The road was built along the shore quite cheaply at a cost, it is said, of about \$12,000 a mile. At the present three passenger trains a week are being run and the people are complaining.

Not long ago Mr. Murray journeyed to Toronto and had a conference with Mackenzie & Mann. What transpired cannot be known accurately,

but it is significant that soon after a feeler was thrown out by the Dominion government concerning the lease of the I. C. R. to the Canadian Northern. This aroused a feeling of popular opposition and now it is proposed to have the I. C. R. take over the Halifax and Southwestern as a branch line, assuming the bonds and extending the line to Canso.

Another peculiar deal of which the Murray government is accused, deals with the road from Midland to Annapolis, recently acquired by Mackenzie & Mann interests. Mr. McLean is said to have been active in bringing this about.

The situation is so critical that overtures have been made to the provincial opposition. It is doubtful if any Conservative just now could be induced to form a government, much less to join a coalition. They insist upon the Murray government dealing with the crisis, or facing a general election.

Deferred Elections.

On motion to go into supply this afternoon, Mr. Burrell (Con., B. C.) offered an amendment declaring that "this House is of the opinion that for the purpose of enabling the electors to exercise the full rights and privileges of their franchise the general elections should be held on the same day through all the provinces of Canada."

Mr. Burrell delivered a masterly speech and was followed with close attention by a crowded house. While he purposely discussed the subject matter from a non-partisan standpoint, he felt it incumbent upon him to state how high officials in the government had given the electors of his riding (Yale-Cariboo) to understand that unless they got on the band wagon and voted for the Laurier government they need not hope for public works in their locality. It was significant that Mr. Oliver, whose speeches in the Yale-Cariboo deferred election campaign were thus criticized, attempted no denial or defense.

Three Ministers—Messrs. Fielding, Lemieux and Templeman, were put up to reply to Mr. Burrell, but they had little to say beyond urging that a vote for his amendment would be a vote against the government. This argument was effective. For example, Mr. Congdon, the Liberal member for the Yukon, who spoke for the resolution before he heard from the government, turned a complete somersault after Mr. Fielding's speech, and voted against it.

Hon. Geo. E. Foster made a strong argument. He reminded Mr. Templeman that he had never secured a seat in the House without first making a deal with some more popular member who had been able to be elected.

Lost on Party Vote.

Mr. Burrell's amendment was voted down by a party vote. A curious feature of the debate was the general applause from the Conservative members when several speakers suggested that it might be desirable to have a fixed and certain election day established by law, instead of by the caprice of the party in power. Mr. Burrell did not claim that all deferred elections in the past had been without justification, but that the 30,000 or 40,000 electors in the constituencies whose elections were deferred were practically disfranchised.

He denied the validity of the argument that in certain isolated sections, among them his own district of Yale-Cariboo, B. C., it was impossible to distribute the ballot boxes to hold the election within the statutory time. In the recent bye-election in Comox, Atlin, B. C., by which a seat was provided for Mr. Templeman, the defeated Minister of Inland Revenue, less time was allowed than was granted through Canada at the general elections. The government at this bye-election had furnished proof that it was possible to hold all elections on the same day. The postponement of an election made possible the plea that since the government was secured anyhow, that the constituencies holding the deferred elections would get greater consideration in the form of public works if they selected members to support the government.

Ministerial Pleas.

Mr. Burrell accused Mr. Templeman of using just such argument at a public meeting at Grand Forks, B. C. Mr. Burrell then took up the deferred elections of 1908. The Minister of the Interior, Hon. Walter Scott, and other prominent Liberals, poured into these districts. Mr. Oliver addressed many meetings at Kamloops. On Oct. 30 he said that the people of Canada had pronounced in favor of the government and that it was up to the people of Yale-Cariboo to decide whether or not they wanted their district developed. "The government," Mr. Oliver told them, "would be guided by the results of the elections, whether they voted for Duncan Ross or Martin Burrell." He added that the influence of a member with the government depended upon the size of his majority, and the Inland Sentinel, the Liberal organ which reported the speech, said editorially: "Public works are badly needed in Yale harbor, and their construction depends entirely upon the constitu-

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Agency returning the Liberal candidate.

Bribe of Public Works.

Mr. Burrell went on to say that in various places tenders for new post office buildings were advertised for in the middle of October last.

Pictures of the proposed post offices were published in the Liberal newspapers. In Vernon, tenders were invited for the building of a \$40,000 post office. Needless to say, when the elections went against the government nothing more was heard of these proposed public works.

"This wholesale bribery," said Mr. Burrell, "had no effect upon the people of Kootenay and Yale-Cariboo. They were so indignant at the election being deferred that nothing could change their determination to resent it." (Applause.)

Fixed Date for Elections.

Mr. Burrell suggested that a longer time should elapse between the issuing of the writs and elections. "Indeed," he continued, "I would prefer to have a fixed term for members of parliament, a fixed day for all elections." (Opposition applause.) "This is not a political question," he added, "it is an appeal for a square deal for all the people and all the political parties in Canada." (Applause.)

The House divided and Mr. Burrell's amendment was defeated on a party vote of 115 to 69.

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