

HON. MR. FOSTER EXPOSES LAXITY OF THE LIBERALS

Shows how Late Government Failed to Deal with the Question of Ocean Rates.

(Continued from page 1)
A number of questions were asked at the opening of the House this afternoon. Several of these had reference to the G. T. P. and the N. T. R. The Minister of Railways told Hon. Geo. F. Graham that the Grand Trunk Pacific had not approved of the change of grades on the N. T. R. since the new government came into office. Mr. Cochrane also informed Mr. Graham that the cost of the mountain section of the G. T. P. was estimated at \$97,035 per mile by the government's chief engineer, and at \$102,775 per mile by the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific. The cost per mile of the prairie section was estimated at \$45,180.

As regards the Hudson Bay Railway contract, Hon. Mr. Cochrane told Mr. Chas. Murphy that Mr. J. D. MacArthur was the contractor for the three sections at the following figures: Le Pas to Thicket, 185 miles, \$3,073,254; Thicket to Port Nelson, 185 miles, \$3,684,123. The time limit for the Le Pas section had been twice extended from December 1, 1912 and was now December 1, 1914, as also for the other two sections. Deposits of \$200,000, \$150,000 and \$150,000 had been made on the three sections respectively.

The contract for the first section of the Welland Canal, said Mr. Cochrane to Mr. Murphy, has been let to the Dominion Engineering Company for \$3,487,725, \$200,000 deposit required. Baldry, Yerburgh and Hutchins, Limited, had obtained the contract for section two at \$5,377,135 with a deposit of \$150,000. Section three had been let to James H. Corbett for \$10,220,465 with \$400,000 deposit; section five, to the Canadian Dredging Company for \$1,945,788, and \$100,000 deposit. The time limit for the fifth section is April 1, 1915, and for the other April 1, 1917.

Redistribution, Committee Selection.

In moving second reading of the redistribution bill, Premier Borden said he adhered to the view that seven was a better number than nine, as a select committee to work out the details of the bill, but as the opposition appeared to attach considerable importance to this point, he would move that the bill be referred to a special committee of nine composed of Messrs. Beland, Bennett, of Calgary; Buchanan, MacDonald, Macdonald, Pelletier, Reid of Grenville; Rhodes and Rogers, four Liberals and five Conservatives. Sir Wilfrid Laurier thanked the Premier for his courteous yielding to his wishes in regard to the number composing the committee while he agreed that the principle of the committee was a good one. Sir Wilfrid thought the different groups of provinces should all be represented as would be the case of a committee of nine.

The house went into committee of supply on Hon. Geo. E. Foster's estimates for the Trade and Commerce Department. The minister prefaced the discussion by a brief resume of the history of the Dominion's trade commission, which will meet in Canada next year.

Mr. Foster Answers Critics.

In referring to Liberal criticisms frequently repeated as to his absence from Canada a Canadian delegate to the Imperial Commission, Mr. Foster said:

"I have tried not to neglect my department while giving time to the work of the commission. I hope at the close of a long public career, that the widening of my views and increase of knowledge which has taken place may not result without advantage to my public life and my work in parliament as well."

The commission, said Mr. Foster, was at present in South Africa. It would, during the present year make a tour of Newfoundland and Canada. It would begin in Newfoundland toward the latter end of July and go right across Canada to the coast, spending three months in all.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier stated that the minister's very clear exposition of the benefits derived from attending the commission was the chief argument against his discharge of his dual duties, since he could not be present at the commission's meeting in South Africa. This was the only exception he could take.

Ocean Freight Rates.

Mr. W. F. MacLean, asked whether the commission would take up the question of ocean freight rates. In reply, Mr. Foster said that the government during recess had taken up the question of "heightened freight rates and discrimination in freight rates between the United States and Canada."

Chairman Drayton of the Railway Commission had been sent over to confer with the British authorities and the shipping companies, with a view to establishing a joint commission between the United Kingdom and Canada, to recommend some measure of control of ocean freight rates. The British government had not favored this, and proposed instead to turn over to the Dominion Trade Commission, in whose hands the matter had now been placed. The commission had taken up the matter of investigation in Great Britain and would carry on a cognate investigation in South Africa. When it came to Canada, full opportunity would be given to all interested parties to give evidence.

Dr. Neely of Humboldt favored the appointment of a special committee of the house, to go into all freight rates.

Hon. Frank Oliver, quoting from a report of the Saskatchewan Grain Commission, said the charge for carrying 1,000 bushels of wheat on inland waterways had increased between 1909 and 1913 from \$10 to \$20. The charge on ocean steamships had increased from \$40 to \$75. It was up to the government to make up and not wait for a report from the Dominion Trade Commission. Farmers were producing their grain at a loss and the country was losing the benefit of carrying that grain because of the Canadian shipping combine on the Upper Lakes. There was discrimination by ocean lines even as between Canadian ports; the City of Quebec now paying higher ocean rates than Montreal, though nearer Liverpool.

Liberals Failed to Act
Hon. Mr. Foster recalled that early in 1910 complaints were made to the Laurier government, of which Mr. Oliver was a member, regarding the augmentation of ocean freight rates. The Minister of Railways of that day had consulted the late Chairman Macabee of the Dominion Railway Board. Judge Macabee expressed the opinion that government control over freight rates was necessary when the seaboard was reached. He recommended that a joint commission be formed from the British Railway and Canal Commission and the Canadian Railway Commission in order that concerted action might take place on both sides of the Atlantic. In February, 1910, a minute of council was passed, and a communication was sent to the Colonial Secretary asking the views of the Imperial government as to the appointment of a joint commission. Three times the Colonial Secretary had cabled the Canadian ministers requesting an expression of opinion and had been given no reply. The very men who now cried to the government, "wake up; time is precious," had taken no action. Had they acted, a commission might have been appointed and Canada might have, by the present time, secured control of ocean freight rates.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier said the question had been left to be dealt with by the new government, and asserted that the Minister of Trade and Commerce had himself done nothing to solve it.

To this Mr. Foster responded that the present administration had acted, that a joint commission had been formed and would make an inquiry. W. F. MacLean pressed for the appointment of the parliamentary committee. The Dominion's commission would be dilatory of necessity, he said, but a parliamentary committee could get all the men concerned together and get at the facts quickly.

Hon. Mr. Oliver said that since the late government had gone out of office, there had been a serious change in conditions. The price of wheat had declined eight cents a bushel, which was a marked drop of 150,000 bushels was equivalent to a loss of \$12,000,000. He did not wish to lay on the government responsibility for ocean freight rates as he knew the freight rates must necessarily be slight.

Joint action between the Canadian and British governments on this question would also of necessity be one-sided. The ships were owned in Britain and the dividends went there, so naturally the interests of the British government would be in securing the greatest revenue and he thought we could hardly hope for more than sympathetic consideration from that quarter. He urged the government to do what it could where it had control.

The shipping combine of the Great Lakes was under its control and he would lay before the minister a radical remedy which could be used in an emergency, namely, to permit United States shipping to carry grain between Canadian ports.

Hon. Mr. Oliver said that Mr. Foster was refusing to take the duty off wheat and thus secure free entry for Canadian wheat to the United States; he was refusing to reduce the duties on goods from Great Britain. Would he increase the price of wheat by increasing the duty on wheat?

Now was the time for the government to show the faith that was in it. "Does the honorable gentleman think it would be to the advantage to Canada to have a higher duty on wheat?" asked Mr. Atkins, (Brandon). "In my opinion, certainly not," replied Mr. Oliver. "But if this government believes that a higher tariff will raise prices, then raise the prices of the farmers' wheat by increasing the duty on wheat."

One View.

"Do you believe in long engagements?"

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the duty on wheat. I am a protectionist. "Since when," asked a Conservative member. "Always," replied Mr. Oliver. He added that he believed in legislation which would improve the conditions of the country fairly.

Mr. W. H. Bennett, East Simcoe, said Mr. Oliver had encouraged the house to believe that a combination to increase freight rates on the Upper Lakes had sprung up in the last few years. Mr. Bennett said that it would be impossible for eight or ten Canadian companies to control rates on the Great Lakes in face of the competition of United States carriers. He did not believe that there had been collusion between the Canadian vessel owners to raise freight charges. In point of fact, rates last year were lower than in previous years. Moreover, rates from Port William, Port Arthur and Duluth to Georgian Bay ports were practically the same as the rates from those points on Lake Superior to Buffalo.

Mr. Bennett drew attention to the fact that far from falling off in quantity of wheat handled at Montreal last year was 44,000,000 bushels, or more than ever before. He felt, however, that facilities should be provided at Montreal to move it more rapidly. Mr. McCrea, Sherbrooke, asserted that the increase in ocean freight rates on lumber had been greater in the last few years than the increase in the rate on wheat.

Mr. MacLean Again.

On an item of \$349,000 for the steamship subsidy to the Royal Mail Line for a service to the West Indies, A. E. MacLean, of Halifax, said he thought it would have been better had the government made an arrangement with Pickford & Black, of Halifax, the originators of this. The company had been treated rather unfairly. It was true that the service which they gave was in need of improvement, but a parliamentary committee could get all the men concerned together and get at the facts quickly.

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BROTHERHOOD LAUNCHED AT BIG BANQUET

German Street Organization Started Auspiciously Last Evening—Addresses by Mayor Frink and Com. McLellan.

The German street Brotherhood was launched last evening at a banquet in the school room of the German street Baptist church. More than fifty men were present and the outlook for success was very bright. Speakers of note were present and spoke encouragingly of the work which will be attempted by the new organization.

The object of the new society is to band together the men of the city for the purpose of culture, sociability, fraternal and social work. Schemes for the betterment of citizens in general, housing problems, and social betterment will be considered by the members and every effort will be made to have St. John a better city in which to live.

The supper was served by ladies of the church. The assembly sat down at 6.30 o'clock and about eight o'clock the tables were cleared and the constitution for the new organization was considered. It was taken up section by section and generally approved.

The regular meetings of the brotherhood will be held every Sunday afternoon at 3.30 o'clock. R. W. Wigmore, commissioner of water and sewerage, proposed the health of the City of St. John and in reply Mayor Frink and H. R. McLellan, commissioner of public safety, were heard.

The worship favored the work and object of the brotherhood and then spoke of the need of better housing conditions in the city. His pointed out that according to estimates made at city hall, the population of St. John had increased about 1,800 in the last year and a half. This meant that living conditions were more crowded. He thought good air, good housing and good food were necessary for the proper development and expansion of the city.

Commissioner McLellan made a short address on matters concerning the city administration. Commissioner Rees, head of the Salvation Army in Canada, was in St. John for a short time yesterday. He had a meeting with the local officers and left on the Halifax express last evening. He will sail for England on the Empress of Britain. He has been summoned to the Old Country by Gen. Booth with whom he will discuss army matters relating to Canada. The commissioner has been ill for some time and it is expected that the trip will benefit him health. Major Moore, head of the subscription department of the army in Canada, accompanied Commissioner Rees to the city yesterday and he will inaugurate a campaign to raise funds for the establishment of a new metropolis in this city. Meetings of the local officers took place yesterday and matters in connection with the campaign were arranged.

Those interested are requested to meet in the Board of Trade rooms to day at four p. m.

SOUTH SHORE SERVICE

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