

OTTAWA LETTER.

Discussing Whether the Territories Shall Receive Provincial Rights.

Mr. Charlton Rapidly Becoming the Chief Protectionist in the House.

Time Has Come When Canada Should Take Efficient Measures to Get the Full Benefit of Her Great Nickel Wealth.

OTTAWA, April 19.—Nobody seems to remember having seen a quorum in the house of commons. Twenty members constitute a quorum, which is less than one-tenth of the whole number. But small as it is, this quorum was not on hand during a good part of yesterday's discussion on the important question whether the territories should receive provincial rights.

The substance of Mr. Sifton's objection appears to be that the people in the west are divided on the question whether they should be grouped into one province or two, and that the immense amount of land and other resources in the territory would be an incentive to extravagance and the accumulation of a large debt.

The real objection at Ottawa to western autonomy is probably a desire to control western expenditure and western resources. There is no doubt of money made by people who have a "pull" in the Northwest, and the importance from a party point of view of the patronage of the department of the interior would be greatly diminished if the business which Mr. Sifton controls were handed over to a local government.

It is an interesting circumstance that while the subject was under discussion the government interest in it was so small that there were never more than three ministers present, of whom two were engaged in writing letters or asleep, until they went out and left the minister of the interior to wrestle with the question alone.

Mr. Charlton is developing rapidly into the chief protectionist of the house. Yesterday the nickel interests and the binder twine industry received his attention. On both subjects, he stands out for better protection than our present system affords.

The United States people take care of their own interests. They get the ore into their country and manufacture it, and do not allow nickel products in an advanced condition to be admitted except under very high duties. The result is that the manufacture of nickel products in this country is impossible, and we are giving to a foreign country the control of an industry wherein we have a natural monopoly.

the government has been thinking about it, but has not yet been convinced that such action is necessary.

While we have control naturally of the world's supply of nickel, the United States, by the ownership of the Philippine Islands, controls the world's supply of manila hemp. Our friends across the border do not follow the Canadian example. There was always an export duty on manila, collected for the benefit of the Philippine administration, but it was applicable to all countries.

When Mr. Gourley offered the suggestion that the opposition should pay less attention to small government speculation and more to larger speculation, he may have had in mind the comparatively small steel achieved in the Grosse Isle expenditure. It is small enough compared with the Intercolonial jobs or with the operations in the Yukon.

OTTAWA, April 21.—When Mr. Brock declared his conviction that Mr. Tarte was not master of the administration, he said he was sorry for the fact, because if Mr. Tarte was master we would have a better tariff and more dignified relations with the United States.

Yet I venture to think that though the budget was delivered a month ago, and though Mr. Fielding then declared that there would be no tariff changes until next year, the session will not conclude without at least one important change by taking binder twine from the free list.

Moreover, when once a duty is imposed upon binder twine it will stay there. It is absolutely essential in the manufacture of armor plate and is used in the best steel rails and structural iron for various purposes, and of course in many articles of the war in common use.

Mr. Sifton has been obliged to beat a retreat. The Treadgold deal in the Yukon may still be bad, but at least it is changed so far as to satisfy the delegates who came here pledged to fight the government on the subject. Whether there is anything left in it for the original dealers is not known.

posed to be politicians rather close to the government at Ottawa. It is the commonly received opinion that more than one or two or three ministers have large interests in the Yukon which did not cost them much money, and that in certain transactions they take place in regard to them they stand to profit by the principle of "heads I win, tails you lose."

But if Mr. Sifton has not succeeded in completing the transaction as originally planned he need not be despondent. He is quite prosperous in his own goods, and this is the only real administrative disappointment. The latest bank statement shows that he holds two hundred shares recently acquired of Bank of Ottawa stock, which is good in the market for about \$40,000.

To go back to Mr. Tarte. It will be remembered that a few days before the session Mr. Mulock's organ in Toronto opened up a discussion of government ownership of telegraph lines. The writer in the Toronto Star and also one in the Toronto Globe suggested that the government telegraph line, and those which should be established under the Marconi system, ought to become a part of the post office service.

OTTAWA, April 22.—Members of the public accounts committee who undertake to get the truth concerning intercolonial railway management have a pretty hard contract. In the first place if there is a witness desired whose information is supposed to be accurate and important and may be damaging to the government, the motion to call him is voted down.

Mr. McManus appeared in the committee yesterday as Mr. Blair's witness. He has been inspector of ties on the Intercolonial, but was displaced from those duties nearly a year ago, when complaint was made that he was accepting bad ties. A reinspection was ordered last May, and has not yet been completed.

Mr. Barker had heard something, so after obtaining from Mr. McManus an explanation of the charges made against him, he led up to the subject. Mr. McManus explained that complaint about the ties had been made, that

the ties accepted were under the proper size, and that some were popular.

Mr. Blair examined Mr. Manus on these points. Mr. McManus cannot believe that the latest inspection is correct. He thinks that Mr. Williams, who was sent by Manager Russell to go over his work, made a mistake, and that the ties which Mr. Williams said were fir were really white spruce. In his examination a short time ago General Manager Pottinger stated that Mr. Williams had knowledge of ties and of railway stores generally. It may be assumed that Mr. Russell knew his capacity when he selected him.

Q. I asked you about the life of different qualities of ties. What do you put down for cedar?  
A. Six to ten years.  
Q. And spruce?  
A. Black spruce six years, white or yellow spruce four years.  
Q. What about poplar?  
A. It is worthless or worth very little.  
Q. You would never think of putting in a poplar tie?  
A. No.  
Q. What about fir?  
A. Fir is down here for three years.

This evidence is interesting in the light of the prices paid and of the qualities of the wood accepted. It appears that Mr. Culligan and Mr. Ulickan were paid for cedar, white spruce and cedar, the same for one as the other, and that white spruce was accepted from both. Inspector Williams finds that 23,000 fir were also taken from these or other contractors.

To return to Mr. McManus. Closely examined by Mr. Blair he stated that he was authorized to pass certain ties, and that he made his examination of public works ready, and the motion to call him is voted down. He was at it. Some other minister had been discussing the question of the Anglo-American Company, but Mr. Tarte ignored that. He also ignored Mr. Fielding and the Marconi arrangement, and informed the house that for the time being he meant to go to England this summer.

This leads us back to the first day of the inquiry, when under the "intense" examination of Mr. Blair, Mr. Pottinger was made to say that the minister did not interfere in any matter of purchasing supplies. Mr. Blair over and over again asked to show this question very insistently, and no one could reach any other conclusion from Mr. Pottinger's answers than that Mr. Blair had kept out of it altogether and gave Mr. Pottinger leave to carry out the general manager's own policy.

So Mr. Blair's examination of Mr. McManus came to an end, and if Mr. Barker had not by some means learned of the private communication given by the minister to Mr. McManus, the whole subject would have been left there. Mr. McManus had not destroyed Mr. Blair's letter, but it had been taken from his desk, and Mr. McManus did not know where it was.

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Mr. Burpee who had charge of the matter, sent for him, took him away from the inspection, gave him something else to do, and sent another man to go over his work. But it was some time before this that Mr. Burpee and Mr. McManus first came into collision.

It took Mr. Barker a good while to find out where these instructions came from. Mr. McManus was very reluctant to testify on this point. Witness said he rejected certain ties and afterwards accepted them.

Why did you reject them? he was asked. He rejected them because they were white spruce, and his instructions were to accept only black spruce.

Why did you accept them at last? Because I was instructed to do so. Who instructed you? Well, I accepted them.

And so the question and answer went until Mr. Barker appealed to the chair to compel the witness to answer. Brought to a halt, Mr. McManus said that he had instructions from the minister. Finally he stated that the instructions were written, and at last the fact was elicited that the written communication to Mr. McManus had been given to Contractor Culligan by Mr. Blair and handed by the contractor to Mr. McManus.

It was after this that Mr. Burpee attacked the inspector for accepting these white spruce, and the inspector told Mr. Burpee what authority he had for doing so. It seems that Mr. Burpee could hardly believe that this interference had occurred. It was necessary for Mr. McManus to produce the letter, which he had not then about him. Mr. Burpee subsequently got the letter, kept it for a time, returned it to Mr. McManus, who finally put it in his desk.

Mr. Burpee was thus suppressed, the white spruce was accepted and paid for at very good prices, and the railway has on hand a considerable stock of useless ties. To begin with, there was no need of taking spruce at all. Mr. Blair led down to white spruce, and according to the recent government inspection still further down to fir and poplar. If there is any worse wood known to lumbermen probably it will be heard from next.

Mr. Blair next took the witness in hand and obtained from him a statement that previous to this note he had accepted white spruce from Mr. Ulickan. It is not yet ascertained how this acceptance of white spruce began, and the witness was authorized by Mr. Burpee, who evidently despised this kind of wood. It was not authorized by Mr. Pottinger, and certainly not by Mr. Russell. Mr. McManus swears that the memorandum that he had when he went to examine Mr. Culligan's ties was that he should take no other spruce but black spruce.

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with Mr. Blair obtained from him a note of instruction to that effect addressed to Mr. McManus. Mr. Pottinger could not have been present at the transaction or he would have remembered it. There is another and stronger reason for saying that he was not present, for if he had been the order would have been given by him and not by Mr. Blair. Mr. Blair always puts one of the officers in the gap in a case of this kind if the officer is accessible.

And so while the deal with Ulickan is not yet explained, facts in regard to Mr. Blair's interference were brought out. After that there was nothing to be gained by a further concealment of the letter, and something to be gained by producing it. So Mr. Emmerson, having called Mr. Blair out and consulted him, produced the identical document, which is identified by the witness and by the minister. This was after a long and wearisome questioning and explanation of the witness about the loss of the letter, with speculation on his part and on the part of his examiner as to what had become of it and a promise from the witness that he would endeavor to find it. It is fair to Inspector McManus to say that while under Mr. Blair's examination about this letter he was a very unwilling witness and he appeared to be anxious not to tell anything that was untrue. It was difficult to get from him the whole truth, which is to be expected, but there was no reason to suppose that he told anything but the truth.

Mr. Emmerson's statement was heard with amazement. He seemed to be rather merry at first over his achievement, but afterwards the seriousness of the position appeared to impress itself upon him as it certainly did upon others. Mr. Emmerson's story was that before the Easter vacation he attended this enquiry and became anxious about the instructions which Mr. McManus had received from the minister. Now there was no mention in the committee about these instructions. The only evidence given was calculated to produce the impression that Mr. Blair never gave instructions. Mr. Emmerson's anxiety was therefore due to information received elsewhere. What purpose he may have had in desiring to control the document that would connect Mr. Blair in an awkward way with the transaction can only be guessed. At all events Mr. Emmerson says that when he went to Westmorland he set about an enquiry on his own account. As Mr. McManus was to be a witness he did not speak to him, presumably because he thought it would not be proper to do so. He therefore went to Mr. McManus' brother, who undertook to procure for him the letter which was the property of Inspector McManus, and which it was the inspector's duty to bring with him to the committee. The delicate sensibility which prevents a man from talking over the evidence with the witness before he comes into court, and which permits him to obtain through another person from that witness private drawer a part of the testimony which he is to furnish is too fine to analyse here. The result was that from Eastmorland until yesterday Mr. Emmerson carried around Mr. McManus' letter, while Mr. McManus was searching for it to bring to the committee, the unfortunate owner never dreaming that the letter had been abstracted.

There is no reason to suppose that this paper would ever have been heard from again by the public if the facts had not been previously brought out at the examination. Perhaps it would have been heard from by Mr. Blair, because it might be convenient for Mr. Emmerson to mention it privately. Between Mr. Emmerson and Mr. Blair we are none of us wise enough to know what use may be made of information procured from other people's desks when the owner is away. But as between the public which wants to know how public business is done, and the administration of railways, this affair is shabby enough.

Children Cry for CASTORIA.

SUBURBAN ITEM.

(Springfield Republican).

Citizen—"Yes, I'll be glad to run out and see you some time. What's your number?"

Suburban—"Why—the houses in Swamphurst are not numbered, yet."

Citizen—"Well, how shall I find you?"

Suburban—"Turn to the left from the station and walk down the road until you come to the second big puddle. My house is directly opposite."

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FIRE AT MONCTON. MONCTON, N. B., April 26.—Mrs. Gibson's residence, situated just north of Main street crossing, was destroyed by fire this afternoon.

CHICAGO, April 27.—Hon. J. Sterling Morton, former secretary of agriculture, died this afternoon at 11 in his 82nd year. He was born at Lake Forest, Ill.