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GENERALLY FAIR

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COMPLETE EXONERATION OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE MURRAY GOVERNMENT AND OF THE FORMER VALLEY RAILWAY DIRECTORATE BY COMMISSIONER STEVENS

AMERICANS MAKE SURPRISE ATTACK NEAR RICHECOURT

All Along Western Front Intensive Artillery Duels and Raiding Operations Continue—Much Activity on Italian Front—British Still Active in Palestine.

Situation in Siberia More Serious--Japanese Have Not Decided on Exact Course of Action--Bolsheviks Defeat Gen. Semenov, Who Retreats to China.

The American troops holding a portion of the line of battle northwest of Toul apparently are making raids into enemy territory a part of their daily work. Following their incursion of Monday morning, when, after a bombardment they raided German front lines for three hundred yards unaided, as had been customary, by the French, Tuesday they set out again and made a successful surprise attack on trenches south of Richecourt, which lies to the northeast of Xivray, where some of the hardest fighting in which they been engaged has taken place.

All along the western front intensive artillery duels and raiding operations are continuing on isolated sectors.

The Australians again have carried out successful raids into German trenches northeast of Messines, killing a number of Germans and making prisoners of others.

The Italian Front.

In addition to a continuation of the artillery duels along the Italian front, there is considerable aerial activity daily. In fights in the air Monday the Italians brought down five hostile planes.

The British troops in Palestine are giving the Turks no rest. Again they have driven forward their lines northwest of Jerusalem. Numerous casualties were inflicted on the Ottoman troops and several machine guns were captured.

Monday night's air raid over Paris was the most disastrous, in point of casualties, the Germans have yet carried out there. Thirty-four persons were killed and seventy-nine injured by bombs in Paris and its suburbs and sixty-six other persons were suffocated in the Metropolitan railway tube, where they had fled to escape the missiles of the raiders. Some sixty hostile machines carried out the attack and four of them were brought down by the French. Berlin says the raid was made as a reprisal for the bombing of Stuttgart and other German towns.

Britain Raided.

German aircraft attacked the Yorkshire coast of England Tuesday night and British aviators have dropped a ton of bombs on the town of Coblenz in Prussia.

The situation in Siberia apparently is daily growing more serious.

As yet the Japanese government has reached no decision concerning whether Japanese troops are to be sent to Siberia, according to an announcement by Premier Terauchi.

In the meantime the Bolshevik forces have defeated General Semenov, the anti-Bolshevik leader, and compelled him to retreat into Manchuria.

Former German prisoners are believed to be aiding the Bolshevik troops.

Whether or not the revolutionists will follow Semenov into Chinese territory is not known at present, but a warning has been issued to them by the Chinese commander at Harbin that any invasion of Chinese territory will be regarded as an act of war.

An American steamer on its way to France has successfully defended itself against a German submarine attack. In the encounter the underwater boat shelled the steamer, damaging the bridge and boring a hole through a smokestack.

GERMAN AIRSHIPS RAID THE YORKSHIRE COAST!

London, Mar. 12—Hostile airships attacked the Yorkshire coast tonight according to an official statement.

Field Marshal Lord French, commander of the home forces, reports that one or two hostile airships attacked the Yorkshire coast late this evening. A few bombs are reported to have fallen, a short distance inland. No reports of casualties or damage have yet been received.

EVERY MEMBER OF OLD GOV'T AND THE VALLEY DIRECTORATE NOT GUILTY OF WRONG-DOING

Commissioner Stevens Submits Exhaustive Report of His Findings in the St. John and Quebec Railway Enquiry—Members of Old Government and Railroad Directors Completely Exonerated in Connection with Nova Scotia Construction Co.'s Contracts for Construction of Portions of Line and Activities of W. B. Tennant in That Regard.

Public Money Not Misappropriated or Misapplied in Any Way—Evidence Not Sufficient to Justify Proceedings Under Criminal Code Against W. B. Tennant or Thomas Nagle—Commissioner's Report Evidently Sad Disappointment to Fosterites—A Voluminous Document.

(SPECIAL TO THE STANDARD)

Fredericton, March 12.—Every member of the old government and the Valley Railway directorate is completely exonerated of wrong doing in connection with the Nova Scotia Company's contracts for the construction of portions of the Valley Railway and the activities of Mr. W. B. Tennant in that regard.

This in brief is the story of the report of Commissioner J. M. Stevens which was tabled in the legislature this afternoon. There are two reports, an interim report dated August 31, 1917, and a final report dated February 21, 1918.

The first deals with the connection between Mr. Tennant and the construction company and the payment to Mr. Tennant and Mr. Thomas Nagle of certain sums of money to be taken from the profits of these contracts. The second report deals with the proceedings taken under the amended commission given to Mr. Stevens which authorized him to trace the disposition of the money paid to Mr. Tennant.

Repeatedly through both reports the commissioner expresses the opinion that every member of the old government and of the Valley Railway directorate is innocent of any wrong doing in connection with the construction of the railway. He finds that public money was not misappropriated or misapplied in any way. This is particularly illustrated by the following extracts from his findings:

Referring to the negotiations in connection with the N. S. Company's tender—"There is not sufficient evidence to justify me in arriving at the conclusion that any member of the railway company or of the government was in any way a party to this scoring for position."

And again: "I cannot come to the conclusion that there was any understanding between any member of the railway company or of the government with such company, or anyone representing said company, (the N. S. Construction Company) that said company would receive the contract if other tenders of responsible concerns were lower than the tender of said construction company."

DISPOSITION OF MONEY.

Referring to the disposition of the money by Mr. Tennant the commissioner says: "Mr. Tennant has sworn that all this money went into his legitimate business and is still there in some form or other and no sufficient evidence to the contrary has been produced to justify me in finding otherwise."

As to increased prices to the construction company the commissioner says: "I am unable to conclude from the evidence offered so far that it, (the increase in the prices), was the subject of a prior understanding between the directors of the railway company and any member of the government in collusion with the Nova Scotia Construction Company, Limited, or anyone representing such company."

The commissioner also declares that there is not sufficient evidence to justify any proceedings against either Messrs. Tennant or Nagle under the criminal code.

The main features of the reports, however, are found in the complete exoneration of the government and Valley Railway board. It is quite evident that the report is not the sort of document some of the gentlemen in connection with the present government expected it to be.

The documents are very voluminous. The interim report reviews the evidence and the arrangements for the calling for tenders for the construction of the uncompleted portions of the railway, reproduces the correspondence between Messrs. Tennant, Nagle and the construction company and deals with the regulations and conditions under which tenders were to be called for and the contracts awarded.

The commissioner then finds as follows:

In conjunction with the farm settlement board. Mr. Foster should have known this. The premier did not even see his blunder after Mr. Murray had called his attention to it and was proceeding to repeat that no commissioners had been appointed.

Mr. Murray—"The commissioners were appointed to act in conjunction with the farm settlement board, and if the government of that day had been returned to power the act would have been in force now."

Mr. Murray then referred to the plan of land settlement which he had taken to England and which had been approved there. This was the plan covered by the act and British authorities had announced that it was the most practical contribution to the problem of settling the returned soldiers that they had seen.

The premier was plainly nonplussed at the prompt manner in which the opposition leader had corrected his misstatement. It was quite apparent to the house that Mr. Murray had all the better of the encounter.

Inconsistent Still.

Mr. Foster paid a tribute to the commission selected by the former government to work out improvements in the workmen's compensation act and said he did not think a better choice could have been made. He then proceeded to discuss public health and showed his inconsistency by the intimation that he intended to enlarge the government by the addition of a minister of health, stating almost in the next breath that he favored the reduction of the government to three or at most four members.

After a rather painful attempt to explain the bond transaction, which is dealt elsewhere in The Standard, the premier closed his address.

Premier Foster Admits Bond Issue Charges of Hon. James A. Murray

Provincial Loan Disposed of To Government's Friends Without Tender.

PREMIER SAYS MONEY URGENTLY NEEDED

Professes Ignorance That Other Brokers Would Have Paid More.

DEFENSE ON WHOLE DECIDEDLY LAME

Hon. Mr. Foster Peeved at Certain Newspapers and Makes Threat.

Special to The Standard.

Fredericton, Mar. 12.—Premier Foster's answer to Hon. Mr. Murray's charge that the most recent issue of provincial bonds was disposed of to "friends" of the government without public tender was delivered in the legislature this afternoon. The premier admits the charge, but tries to defend his action on the ground that the money was urgently and quickly required and the offer was a good one. He professed ignorance of the fact that any other firm of brokers was prepared to offer more money for the debentures, but did not say that such offers would not have been received if brokers had been publicly notified that the government was prepared to consider them.

Starts Explanation.

When he started his explanation of the bond transaction it looked for a minute as if he intended to take the House and the country into his confidence and make a frank statement. He started out well, saying: "As I stated the other day, it is the policy of the government to make a frank and full statement of all its transactions. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition has asked me a frank question in regard to the bonds and I will give him a frank answer."

At that the back bench members on the government side pounded their desks vociferously, evidently enraptured of their leader's stand and certain that his defense was good.

But as Mr. Foster proceeded it became evident that he had no defense except to admit the charge, although he tried to employ the argument that former governments had acted in the same manner in the disposal of bonds. He did not, however, compare prices received for offerings floated by former governments and the price he got for the most recent issue.

Entertained Deep Regret.

He claimed that it was with deep regret he found it necessary to go on the market with a bond offering at an inopportune time, but the government needed the money and there was no other way to get it. Before placing the issue the representatives of the government conferred with the general manager of the Bank of Montreal and the Dominion Minister of Finance. The bank manager advised that the issue should be floated in the province while the Minister of Finance informed them that owing to heavy demands upon the Dominion treasury it would be impossible to secure federal aid.

Just after receiving this unwelcome assurance the fates were kind, for by a peculiar coincidence along came a letter from A. E. Ames and Co. of Toronto, offering to loan the province the money required and announcing that the firm of J. M. Robinson and Sons, St. John, would be taken in on the transaction.

Said It Looked Good.

This offer, the premier said, looked good to him, and the deal was consummated, Messrs. Robinson and Ames securing the issue at 96 and they disposed of it in two days at a substantial profit.

Mr. Foster contended that in comparison with issues of other provinces New Brunswick obtained a good price. An Ontario issue of \$2,000,000 had been floated at 97 and the cost to that province was 6 1/2 per cent. The New Brunswick issue, floated at 96, cost the province 8 1/2 per cent, and when the difference in the credit rating of the two provinces was taken into consideration Mr. Foster thought this was a good showing. "The government did not ask for tenders for this issue," said Mr. Foster, "because we felt that we received a good offer and as the money was available we should take it." He considered it was the second best price of public financing that had been put through in Canada this year, second only to the Ontario loan. He did not say, however, that a few weeks of the year had elapsed when the loan was made and that there were very few other loans with which it could be compared. He quoted Hon. Edward Brown, provincial secretary of Manitoba, to the effect that the Manitoba loan had been floated at seven per cent, but did not tell the House that since floating that loan Hon. Mr. Brown has been pilloried by most of the newspapers of Manitoba as a "bone head" financier.

A Terrible Threat.

Altogether Mr. Foster was unconvinced and ill at ease. He closed his address with a complaint concerning the manner in which he had been criticized in newspapers in the province, papers which he contended followed the direction of Hon. Mr. Murray and threatened if this sort of thing continued it would be necessary for members on the government side of the House to "take steps."

Hon. Mr. Murray, after Mr. Foster concluded, arose and stated that he did not direct or control any of the newspapers in the province and advised the premier not to be thin-skinned. He himself had been subject to considerable newspaper criticism of a character that was not always fair. The debate then ended and the address was formally adopted without division.

BOLSHEVIKI ARE WARNED NOT TO INVADE CHINA

Invasion Will Be Considered Act of War—Bolshevik Leaders Arrested at Blagovieshtchensk—Conflicting Reports.

London, Mar. 11.—The Chinese commander at Harbin, Manchuria, has warned the leader of the Bolshevik forces in Siberia that the invasion of Chinese territory will be considered an act of war.

The forces of General Semenov, the anti-Bolshevik leader in Siberia, are regarded as representing the army of the Russian provisional government recognized by China, the despatch explains.

Obsacks have arrested the Bolshevik leaders at Blagovieshtchensk, capital of Amur province, and have dispersed the Bolshevik forces there.

London, Mar. 12.—A despatch received from Tokio says that Foreign Minister Motono, replying to question in the Diet, stated no request that troops be sent to Siberia had been received from Japan's allies, an exchange of views, he said, was proceeding.

The opposition leader favored the sending of troops, but expressed the fear that the presence of Japanese in Siberia might drive Russia toward Germany unless the greatest precautions were taken.

Conflicting Reports.

Harbin, Mar. 12.—Conflicting reports have reached here regarding the plans of the Japanese, American and other ambassadors now at Volodga. According to the understanding in Harbin they were to proceed to Vladivostok, travelling by way of the Amur railway from Karinskaya, where east bound traffic is now being transferred, because of the destruction of the Manchurian railway between the Manchuria border and Chita, in the Trans-Baikal.

The ambassadors were expected in Vladivostok, about March 14, it has been understood here, but a rumor that they were being detained by the Bolsheviks has been current.

General Semenov brought his dead and wounded to Manchuria with him in his retreat.

General Semenov's munitions are reported exhausted as well as the funds at his disposal.

(Continued on page 3)