

Department of the Interior. First, permits had been granted—and now I speak from memory—to the two transportation companies, the Alaskan and the North American, and an application came before me to renew these permits. When that application came before me I simply said: How much did they get the year before; I was told; and I then said: You can renew the permit for the amount they got the year before. Subsequently, some parties applied for leave to take liquor in. A man named O'Brien came with a letter from Inspector Constantine recommending that a permit should be given him, saying, if I recollect aright, that the liquor business was carried on there, that O'Brien was a respectable man, and he was recommended to the good offices of the department. It was simply upon that letter a permit was issued to Mr. O'Brien. There were two or three other cases of applications having been made, amongst them this gentleman from Oak Lake, who seems to have excited the hostility of my hon. friend from West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin). I granted two or three permits. I could not see there was any special reasons why, if the liquor business was going to be carried on in the Yukon district, it should be confined to two American trading companies, and I do not see now why it should be confined to the two American trading companies. The only question was, whether the amount for which I granted the permit was an excessive amount. I do not think any one would say that if there was going to be liquor allowed into the Yukon district, 10,000 or 12,000 gallons would be an excessive amount for thirty or forty thousand people. Therefore, I feel that I am not open to any severe criticism in that respect. I subsequently found that applications were coming from all over the country for permits to take liquor into the Yukon district, and I simply sat on the whole thing, and I said I would not issue any more. That has been followed consistently since with the exception of a few cases to which I referred before, in which the applications were not of a commercial nature: that is to say, in the sense of a desire on the part of the applicant to use the permit for commercial purposes, and in these cases a few permits were granted for a small amount, five or six gallons. These permits are shown on the returns brought down to the House.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I heard from one source, I think it was in the House but I cannot find the reference, not as the Minister of the Interior puts it, that this practice had existed of issuing these permits on the part of his predecessor, but that the Lieutenant-Governor had himself claimed the right to issue permits, and had issued permits to those two companies in particular.

Mr. SIFTON.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. That was since, I think, speaking from memory, the companies got the Lieutenant-Governor to issue the permit after I had refused. The late Deputy Minister, Mr. Burgess, told me that was the arrangement that had been made, and an application was made to me on behalf of these two companies in the first instance. I said to renew their permits for this year for the same amount as last year. For the reasons I have given, I subsequently gave a permit to Mr. O'Brien and to two or three others, and amongst them to one firm on the recommendation of Mr. Turner, the Premier of British Columbia, who wrote me recommending the parties as responsible. From information I have got since, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west Territories apparently issued permits after I had ceased to allow any further requisitions to go forward, and I think he must have issued permits to the two companies which had applied to me and been refused, because when they came again, after I had given directions for the first time, some months later, I said I would not issue any recommendation in their favour because I had decided not to issue further recommendations until I knew more clearly what sort of administration we were going to have in that country, and I think they must have got their permits from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories without any knowledge by the Department of the Interior. I do not know that any other explanation is necessary.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. Minister is not able to say that his predecessor issued any permits in the Yukon territory?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. When the matter came before me I referred it to the late Mr. Burgess, who was then Deputy Minister. He explained to me what I have stated. I never looked back to see when or where the permits had been granted. I had been told that permits had been issued the year before, and I said to renew them for the same amount. When the return came down, I found that they had been given about the time of the change of Government, and that the officers in the department must have issued the requisitions. Probably, therefore, the late Minister of the Interior did not know anything about it.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. That seems to be the idea. For instance, on 30th March, I see in "Hansard" that the hon. Minister, referring to one of these permits, stated that a permit to take 1,000 gallons of whisky into the Yukon district had been issued by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west Territories. I suppose the hon. gentleman, in referring to the custom anterior to his taking office, referred