The Facts About the Ross Rifle

Why and How the Dominion Government Arranged To Have a Canadian-Made Rifle for the Militia.—A Completely Exploded Slander Campaign—Remarkable Success of the Weapon.

Winnipeg Free Press.—Under the guise of patriotism, Conservative charges have been particularly directed against Departments at Ottawa, like that of the Militia, but of all the exploded scandal charges there has been no greater "blow back" than that connected with the Ross rifle. Everything connected with the establishment of the Ross factory with Government aid, from the grant of a site to the price of the rifle, and from the merits of the weapon itself to the character of the Conservative members who recommended it, was attacked with a virulence and a disregard of truth by the Conservative Opposition that has led many to think that there must be something wrong with the whole business. Fortunately among the experts on the Opposition side there are men with patriotism enough to defend the Government on a matter of this kind and the strongest reply to the Conservative charges was furnished on May 22 on the floor of the House of Commons by Col. Sam. Hughes, who in a speech of great ability and with a full knowledge of the facts, concluded by saying: "I am not under any obligation to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Militia, or the whole Liberal party. I have treated them as gentlemen, but when they have gone astray I have not hesitated to let them feel the weight whatever it might be, heavy or light of my indignation. I have been a loyal follower, so far as I could be, of the leader of the Opposition; and so long as the Conservative party takes a straight line I will follow it. But, as I have said, I owe no allegiance to any man that affects my allegiance to my conscience. So when the Conservative party departs from the course of right, as they have done in this case (the Ross rifle, as they did on the Yukon question, and as they did on the Manitoba school question, I will follow it."

A Serious Problem.

The history of the establishment of a rifle factory in Canada under Government auspices really dates back to the South African war in 1900. Canada had sent all her available rifles to South Africa and needed 10,000 more at once. The Minister of Militia found that not even a thousand could be purchased in England, and this, as he stated in the House of Commons, set him thinking.

It is essential for the purpose of Imperial defence that the Canadian forces should be armed with a weapon using the same ammunition as the rest of the British Army, but if the Old Country could not be depended upon in time of war for supplies Canada might be easily placed in a very dangerous position.

The situation was crystalized in a British state paper, which was along the lines suggested by the Imperial Government at each of the Colonial conferences, and in which the British Government urged that so far as munitions of war were concerned "Colonial Governments should be urged to arrange for local manufacture and provision rather than rely on the resources of the United Kingdom." This was exactly what Canada had already done, and the British state paper referred to shewed the Imperial Government appreciated Canadian action.

Steps That Were Taken.

Sir Frederick Borden and the Canadian Government were not at the time they took action biased in favor of the Ross or any rifle. They were chiefly concerned to get a suitable and up-to-date rifle manufactured in Canada. With this end in view Sir Frederick Borden went to England and tried to get the Birmingham Small Arms factory to establish a branch in this country, but they refused to do so. He saw the Chamberlains, and urged this upon them, but failed to get them to see any advantage from a commercial point of view of establishing a Canadian factory for small arms, whose sole customer would almost certainly be the Canadian Government. This company manufacture the Lee-Enfields, and it was this rifle his Government had in view. The only alternative was for the government itself to establish a small arms factory and enter upon the manufacture of small arms, a course which would, no doubt, have been bitterly attacked by the Opposition—keen public ownership advocates as they are—NOT.

At this stage the Government was sought by Sir Charles Ross, on Old Country man, who had invented a new straight pull rifle, which was practically the weapon which had just been adopted for the Austrian army. It was claimed to have certain advantages over the Lee-Enfield, and it used the Lee-Enfield ammunition.

The Arrangement Made.

The government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not act hastily. They appointed a committee of experts, which included leading Conservatives, to report on the rifle. This committee was composed of General Otter, Col. Gibson, Col. Sam Hughes, Col. Anderson and Major Gaudet. They unanimously reported in favor of the rifle, although recommending certain improvements.

Sir Charles Ross agreed to sink practically his whole fortune in his rifle and spent half a million of his own money in erecting buildings and putting in machinery for his one customer, Canada, before he received a penny from the Government, but he received a free site and he agreed to manufacture a weapon to be passed by the Government inspector, for the price of $25; such price to be reduced or increased if either party could show that the sale of such weapons in England in large quantities was above or below this figure. This provided, of course, for the Government benefiting by any decrease in price, while an increase in price was doubtful. Contrast this $25 for a new weapon with the cost to the British Government of manufacturing Lee-Enfields in their own factories which is £4 5s. 0d., or equal, as Col. Hughes pointed out, to $20 laid down in Canada, with cost and carriage added.

The only concession the manufacturer and inventor got for risking his fortune in supplying his one customer with the certainty that if he did not keep his rifle up to the mark that it would be displaced by a better weapon, was that in addition to the free site he was allowed to get his raw material duty free, and that instead of paying in advance, like the British government, for the goods the Dominion government agreed to advance him 75 per cent. of the actual cost of any rifles to be delivered that year out of the total price. Any other large government contractor can get progress estimates paid, but this clause in the contract particularly enraged the Conservative opposition and led to charges of something improper.

What Canada Has Secured.

Not only has the government policy in connection with the Ross rifle met with the approval of the Imperial authorities, and added to the safety of Canada, and of the Empire, but it has established an important new industry on Canadian soil, and as stated on the floor of the House last session, out of $1,200,000 spent in the manufacture of Ross rifles, $900,000 was for labor alone, while as a result Canada has got a rifle which, according to Colonel Sam Hughes and other experts, "stands unsurpassed, unequalled, in the world today." It is safe to say that had the Canadian government purchased the patent rights of this rifle these alone would have cost many times the value of the site given, while against the 75 per cent. advanced on progress estimates ten times the amount would have been spent had the government entered into the manufacture of rifles themselves.

The Ross rifle is still capable of improvement, although the "Mark III" weapon is as described the best in the world today; but before the Lee-Enfield attained its present stage of development millions of dollars were spent on experiments and improvements, and "Mark XII" is the number of the Lee-Enfield pattern now in use. The Canadian government, knowing that they were adopting a new weapon of untried capacity, and in spite of all its good points and the good reports upon it, allowed the "Mark I" rifle to be issued to the militia with practically no instructions or restrictions. The wisdom of the course was proved by the fact that the defects in it were at once discovered and—exaggerated. They were also amended, and in the third pattern of the rifle now being made the Canadian government have secured in shorter time and at less expense an almost perfect weapon, which both at Bisley and on the Canadian ranges has proved its capacity to top the score list.

Contrast the indiscriminate issue of the Ross rifle both in England and in Canada to that when the Lee-Enfield was first issued, and the reason why so many people were able to talk about defects in it is easily understood. When the Lee-Enfield was first issued it was, to use a phrase of Sir F. Borden's, not used, but "kept in cotton wool." No one was allowed to take it apart except an armorer. Great expense and trouble was caused by the way in which it had to be kept in the racks at headquarters. In spite of this, even in the last few years, accidents with the Lee-Enfield are common, although they do not get into the newspapers. The Winnipeg Telegram for 1903 to 1908 has alone handled over a dozen cases of damaged Lee-Enfields, in which the barrel had burst, the bolt broken and other serious accidents had occurred.

In the Ross rifle the mechanism is so simple that everybody has been allowed to take the rifle apart, and in most cases accidents have been traced to some error in replacing the parts. In the two most serious accidents reported, and of which much was made in the House of Commons debates, it was shown in one case that the supposed damage merely amounted to a small spring flying out, and in the other, where a Conservative at Eastman had made a great parade about the danger of firing near a Ross rifle, and in which the rifle held by his comrade exploded and struck him on the forehead, it was proved beyond question that the rifle had been tampered with. It was significant enough, also, that the damaged rifle was taken to a Conservative convention next day, and that the member who professed to know all about the circumstances because he said, "he was in the vicinity," declared, when challenged and when the truth about the matter was told by Col. Hughes, that he was not within twenty miles of the occurrence at the time.

As to parts being manufactured in the United States, practically nothing but forgings, and not manufactured parts, are now imported, and it was shown that the member who made this allegation had got mixed between forgings and manufactured parts. The British government itself imports several parts and a good deal of material for Lee-Enfields. Eventually there is no doubt the Ross will be a purely Canadian made article, but as Sir Frederick Borden pointed out in the House, a 50 horse-power Canadian motor widely advertised as Canadian, and so admitted by manufacturers, imports $1,900 worth of material out of $4,500.

The supposed patriotism of the attack on the Ross is discounted by the attempts which have been made to get the government to adopt the rifle of another company, and the vindictiveness of the prime movers is shown in the sneer of the Conservative member for Sherbrooke, who in moving last session the resolution censuring the government for its policy in connection with the manufacture of the Ross rifle, alluded to the necessity of "allaying the fears of an already unsteady militia," a description of the Canadian forces which is a distinct libel of men, who, if some of them have been induced by persistent party agitation and misrepresentation to utter criticisms of the earlier patterns of the Ross rifle, have after all only followed the example of soldiers the world over who have always found fault with the first issues of a new rifle. As everyone knows, an inferior weapon to which a man is accustomed will give him better results in shooting than a much better gun which he is not used to, and both at the adoption of the Martini in place of the Snider, and of the Lee-Enfield in place of the Martini, there was very much greater outcry than against the Ross rifle, only there was no partisan use made of it.

THE CONSERVATIVES FAVOR A HIGH TARIFF.

Winnipeg Free Press—When the Dominion leader of the Conservative party, Mr. R. L. Borden, comes to Western Canada on his speech-making expedition the people of Western Canada will expect him to declare in plain, explicit, straightforward language what he means by his policy of "adequate protection," and whether he supports the demand of the woollen manufacturers for higher duties on woollen goods. Pending his arrival, we have only the utterances of the western leader of the Dominion Conservative party, to enlighten us as to the tariff policy of that party.

When that truly great statesman returned from his last visit to Ottawa seven or eight weeks ago, before parliament had risen, he was of course "interviewed" at great length by the Winnipeg Conservative organ, and delivered himself in most impressive language of many weighty judgments upon national affairs and his usual prophecies that the Conservative party was going to sweep the country. Among other matters, he touched upon the tariff. He declared that "industry was "discouraged" under the Liberal tariff. "Under the Fielding tariff," announced the veracious Mr. Rogers, "the manufacturer of Canada has been reduced to a mere jobber." He spoke only in general terms, and did not specifically declare in favor of a higher tariff; but what other meaning can be attached to his talk about "industry discouraged," his picturing of the manufacturer as being "afraid either to invest more money or increase his output," and his indignation against imported goods?

What else can the western leader of the Conservative party be understood as meaning than that the manufacturers should have "adequate protection" in the sense that the tariff should be raised to a height that would bar out all goods manufactured outside Canada, including British goods? For it is against British goods, which under the British preference in the Fielding tariff come into Canada in great quantities and compete with the goods of the Canadian manufacturer, keeping prices down to a reasonable level for the benefit of the consumers of this country, that the woollen manufacturers and the other clamorers for high tariff taxation of the Canadian people are demanding "adequate protection." The British preference feature of the Fielding tariff is of course a most important means of promoting inter-imperial trade. It was a new departure in the development of the imperial relationship, and as Mr. Chamberlain declared, gave a lead to the whole empire; but its primary purpose, as Mr. Fielding declared in introducing it was to serve as a sweeping measure of reduction of tariff taxation in this country. This purpose it has steadily served since the day it went into operation. This purpose it is serving today. Hence the hostility against it of the woollen manufacturers and other manufacturers who want to have the Canadian market secured to them without competition.

The Toronto News, now a leading organ of the Conservative party, interprets Mr. Borden's platform as declaring for higher protection for the woollen manufacturers and more taxes upon the people of this country, to whom woollen goods are a necessary of life. The News, like Mr. Rogers, talks of the "ruin of the woollen mills "under the Fielding tariff," and it represents Mr. Borden as standing for higher tariff taxation for their benefit. The people of western Canada are anxious to hear definitely from Mr. Borden on that point; they want to know if his policy is that the price of woollen goods should be increased in this country, in order that the woollen manufacturers may become inordinately wealthy.

The traditional tariff policy of the Conservative party is that the tariff schedules should be framed by a committee of the Manufacturers' association, as they were in the days of Conservative rule, between 1878 and 1896; "adequate protection" then meant all the protection that the protected interests demanded, in return for their support of the party in power, a policy of tariff duties for the sake of protection, even to the absolute exclusion of competition, and even if the revenue suffered, as it did, and the national development languished, as it did, as against the moderate tariff policy of the Liberal government, which permits fair competition and obtains a revenue for the growing needs of the Dominion in keeping with its progress and the expansion of its development.

The farmers of Western Canada are alive to the meaning of the aggressive campaign of the Manufacturers' association for higher tariff duties. It is worthy of note that the farmers of Ontario are showing that they are not inattentive to this movement, and are manifesting particularly their just hostility to the demand of the woollen manufacturers to be allowed to charge higher prices. At the great picnic held last week at Crystal beach under the auspices of the Farmers and Women's institutes and the boards of trade of Welland County, the speakers declared themselves on this matter with no uncertain sound. The head of the Dominion Grange strongly urged the farmers to organize to combat the campaign of the Manufacturers' association.

The Farmers' Sun, too, indignantly protests against the demand made last month just before the close of the session of parliament by the executive council of the Manufacturers' association, then in session at Toronto, for higher duties on woollen goods. They sent that demand to Sir Wilfrid Laurier by telegraph, declaring peremptorily that it was a demand "that must be granted." Sir Wilfrid very properly, and very promptly, wired them a reply, giving them clearly to understand that the government's duty is to the people of Canada, and that he and his colleagues could not, their way, having regard to their duty to the people of Canada, to accede to that demand. For this Sir Wilfrid Laurier is being attacked by Conservative organs. What the people of Western Canada want to be told by Mr. Borden himself is which of the two policies has his approval and support—the policy laid down in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's message of refusal to impose higher woollen duties, or the policy laid down in the demand of the executive council of the Manufacturers' association, in reply to which Sir Wilfrid sent his message of refusal.

Tuberculosis Will Be Wiped Out.

Philadelphia, Sept. 3.—Dr. Lawrence F. Flick, head of the Phipps Institute, declares that in four years tuberculosis will be wiped out. "If I could teach everybody the simple methods of prevention the spread of the disease is would stop at once," he said. The International Congress, which meets in Washington soon, will adopt further means of education along this line.

Lasker Wins Fifth Chess Game.

Munich, Sept. 2.—Dr. Emanuel Lasker yesterday won the fifth game in his match against Dr. Tarrasch, of Nuremburg, for the chess championship of the world in thirty-eight moves. The game lasted five hours. Lasker has now won four games and Tarrasch one.

Burglars in Vancouver.

Vancouver, B.C., Sept. 1.—The week-end residence of Mr. A. M. Stewart, of Clubb & Stewart, was broken into by burglars the other night and ransacked from top to bottom. The thieves were evidently after money. Mr. Stewart and his family were away camping.

BREAK BREAD TOGETHER.

Bryan and Governor Johnson Fellow Guests of Lynch.

St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 31.—William Jennings Bryan arrived here at seven thirty this morning. National Committeeman Lynch will entertain him at luncheon at noon to-day. The occasion will mark the opening of the Democratic campaign in this state, and will possess an element of unusual interest in that it will bring together the man who won and the men who lost in the recent struggle for the Democratic leadership. The men will sit beside each other, and break bread together, and all past differences will be buried for the present at least. Bryan speaks to-night at 8 o'clock in the State Fair grounds.

Harry P. O., Bruce town, G. T. P.

To whom it may concern:

We, the undersigned farmers of Bruce, do respectfully petition for one or more elevators to be built and operated here this fall. There will be a large amount of grain to market in 1908 harvest.

Yours truly,

Name.	P.O.	No. acres.	S.	T.	R.	P.
C. W. Harris	Harry	33	36	48	15	
R. B. Stafford	Harry	20	10	48	15	
E. H. Glaspie	Harry	15	34	48	14	
H. M. Willson	Harry	60	33	48	15	
W. R. Hall	Harry	140	26	48	15	
T. P. Hall	Harry	110	27	48	15	
G. Ea. A. Johnson	Harry	40	20	48	14	
Gust. Johnson	Harry	15	16	49	17	
Wallace Palmer	Harry	15	4	49	14	
Arthur E. Haight	Harry	22	14	48	15	
Mesit S. Haight	Harry	40	14	48	15	
E. J. Nicholson	Harry	15	15	49	15	
A. G. Nicholson	Harry	35	15	49	15	
M. B. Johnson	Harry	15	19	47	14	
Geo. H. Barker	Harry	120	24	49	15	
Fred Golden	Harry	30	24	49	15	
George Olberg	Harry	15	4	48	15	
E. S. Cole	Harry	5	28	48	14	
Thomas Seddon	Harry	18	6	48	14	
F. L. Wilson	Harry	28	4	48	14	
R. J. Wilson	Harry	12	4	48	14	
W. McMullen	Harry	50	36	48	14	
C. McMullen	Harry	15	36	48	14	
S. R. McMullen	Harry	10	36	48	14	
Chas. G. Tiedt	Harry	14	32	47	15	
Duncan Ingram	Harry	30	21	22	49	14
J. S. McMocken	Harry	325	35	49	15	
W. M. Robinson	Harry	30	20	38	14	
Walter Middleton	Harry	10	40	48	15	
Floyd Coe	Harry	5	n.e.	14	48	14
S. E. Ferris	Harry	5	n.e.	16	49	14
E. A. Pearson	Harry	22	s.w.	32	48	14
E. J. Christiansen	Harry	150	n.w.	32	49	15
Lewis Jacobson	Harry	150	n.e.	49	15	
Milton Greene	Harry	60	s.e.	28	48	14
David Robinson	Harry	40	14	48	14	
John McMullan	Harry	20	2	49	15	
Olaf Johnson	Harry	40	18	49	14	
John C. McArthur	Harry	15	36	47	15	
Gust. Johnson	Harry	15	18	49	14	
Huhwe H. Olson	Harry	110	26	49	15	
F. R. Jefferds	Harry	45	14	48	15	
Wm. Robinson	Harry	20	35	48	14	
W. H. Webb	Harry	100	3	48	15	
H. Pirie	Harry	12	36	48	15	
J. W. Williams	Harry	40	26	47	15	
W. A. Williams	Harry	26	30	47	14	
C. McGillivary	Harry	25	24	47	15	
H. McArthur	Harry	75	2	48	15	
Joe Hooper	Harry	35	24	47	15	
D. McClarty	Harry	300	19	49	15	
		2834				

A large number of farmers have not been solicited owing to the lateness of organization and there is near 4,000 acres of grain to be marketed here this fall.

W. J. EARL,
Harry P.O., Alta.

THE DELTON DAIRY.

Dissolution of Partnership.

Notice is hereby given that the partnership hitherto existing between Daniel Ritchie and George Hazlett, carrying on business under the firm name of "The Delton Dairy" has been dissolved by mutual consent. The business of the Delton Dairy will continue in the same name under the management of Daniel Ritchie and Harold Wonnacott.

(Signed) DANIEL RITCHIE.

JUDICIAL SALE.

Pursuant to the order of the Honorable Mr. Justice Beck, dated the 29th day of August, 1908, in the suit of McMahon vs. Skraba, tenders will be received for the purchase of the Northeast quarter of section thirty-two (32), township fifty-six (56), range seventeen (17) west of the fourth meridian. The said tenders are to be delivered at the office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Alberta at Edmonton on or before the 29th day of September, 1908, and endorsed "McMahon vs. Skraba tender."

The premises in question are situated six miles from the Westok Post Office; twenty miles from the Canadian Northern railway; two miles from a school house and four miles from a church.

The said premises contain 160 acres and approximately there are 40 acres of arable land, 16 acres of land which has been cultivated, 80 acres of wooded land and 20 acres of meadow land and the balance is muskeg.

The land is offered at an upset price of Six Hundred and Twenty-Five Dollars ($625.00).

Terms of payment are One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) to accompany the tender and the balance without interest within thirty days.

In all other respects the terms and conditions of the sale will be the standing conditions of the Supreme Court of Alberta.

Full particulars may be had from the undersigned or from Messrs. Short, Cross & Biggar, Solicitors for the plaintiff.

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C. S. C.

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