

# BLAIR'S RESIGNATION.

The Subject of a Lively Discussion in Parliament Yesterday—Opposition Members Demand An Investigation.

OTTAWA, Feb. 3.—Hon. A. G. Blair's resignation from the railway commission together with its causes, was the topic of interest before the house today. Under the sensation of a heated discussion, during which opposition members demanded an explanation from the government, came the change by Hance J. Logan on behalf of the government that the opposition was in league with "the man who said he persuaded Blair to resign" in a "diabolical plot" to overthrow the government and make Blair minister of railways. He declared that in a few months the government expected to have a certain knowledge respecting the details of the whole affair.

The matter came up when the government's resolution was introduced providing that if a member of the superior court accepts the chairmanship of the railway commission he shall not be removed except by impeachment and shall be given the same rights, allowances and privileges as those held by a judge. Besides the introduction of a few private bills this was the only business before the house. In moving the resolution Mr. Fitzpatrick pointed out the immense power of the railway commission with its absolute control of the location, construction and management of every railway in Canada save those owned by the government. It was the most powerful body in Canada save parliament and it was important to have a good man with legal and judicial training, with wide knowledge of public affairs and a man who has been in no way associated with great railway corporations. The government, he said, believed they had found an ideal man in Judge Killam. The resolution was not passed in its original form, but to widen the field of choice for this important position by making it so that judges of superior courts could accept it without the necessity of resigning allowances, which they hold while on the bench.

W. F. McLean contended that the main purpose of the bill was not to increase the field of choice, but to circumscribe the powers of the commission. He objected to the promotion of judges or to their appointment to places outside the jurisdiction of parliament, by making him only removable from office by impeachment of both houses. This would make him a czar, and he believed that the railway corporations were back of the proposition, because with the railway commission free from parliamentary control they thought they could get in their influence Walworth and Drinkwater, the twin railway lobbyists, who had not been hanging around recently for nothing. McLean took occasion to bring again before the government their duty to explain the peculiar circumstances of Blair's resignation, which he characterized the most shameful thing in Canadian political history. Blair's sudden abandonment of his duties and public interest in his care was deserving of punishment and ignominy. Yet the government not only took no action, but persisted in keeping secret their knowledge of the shameful transaction.

W. A. Galliver of Kootenay supported the resolution on the grounds of Judge Killam's eminent qualifications and integrity, and was followed by Dr. Sproule, who echoed McLean's demand for explanation and argued against the independence of the bench by holding out to judges the hope of reward if they pleased the government. He also pointed out that if Judge Killam was appointed there would not be one man with any expert knowledge on the railway commission. Sir Wilfrid opposed the principle that a judge who proved himself fit for a higher position should not be promoted. He quoted several precedents of Sir John Macdonald's promotion of judges to higher courts and chief justiceships, and notably his summoning of Judge Thompson from the Nova Scotia bench to a seat in the cabinet. The premier hotly resented what he termed a slur on a most honorable man, in McLean's insinuation that the railway lobby was pushing Killam's appointment. He claimed that under the act which the government proposed to pass, the chairman would be more independent than if he was subject to parliament.

Messrs. Haggart and Barker contended against the resolution as calculated to lessen the independence of the bench and lessen public respect for it.

**FOSTER'S ELOQUENT SPEECH.**  
Hon. Geo. E. Foster made a strong and eloquent speech, objecting chiefly to the class of legislation involved in the resolution. Whatever privileges and emoluments parliament gave fit to attach to the chairmanship of the railway commission should belong to the position, not to its individual occupant. There was no possible reason why any man who could fulfil the duties of office was not as much entitled to a retiring allowance, and to be kept from the control of the government as a judge. He was also opposed to the practice of promoting judges, especially to political positions. He reiterated the sudden resignation, which caused the loss to the country of a man whom the government had appointed under peculiar circumstances, and for whose actions they were responsible. He denounced the

the Montreal Herald references to a conspiracy, part of which was the attempted purchase of Mr. Prefontaine and Mr. Fitzpatrick.

**STUTTERED WITH WRATH.**  
Fitzpatrick, who had been fighting in his seat, rose, uttering with wrath, and characterized any such references as absolutely untrue and without foundation. He defied any member of the house to prove them, and amid wild liberal cheers, Prefontaine made a similar statement. Further, he asserted that no such article ever appeared in the Herald. Bennett proceeded to read from that paper of Dec. 5, when Laurier leaped to his feet and asked for definite charges and a cessation of mere gossip.

The speaker took the hint and ruled that since the charges had been denied by the ministers, Mr. Bennett should make no further references to them. The government benches greeted the ruling with wild applause.

**READ OTHER CHARGES.**

Shut off from this tack, Mr. Bennett read charges in the Ottawa Events regarding the alleged theft of the Telegraph by David Russell and involving Mr. Blair. The charges, involving a liberal ex-minister, formed another reason why the government should not be responsible for a position as chairman of the railway commission. The office was to them, not a sacred trust, but a plaster to heal party wounds, to shut the mouth of a man whom they feared. They gave him high office though they despised him in their hearts. Mr. Foster referred to Blair's mysterious resignation and to the fact that his subsequent conduct had shown there were no urgent business reasons for it, no reasons why he could not have waited a few weeks, yet there must have been reasons, and what they were, as Blair was the government's servant, it was their duty to find out and make public.

Foster also strongly criticized other appointments to the commission as being for party expediency rather than the public interest.

**DEFENDED BLAIR'S APPOINTMENT.**

Mr. Logan defended the appointment of Blair on grounds of his knowledge of railway matters and law. Regarding the demands made by the opposition, he thought it was up to them rather than to the government to explain Blair's action after he was appointed. Mr. Blair's resignation is beyond explanation from this side of the house he said. But the honorable gentleman opposite who formed a partnership with the man who said he persuaded Blair to resign, who became his accomplice in a political crime of which that resignation was a part, ought to make a confession to this house. We can only guess the far certain members of the opposition were involved, but in a few months we expect to have certain knowledge. Mr. Logan repeated the charges made in certain papers that conservatives knew of Blair's intention beforehand, that the Montreal Star authoritatively announced he would take the stump. How did they know these things, he asked. Referring to the subsequent eulogy of Blair in the press and on the platform, Logan said: "It is a fact that will be proved in due time that the opposition agreed that if the government should be defeated by the aid of the diabolical machinations of men who should have kissed the hands of Sir Wilfrid instead of endeavoring to pierce his side, Blair was to be made the conservative minister of railways."

**JUDGE LANDRY'S PROMOTION.**

Defending the promotion of judges, Logan referred to the promotion of Judge Landry in 1893 from the county court to the supreme court of New Brunswick, which was made by the government of which Haggart and Foster were members.

Haggart said if that was the case he knew nothing of it, he had no recollection of the matter being ever brought before the council of which he was a member. Anyway he said there were some principles of good government which had always been observed in every province of the dominion except New Brunswick.

**LIBERAL APPLAUSE.**

Logan's speech was received with great government applause in which Laurier joined, when he sat down, it being 5 o'clock, the speaker left the chair.

**GOV. W. FOWLER.**

The first speaker after recess was G. W. Fowler of Kings and Albert counties, who gave an impassioned denial to every charge made by Mr. Logan. Referring to his assertions concerning an alleged plot against the government, he denied categorically and emphatically that any member of parliament, any ex-member, any man having the slightest authority to speak for the conservative party, were mixed up in any way with any kind of plot. Blair's resignation, he asserted, was not what he wanted to reaffirm his opposition to the iniquitous G. T. P. deal. If there were any other reasons that distinguished member of the government who had a certain interview with Blair on a certain Sunday and under further investigation, he would have cleared up the mystery than any others. Considering that the principals of the alleged plot were Montreal promoters and a Montreal lawyer, both liberals, he thought it strange that the opposition should be mentioned in the matter at all. This was not the first time that liberals had conspired against the liberals, nor would it be the last.

**AGAINST THE RESOLUTION.**

Mr. Boyce, the new member for Sault Ste Marie, spoke strongly against the principle of the resolution.

**MR. BENNETT'S SPEECH.**

The next speaker, that of Bennett of East Simcoe, brought on the storm. He based his demands for the investigation, first on the fact that Logan's declaration that Blair was promised the conservative portfolio, reflected directly on the integrity of R. L. Borden. The government in decency could not let such a charge go uninvestigated. Then he said the government could not afford to be silent on charges involving three of its members. "Who are they?" the liberals yelled. "I'm coming to that," said Mr. Bennett, and he proceeded to read from

## AS A FARMER

Mr. Fisher Would Hardly be Successful.

Amusing Incidents in the Discussion on the Seed Question—Difference Between Imports and Exports.

OTTAWA, Feb. 1.—The Honorable Sydney Fisher, minister of agriculture, is hardly what you would call a popular man in the house. He sits there with such an air of condescending, high-bred superiority, he is so superciliously cock-sure in all his opinions and he patronizes every practical farmer who has the temerity to hold ideas of his own, in such a sneeringly, irritating way that the average farmer would not care to have a word of conversation with him. He is a contempt for that class and his distinguished representative in the government.

The chance was given yesterday when Mr. Fisher's bill for the inspection and sale of seeds came up. The purpose of the bill is undoubtedly a good one—the protection of the farmer from the careless or unscrupulous dealer who furnishes him with seed polluted with the seeds of pernicious weeds. In a measure, the bill and the intended machinery for its enforcement provided good ground for criticism and argument, and the opposition took full advantage of it. But though many of the objections raised were undoubtedly well founded and though the bill would have been greatly reformed in the hands of a more practical man, Mr. Fisher was impervious to either. The bill as he introduced it was the best possible bill, he developed at times a sharp deep pity for misguided mortals who thought otherwise, and any amendments such as honorable gentlemen in their wisdom might suggest, were not only unnecessary but detrimental. Naturally this did not induce tender treatment from members who were determined enough to disagree with the minister, and the debate, which lasted from about half-past three in the afternoon until nearly ten o'clock at night, developed at times a sharpness which lent interest to a discussion that would otherwise have been very dull.

In the end the bill was approved with the exception of three sections relating to its enforcement, which the minister concedingly agreed to let stand. The opposition showed considerable better form of mind concerning them.

The following incident illustrates the temper of a considerable part of the debate and some of the courtesies that popped back and forth across the table.

Mr. Cochrane, the member of Northumberland—an elderly man with a fine white head and a temper and a tongue none too gentle—was complaining of the maze of technicalities with which the bill was enshrouded. Even the young gentlemen of the opposition, about its significance, he said, and how could the farmer understand. "The honorable minister," continued Mr. Cochrane, "seems to be a friend of the poor farmer."

"Not of such poor farmers as you are," sneered the minister in interruption. "I made my living as a farmer, which you never did and never could," was the angry retort. "If the honorable minister," continued Mr. Cochrane, "farming any better than he does this bill, he would be in a very humble position in life if he tried to make his living as a farmer. If he tried to do so, he says it is, how is it that he, with all his great wisdom, cannot make the lawyers in this house understand it. I want to impress this on the honorable gentleman's mind—because it takes a great deal to impress a fact on the mind of a gentleman so conceited that he thinks he knows more than all the rest of the world. At that this bill is so complicated that with all his explanations he cannot bring it down to the comprehension of trained legal brains. This is the result of an expert farmer to do with it."

"This time Mr. Fisher did not sass back. In another place Mr. Fisher had occasion to refer to the "raison d'être" of the bill, only he called it the "raison d'être." "What's that?" queried Mr. Foster gently. "Does my honorable friend want a translation?" asked the minister of Mr. Foster. "He ought to know. He gave us some French the other day," referring to Mr. Foster's reading from a French paper during his speech in the debate on the speech from the throne; a reading, by the way, which Frenchmen in the press gallery said was excellent.

"Oh, it was French, was it?" said Mr. Foster. "I did not recognize it."

Then Mr. Fisher got mad and started to say something very sarcastic about bowing to the superior knowledge and perfect ear and pronunciation of the honorable member for North York. Here he merely very effectively Chief Whip Taylor frankly expressed his opinion that the opportunity the new law would give for the employment of grifts who went jobs was the real reason why the government wanted it passed. "That's all it's for," he declared, "just to provide work and salaries for a lot of hungry officials."

Mr. Fisher hotly resented the imputation which, not content with declaring to be utterly without foundation, he described as "deliberate misrepresentation on the part of Mr. Taylor. Dr. Sproule jumped to his feet on a point of order, demanding a retraction on the part of the minister of railways. The opposition, tired of the debate and glad of the diversion, loudly endorsed the demand and called on the new deputy speaker, who was presiding over the committee for a ruling.

Mr. Marcell was equal to the occasion. He admitted that Mr. Fisher had transgressed the courteous limits of debate and gently censured him therefor; but he also found that Mr. Taylor had been out of order in making such a charge as he did and had given the minister certain provocation. This adroit and not unfair ruling, while it enabled the direct point raised by Dr. Sproule, was received with good-natured laughter by both sides and aroused no objection beyond a humorously sarcastic comment from Mr. Foster on the deputy speaker's diplomacy.

Mr. Fisher later explained that there would be no need for employing any more officials on account of this act. The act would save the government, with a couple of permanent additions, would have to be made anyway, would be able to look after it.

Canada's tendency to spend more than she is making, to buy goods in other countries to a value greater than she sells in other countries, is strikingly shown in the recently issued report of trade and commerce for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1904. In 1902 we bought less than a million dollars' worth more goods than we sold; in 1903 our spendings exceeded our trade receipts by over fifteen million dollars, and in 1904 the difference on the debit side of our books was \$45,690,688. We bought and imported goods to the value of \$239,231,893, while we sold and exported to the value of only \$193,541,205. Our imports were greater than last year's by about eighteen millions, while our exports were reduced by over twelve million dollars. A large part of this increase in imports is found in goods purchased from the United States, from which we purchased last year over thirteen million dollars' worth more than ever before. We bought from the Americans last year goods valued at \$150,236,615, or over twice as much as we sold them. It is notable that the ratio is almost exactly reversed in the case of Great Britain, from which we bought in 1904 \$61,777,574 worth of goods, while we sold them \$117,591,376. In spite of the boasted preference to British goods our trade with the United States is increasing at a rate far greater than our trade with Great Britain.

Another side light on the working of the preference is shown by the fact that while the duty on imports from the Great Britain averaged 17.5 per cent, the duty on imports from the States, which are not accorded any ostensible preference, averaged only about 13.5 per cent.

The increase in imports during the year has been general on all important articles, notably among them, coal, \$122,000; wool and manufactures of, \$2,400,000; wool and manufactures of, over \$1,700,000; electrical apparatus, nearly \$800,000. The exact figures as regards the articles are shown in the detailed statements herewith published.

On the other hand, the decrease in exports is limited to over \$200,000 on animals living; over \$100,000 on breadstuffs (wheat); over \$1,000,000 on fish; over \$4,000,000 on provisions and over \$3,000,000 on manufactured goods. There has, however, been an increase in the exports of minor articles, aggregating nearly \$5,500,000.

The report claims that the decrease in wheat exports is due to decreased production, but to the growing demand for consumption and for seedling purposes. C. F. C.

## HUSBAND SHOT DEAD

And Wife Has Been Arrested—Says He Committed Suicide—The Affair a Mystery.

BOSTON, Feb. 3.—George S. Sargent, a stationary engineer, belonging in Gloucester, was found dead in a lodging house at 31 Appleton street, this city, tonight. There were three bullet wounds in the body, and the police are investigating the cause of death. Sargent had called at the house to visit his wife Annie, from whom he is said to have been separated some seven or eight years ago, and the coroner is under arrest pending the result of an autopsy which will be held by the medical examiner tomorrow.

At the morgue a superficial examination showed that one bullet had passed through his chest, another through the index finger of the left hand, and a third through the right hand. Mrs. Sargent, who had been taken into custody said her husband had committed suicide. She asserted that he had talked of taking his life while they were together in her room this evening, and that as she stepped to a closet leading from her room she heard two shots, and her husband fell dead to the floor. People who saw the body of the house told the police that five shots were fired in all, three in quick succession, and then two more after a short pause. Mrs. Sargent told the police that the revolver used was her own, and that after the shots had been fired she reloaded the weapon, a box of cartridges being found upon the table in the room.

Just what preceded the shooting has not been ascertained. Mr. and Mrs. Sargent were married, according to the woman, 11 years ago, but separated three years later. Since that time Sargent has worked in various places, going to Gloucester about two years ago, where he was employed in the Webster block. Mrs. Sargent, who says she has been in Boston most of the time since the separation, took a room at the Appleton street house two weeks ago. Sargent called upon his wife last night, remaining but a short time, and this evening made a second call. The two had not been in Mrs. Sargent's room long when the shots were fired and when the other inmates of the house rushed to the room to investigate, Sargent's lifeless body was lying upon the floor in a pool of blood. The police were called and placed the woman under arrest.

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## PARENT WILL NOT RESIGN.

QUEBEC, Feb. 3.—Premier Parent is not going to resign, unless he is beaten. Within the last few days he had apparently made up his mind that those members of his cabinet anxious to see him retire were strong enough to force him to do so. Accordingly he looked around for means of strengthening himself from the ranks of the party in opposition. Thursday, Feb. 2.—The great Napoleon musical play, "The Duchess of Danzig," as played over 500 nights to the capacity of the Lyric Theatre, London. Friday, Feb. 3.—The brilliant musical comedy, "Three Little Maids," from the Apollo and Prince of Wales Theatres, London. Saturday, Feb. 4.—The screamingly funny musical comedy, "The Earl and the Girl," nightly crowding the Adelphi Theatre, London. Monday, Feb. 13.—The latest vaudeville success, "The Catch of the Season."

Tuesday, Feb. 14.—Benefit of Mr. Harry Cole. The splendid London success, "Sergeant Brue," as now being played at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London. Wednesday, Feb. 15.—Farewell Performance. The great Gaiety Burlesque, "Faust Up-to-Date." Prices of admission, 75 cts, 50 cts and 25 cts.

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