

OTTAWA LETTER.

One of C. N. Armstrong's Measures Before the House,

Recalls the Days When He Figured Prominently in the Quebec Scandals With Pacaud and Others.

Sut Tarte, Laurier and the Other Grit Leaders Who Enjoyed the Bounty of Mr. Armstrong Have Now Turned Their Backs Upon Him

OTTAWA, April 2.—Mr. Lancaster and the other advocates of the farmer's cow made a long and earnest, but ineffectual fight for the railway cattle guard bill. It was a simple proposition that Mr. Lancaster brought before the house. He asked for a law making the railway responsible for all cattle which got across the cattle guards and were killed on the track, the farmer to be responsible for those killed on the crossings. Mr. Lancaster was supported by many members from the farming districts and opposed by the united interests of the railway companies. The farmers' members claim that under the existing law it is impossible to obtain damages from the company, because the cow owner must not only show that the company had been negligent, but that he himself had been vigilant. On the other hand the companies maintained that there is no cattle guard known to the world that will stop some kinds of cattle, or keep off any kind of cattle when they get into a panic at a railway crossing.

The Canadian Pacific solicitor, Mr. Creelman, appeared to plead the case of his company. It was about his first appearance as the successor of Judge Clark, who was long the familiar friend of the railway committee and thoroughly understood its various moods. Mr. Creelman is a New Brunswicker of Nova Scotia origin, and has come to his present position at an early age, which shows that he is a man of ability and resource. But he never tackled so hard a contract as he had when he faced the country members in the railway committee. They shouted questions to him a half dozen at a time; they interrupted with incredulous jeers when he told them how anxious he was that his company should do right by the farmers, so that Mr. Creelman was led to observe that he did not find it much use to discuss the question in that court. The fact is that the railway committee is probably the most tumultuous legislative body north of the equator. No member is safe to speak there more than five minutes, and unless he han-

mers right at the point, he is not allowed even that long. The consequence is that only members much interested in the question try to speak, and they throw themselves into it with great impetuosity, as if it were a matter of life and death, and so it is for the measures, for in the course of two hours yesterday three bills were thrown out after impassioned discussions which Mr. Hyman, the chairman, struggled hard but vainly to keep within the bounds of ordinary decorum. Mr. Tarte has contributed to the confusion of the committee by building in his new wing a new committee room, which is a perfect whispering gallery. The voice is a great instrument in this room. It strikes the opposite wall, rebounds and goes reverberating back and forth while other sounds originate, and the whole place becomes a hunting ground for echoes. Probably the railway committee room in which 130 members meet for alleged deliberation has the worst acoustic properties of any chamber built in modern times.

Various amendments were proposed to the cattle guard bills, but none of them seem to meet the case. In the west they have no railway fences or fences of any kind, and the conditions do not apply to any law that prevails in the east. The railway people say that they are doing their best to find a cattle guard which will keep cattle out, and that no farmer has a greater interest than the railway owners in keeping the track clear. While the farmer may lose his cow by contact with the moving train, too often the cow gets in her work of destruction and throws the train off the track. The railway cannot make the farmer pay for a wrecked train, and a dead engineer. Moreover, the train men would like to make time, and in the night it is painful and nervous work watching out for live stock, and therefore the companies have a larger interest than anybody else in keeping the cattle off their right of way. Any man who can produce a cattle guard that will head off all the brachy steers will be entitled to a gold medal and large remuneration.

Mr. Creelman threw out a suggestion that there were farmers anxious to sell their cattle at a good price, who sometimes tried the experiment of making a sale to the railway, but this suggestion was howled down by the representatives of the horny handed. Mr. Blair, as minister of railways, was compelled to take sides and concluded to plead for delay. If the committee would give him a year he would have a railway commission, and the commission would study the cattle guard question in the hope of determining what is the right cure. Then a law could be made making the companies responsible for all loss occasioned by their failure to use the right cattle guard. In the end it came to a vote whether the delay should be allowed. Mr. Lancaster and his friends rallied in force, but they were not strong enough and Mr. Blair's proposition was adopted by a majority of eight.

At the same meeting, with less than an hour's discussion, a bill to incorporate the Montreal Bridge Co. was

thrown out by a considerable majority. This company proposed to construct a bridge across the St. Lawrence, at Montreal. It was one of C. N. Armstrong's undertakings and until now has had the support of Mr. Prefontaine, ex-minister of finance, and representative in the house of commons of two constituencies. Mr. Prefontaine holds two-thirds of the stock of this bridge company, and yet it was he who called upon the committee to vote the concern out of existence. This is apparently because Mr. Prefontaine has withdrawn his interest from the Armstrong company, and is going in with a rival concern connected with a United States railway.

The solicitor for the company gave some explanation, stating that this company has recently spent \$50,000 in making plans and other preliminary work and only asked for the usual concession of an extension of time. He asked for another chance to make further explanation, but was vociferously refused. A motion to adjourn was also made and was rejected. The charter must now lapse. The project was to build a \$6,000,000 bridge and to obtain a million and a half in subsidies. The promoter of the rival concern says he does not want any subsidy. He may hear something more about this thing later, for a company which wants no subsidy is something of a novelty. Some years ago there was a project for building a bridge over the Ottawa at the end of Bank street by a company which wanted no subsidy. The bill was rejected in favor of the former project, and was not further subsidized. It was said then that the Bank street concern had paralyzed the committee by making no demand for money, and that such innocence and independence could not be tolerated on Parliament Hill.

In the afternoon there was more budget debate, the discussion remaining with the young members. Mr. Pringle of Cornwall, who succeeds a grit member, as an addition to the speaking strength of the house, Cornwall is a considerably large town, and Mr. Pringle is a strong national policy man. While ministers are boasting that the industries of the country are all prosperous, Mr. Pringle points to one in Cornwall where a quarter of a million dollars has been invested and lost, and where the factory is closed down. This woolen mill, owned by Sir George Stephen, has been compelled to close down, much to the loss of the Cornwall people. Mr. Pringle contends that at present four million dollars worth of cottons are imported which should be taken his stand against the one sided preference.

Neither is Mr. Lavell, the clever member for Leeds and Grenville. Mr. Lavell is a young man, who captured the seat held in the last parliament by Mr. Frost of the great firm of Frost & Wood, with establishments at Smith's Falls, and is a member of a national policy man himself, especially in respect to farm machinery. The tariff on this class of goods suited him as the old duty was maintained and the duty on raw material was reduced. But Mr. Lavell, who takes his place, is an all-round national policy man. He accepted on the part of Mr. Fraser's challenge to any opposition member to say that he was opposed to the Fielding preference on British goods. Mr. Lavell is dead opposed to it; not that he is averse to Canadian exhibitions of loyalty to the motherland, or to Canadian sacrifices for the Empire. On the contrary he holds that the Canadian content which has been maintained and paid for by the people of Canada, and that Canada should continue to contribute to the defence of the Empire. He strenuously denounces the government which can find no money to transport and equip our troops, but has plenty of funds to build useless public works and to subsidize unwise men contractors. He does not believe in paying for defence by the sacrifice of Canadian industries. He believes that imperial defence of Canada should be rewarded by Canadian defence of the Empire, and that Canadian preference to England should be rewarded by English preference to Canadian goods.

Mr. Turgeon of Gloucester made the first speech in French of the budget debate. It was mostly devoted to a defence of Mr. Blair's Intercolonial railway management, and went to show that although there was a pretty big deficit this year, the late government at one time had large deficits also. Mr. Turgeon appears to be satisfied that all the railroads are getting rich and do as well as other ministers did in times when the railroads of the continent were going into the hands of receivers. Mr. Turgeon's French was followed with indistinct care by several English speaking members from the maritime provinces. Mr. Russell, Mr. Flint, Mr. Hughes of Prince Edward Island, Mr. Johnston of Cape Breton, Mr. Copp of Digby are among the members who are talking lessons from a French master. They like a little practice in following French speeches in the chamber. Mr. Tarte's Patrie mentions the circumstance that these supporters of the government are acquiring a knowledge of French as one of the proofs that the French language is making headway in parliament. That journal adds that the student members are making incredible progress and that before the session was over, some of them will address the house in their newly acquired language. If that programme is carried out with due diligence beforehand, one may safely promise the debutant a fuller house than ever he had before in his parliamentary career.

OTTAWA, April 4.—Col. Sam Hughes has been to Africa with the Canadian boys and knows what their conduct was in camp and in the field. He is the only member of parliament who was there, and loses no opportunity to contradict and correct any statements appearing in English or foreign papers, attributing misconduct to his countrymen. Yesterday he had to make two plunges into the subject because the Speaker, by close construction of the rules of the house, headed him off

first time. In the end Col. Sam got his work in and made it clear that the Canadians did not steal the boots from any dead Boers. The Boers robbed themselves of their boots in order to steal upon the foe, and were killed in their sock feet.

Mr. Bickerdike, who has been ill at his home in Montreal, took his seat yesterday and began operations by asking the house to send the Montreal bridge bill back to the committee for further consideration. This is the measure which the railway committee threw out at the instance of Mr. Prefontaine and Mr. Madore, who are now interested in a rival concern with American capital behind it. Mr. Bickerdike is a government supporter, but probably does not belong to the Prefontaine wing. At all events he considers that the company which claims to have expended \$50,000 should have an opportunity to state its case more fully than it was allowed to do in the committee the other day.

Mr. Madore, Mr. Geoffrion, and many Quebec members strenuously objected to this recommendation. They made a particular point of the fact that this was one of C. N. Armstrong's measures, and that anything with which he was connected ought to be condemned on its face. Mr. Armstrong is clearly not persona grata with the liberal members from Quebec, and it is possible that his day of grace is about over. Time was when he was a promoter and contractor of great prominence and importance in Quebec, and the politicians who now denounce him were his intimate friends. It was Mr. Armstrong who projected and nearly completed the Bale de Chaleurs railway. It was he who devised the great scheme of the Atlantic and Lake Superior line which was to connect the western lakes with the seaboard. He was the promoter and organizer of the English company which undertook to establish a steamship line between Bristol and Canada, with Paspébiac as the terminus, a scheme which came to a disaster with the voyage of the Gaspe. That ship drifted around with the ice for many weeks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but was not more helpless or more exposed to frost and cold than Mr. Armstrong and his companions are at the present moment.

It was pointed out in yesterday's discussion that the Bridge company's bill had been before the country in some shape for nearly ten years and therefore did not deserve any further attention at this time. Ten or twelve years takes us back to a period which is quite uninteresting to the present generation of leaders. It recalls a bright winter day in Quebec city when Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Langelier, a brother to the present judge, and to one of Mr. Mercier's colleagues, had a financial conference. Both the meeting adjourned at Mr. Pacaud, then and now manager of the Laurier organ in Quebec, then and now political organizer in his district, became a party to the negotiations. When Mr. Pacaud retired he carried with him five checks for \$20,000 each, payable to his own order, and signed C. N. Armstrong. When Mr. Langelier had gone he had arranged with Mr. Armstrong for the payment to the latter by the province of \$75,000, on a claim that Mr. Armstrong had for work on the Bale de Chaleurs railway. It was out of this subsidy that the \$100,000 went to Mr. Pacaud.

This is not the first toll that had been paid to Mr. Pacaud out of the subsidies for this line. As he really stood on Mr. Armstrong was asked to return some five per cent. of each sum that was paid him on the project estimate. Then men who built the Temiscouata railway testified that they had to do the same thing. But that is another story. Mr. Armstrong's claim, thus settled by the payment of \$75,000 less the amount which he was compelled to hand over to Mr. Pacaud, was a disputed one. The Mercier government would admit no indebtedness. Mr. Armstrong claimed over \$200,000. But he was willing to accept a net sum of \$75,000 because it had to be paid in nothing. He insisted that Pacaud's \$100,000 was taken out of him. Pacaud claimed that Mr. Armstrong willingly gave it to him as a reward for his assistance in securing the other \$75,000. Mr. Casgrain and other Quebec public men maintained that it was really stolen out of the treasury of the province, for if Mr. Armstrong would take \$75,000 and abandon his claim that was all the province need to have paid.

Mr. Pacaud was able to show that he did not take the money all for himself. It was proved that a large part of it was used to retire notes given by Sir Wilfrid Laurier's election campaign in 1881. Mr. Tarte was one of the beneficiaries in this distribution. The name was on the list, and the part of the money went to elect him to parliament, where he desired to go in order to expose the McGreevy scandal. This is one of the humors of Mr. Tarte's career.

Other names to the notes were those of Mr. Mercer and some of his colleagues. Mr. Pacaud himself, the present Judge Langelier, and some distinguished senators. Some of the money went to build houses for prominent politicians, and one \$5,000 check was sent to New Brunswick, where Mr. Blair accepted it and caused a large portion to be used in the endeavor to elect Mr. Thompson, whom he has since appointed to the senate.

All these men who on their own showing, or the showing of Mr. Pacaud, enjoyed the bounty of Mr. Armstrong, in those great days, have turned their backs upon him. He is no longer convenient for the transfer of \$100,000 deposits from the public treasury to the political campaign fund. Other men have succeeded in that position, and the larger treasury of the dominion has been made available for the operations. Bigger transactions than the Bale de Chaleurs railway scheme are now taking place and other men succeed Mr. Armstrong in the functions of intermediary. He cannot get a respectful hearing for an extension of time for a charter on an undertaking which has already cost him \$50,000.

When the vote came on the question of sending the matter back to the committee, to give the case further hear-

ing, all the opposition voted with Mr. Bickerdike. Nine supporters of the government broke away and voted with the minority, but the motion was defeated by a majority of 22. That is probably the end of Mr. Armstrong's bridge company.

The debate on the budget still lingers, but is due to close next Tuesday. Some of the best speakers in the house have been holding themselves back for the last part of the debate, but the discussion yesterday contains some elements of interest. Mr. Scott, who succeeds Mr. Davin, is not a protectionist. He follows Mr. MacLaren of Huntington, and agrees with him that he will not support the government if the duties are increased. They both demand a decrease, and Mr. Scott says that he supports this government with its high tariff only because he knows that the other party would not make it any lower if this government were defeated. We have now heard from five members in that strain. Mr. Edwards, the Ottawa lumberman; Mr. Rose, the ex-minister; Mr. Fraser of Gushyboro, who is very mild in his suggestions of the need of reform; Mr. Scott and Mr. MacLaren. There is no doubt that all of these with the possible exception of the man from Regina, will support the government even though the duties shall be doubled, and therefore the ministers are not breaking their hearts over these mild protests.

On the other side of the house, Mr. Taylor, the chief whip, makes a strong protectionist speech and has gone a good deal into detail in his reflections upon government extravagance. Dr. Roche of Manitoba, who is an extremely forcible, neat and emblematic speaker, did not spare Mr. Sifton politically or personally, in his statement of the situation in the west. Mr. Roche is of the opinion that while Mr. Sifton has been proclaiming to the western farmers that he will give absolutely free duties on agricultural implements as soon as he can, the organ of the government in the west has passed into the control of Mr. Sifton, through the handsome contributions of a firm of protected farm machinery manufacturers. Mr. Sifton is a pretty heavy campaign manager, and has the handling of a large amount of patronage in the Yukon, where dealings are hard to investigate. His officers come down to Ottawa occasionally, and some of them have been very much wanted in the public accounts committee, but like Mr. Tarte's foremen, they are always called away suddenly on Yukon business about the time the summonses are issued.

OTTAWA, April 5.—The minister of agriculture is the first minister of the cabinet to talk on the budget since Sir Richard Cartwright, and he confined himself to the work of his own department, that is, to say to the census and agriculture. Much in Mr. Fisher's own census requires explanation and some things demand an apology. It would be appropriate to a budget speech for the minister to tell why he has spent \$475,000 on a census which is not nearly completed, whereas no previous census of Canada cost \$600,000. He passed lightly over that and had nothing to say about the Cote circulars or the ridiculous succession of picturesque blunders that Mr. Blue has made. It ought to be possible for a census commissioner to handle the ordinary rules of arithmetic, but Mr. Fisher did not make that a pre-requisite. Consequently Mr. Blue's reports have required a great deal of correction. Mr. Broder got to the root of the matter when he advised Mr. Fisher never again to allow an Ontario government to unload a superfluous officer upon him. George Johnson, the government statistician, knows how to take the census correctly, and he is still in the public service. Mr. Blue was unnecessary and he is costing a half a million dollars, too much for a census that even the government supporters in the house condemn.

Mr. Fisher's time was largely occupied with an analysis of the census enumeration of ten years ago. He has spent a few thousand dollars sending agents of his own into places where he thought good material could be found to investigate the census of 1891. They have procured for him reports from many parishes in Que-

bec, to show that the enumerators of 1891 included in their lists the names of people who had been absent several years. Mr. Fisher read long lists of names in this class. They were mostly from Quebec, and in many cases he was unable to give the name of his informant. In no case could he give the name of the enumerator whose return was attacked. One of the guests who made the investigation was a government supporter in the house of commons. Some investigation was ordered in Ontario, but Mr. Fisher found less sign of padding in that province. In Goderich, which appeared to be the strongest case he could procure, he discovered thirty-seven names of persons who, according to his agent, had left the town before the census was taken. In another town of 3,000 people, he found forty names duplicated. The highest percentage of padding reported in Ontario was two per cent, in one village.

Now let us suppose that ten years from this date, or 1912, an investigation is held into Mr. Fisher's census of last year. Would it be an astonishing thing if the names of 20 or 30 people in the towns of Windsor or Woodstock, or places of that size, should be found who would not be known to the investigator. It may even be that as much as ten families in some Nova Scotia and New Brunswick towns have been counted after they have left that place. It is more than probable that at least 30 or 40 young people in each considerable town have been counted more than once. That is to say, in the place where their parents live and in the house where they resided when the census was taken. So far as one can see there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the census taken in 1891 was padded more than the census of last year.

Mr. Fisher admitted that the instructions given to the enumerators absolutely forbade any such padding. Mr. Johnson took all possible precautions against it. Mr. Broder, who had charge of the census in the Eastern part of the province, had to conduct the census in more than a year. It may be that some of the commissioners in order to earn more added the names of people who should not be counted. There is a still stronger inducement for Mr. Fisher's enumerators to do the same. He has twice as many enumerators and those who remember both censuses can judge which class of officers is more likely to commit fraud and perjury.

Then there is another curious thing about this padded census of 1891. Only last year Mr. Fisher was called upon to explain why Mr. Cote was allowed to send out circulars to the parishes asking them for names of persons who had left the country within a year. Mr. Fisher explained that in the census of 1891 a great many persons had been left out of the count who ought to have been included. This year he is arguing that the census of 1891, taken as a whole, was padded in Quebec, whereas last year he contended that it was too much contracted. After all the census of 1891 is over and done with, Mr. Fisher has a great deal more reason to investigate the work of his own enumerators and his own commissioners than he has to overhaul work ten years old by sending unknown and prejudiced agents, not sworn to do their duty, to deal with the state of affairs which existed twelve years ago, and to make reports upon hearsay evidence.

I do not know whether Prof. Robertson, who is the main man in the department of agriculture, has a saving sense of honor. If he has he must be entertained with the discussions that are taking place over cold storage and the credit due to various ministers. So far as cold storage and encouragement of the king to the cheese industry go, the actual minister of agriculture is a cow, and has been, Prof. Robertson himself. He manages Mr. Fisher as he managed his predecessors, and will manage his successors. Mr. Robertson is a statesman and a politician in the best sense. He knows how to use the public men for the advantage of the country.

Mr. Fisher makes argument to show that the large increase in farm ex-

(Continued on Page Seven.)

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