

THE TREADGOLD COMMISSION.

INQUIRY.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON inquired :

Whether the commission recently issued to Judge Britton and Mr. Bell to investigate the Treadgold concession contains a provision fixing the amount of remuneration to be paid to the commissioners. If not, has the remuneration been otherwise settled, and in either case, how much does it amount to ?

He said : Yesterday, when this order was called I made some observations in reference to an unseemly occurrence which the newspapers had reported from Dawson in connection with the sitting of the Treadgold Commission. I find in yesterday's newspaper there is another incident of the same character, showing conclusively that this investigation is not shedding any lustre upon the bench of Canada inasmuch as one of the members of the bench is a member of that commission. The report of the Ottawa 'Free Press' is as follows :

Graham Campbell offered a most flagrant insult to Commissioner Britton. The latter had refused to order the production of certain papers at the suggestion of Mr. Campbell, saying he had no authority to do so. 'You have no authority' Campbell insolently observed, 'What authority have you.' 'I have the authority' replied Mr. Britton, 'to commit you for contempt.' 'I have shown no contempt' Campbell muttered, 'I have considered you beneath contempt.' Commissioner Bell heard 'he sotto voce insult, and Campbell was called back and given a verbal castigation. He would have been committed but for the intervention of Judge Britton.

As that is reported, it does not add anything to Judge Britton's credit.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—What has that to do with the question the hon. gentleman has put ?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—It has to do with the Treadgold Commission. I am quite free, in connection with that, to refer to the Treadgold concession and how the investigation of it has been proceeding. I am asking a question with regard to that subject and calling attention to these occurrences that are almost daily reported in the papers in despatches from the Yukon, showing that the judge is getting into collision with people there.

Hon. Mr. TEMPLEMAN—Might I ask my hon. friend to point out wherein that detracts from Justice Britton's position or his fitness to adjudicate on the case? Wherein does that detract from Judge Britton—

the fact that a man named Campbell insulted him ?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—This is reported from an unfriendly source to Mr. Campbell, and when Mr. Campbell asked what authority the commissioner had, it was his place to explain his authority and not to have told him : 'I have authority to commit you for contempt.' I think it was the place of the commissioner to make that explanation.

Hon. Mr. TEMPLEMAN—What explanation ? Explain his commission to a man named Campbell ?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—Certainly.

Hon. Mr. TEMPLEMAN—I have the advantage of my hon. friend inasmuch as I know Graham Campbell.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—It is the fashion with some people, if anybody differs from them, to impugn them at once. I do not say my hon. friend does that always, but that is the view that is running through his interruption. Mr. Clarke—the notorious Joseph Clarke as he is called in the telegrams to the 'Free Press,' was a candidate in the last election for the Yukon. It is common for some newspapers to detract from the respectability of a man who differs from them, and say at once he is notorious, and that he is not the man he ought to be. My view is that it was the duty of the commissioner to have made an explanation to Mr. Campbell, and not to have flung his authority in his face that he could commit him for contempt. I only mention it in this connection to show that it is unseemly that a judge should be placed in a position of that kind, where he is becoming embroiled with the citizens of the Yukon. My questions, however, bears incidentally on this, and therefore I have a right to refer to it. Even if I had not given this notice, it would not have been out of order to make this reference to the incident. My question bears on another point, and it is this: I want to ascertain the remuneration that Judge Britton and Mr. Bell are to receive for their services. I am anxious to ascertain that from this view: These gentlemen are sent there to adjudicate on a question between the government of Canada and their opponents, and between the Treadgold concessionaires and the owners of certain rights