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## TWO SESSIONS OF THE POTATO ENQUIRY WERE HELD YESTERDAY

Hon. J. A. Murray on His Request Gave Evidence—William Cruikshank and J. H. Crockett Were the Other Witnesses—Adjournment Until Next Thursday for Purpose of Recalling W. B. Tennant.

When the potato enquiry resumed yesterday morning the first witness was Hon. J. A. Murray, minister of agriculture at the time the contribution of potatoes was made to Great Britain and Belgium, who appeared before the Commissioner and asked to be heard.

Mr. Hughes tried to make capital out of the fact that he had spoken to Mr. Powell about having Mr. Murray on the stand, but had to admit that he had never sent any request to Mr. Murray to appear. Two other witnesses were examined yesterday, William Cruikshank and J. H. Crockett. At the conclusion of Mr. Crockett's evidence Mr. Hughes asked for an adjournment until next Thursday as he wished to have W. B. Tennant recalled and to call one of the firm of Taylor and White.

Morning Session.  
Hon. J. A. Murray said at the time potatoes were bought and shipped to England and Belgium he was acting minister of land and mines in addition to minister of agriculture, and the details of the purchasing and shipping of the potatoes had been left very largely in the hands of J. B. Daggett, secretary of the department of agriculture.

He had given instructions to Mr. Daggett to distribute the orders through the province and not to overbuy. There had been 40,000 barrels shipped to Great Britain, and about 15,000 barrels to Belgium. When the shipment to Belgium had been completed there remained on hand about 16,500 barrels, and the department had undertaken to dispose of this surplus. From the records of the department he knew some had gone to Cuba, some to Halifax and some had been disposed of in St. John. He had authorized Mr. Clements to sell some of these potatoes and probably had authorized J. C. Manser to act for the department, although he had no recollection of it.

He had then Mr. Daggett was purchasing from B. Frank Smith, but did not know of the letter of credit given to him until after he, witness, had made his statement in the house that this had not been done. The first time he heard of it was when Mr. Daggett, who had been ill, called his attention to it. Mr. Murray stated that he would not have given such a letter of credit himself to any person. Witness was not prepared to say the surplus was the result of this letter of credit, but thought it might be attributed to the fact that quite a quantity of potatoes which had been purchased, but which Mr. Daggett was not expecting delivery to be made, had come in.

He had been given to understand by Mr. Daggett and Mr. Colby Smith that the overseas shipments would take care of all, but the culls, and he did not know until after these shipments had been made.

The witness stated that he was not familiar with the names of the firms to whom the potatoes were shipped in Cuba and when shown a list of the names asked Mr. Hughes if Mr. Daggett had said these were not bona fide sales. To this Mr. Hughes replied that Mr. Daggett said they were bona fide sales. Mr. Murray said this statement might have been made up at his request but not under his direction. He knew the goods had been shipped to Cuba and he also knew that all the payments had not come from there.

Mr. Hughes then asked witness about the payment of \$5,000 to A. C. Smith and Co. on April 30, 1915. Mr. Murray stated that Colby Smith had called him up and told him that he, Smith, needed money, and would like to get an advance on what the government owed the firm. Witness told him that as he had nothing by which he could check the account it would be impossible for the department to make any payment. He had however seen Mr. Daggett and found out that more than \$5,000 was owing to A. C. Smith & Co., and he had arranged for personally advancing the money on the understanding that it would be repaid when a final settlement of the account was made.

Shortly after that he had sent Mr. Robertson to A. C. Smith & Co. to make up the statement, and instructed Mr. Daggett to arrange for a final settlement, and his understanding of the matter was that when the cheque for \$5,311.16 was issued it was for the full claim and the \$5,000 advanced was to be deducted from this cheque. He knew nothing of subsequent drafts on the department nor the turning over to A. C. Smith & Co. of a draft from Cuba of \$806.91.

The payment of \$1,500 was a personal indebtedness of his to the firm and had nothing to do with the potato account. He had instructed Mr. Daggett to deposit this amount to the credit of A. C. Smith & Co., and get from the bank his note for that amount, but the payment had nothing whatever to do with any government account and should not have gone on the payment of any draft of A. C. Smith & Co.

He understood that A. C. Smith & Co. claimed there still was an amount due them, but the settlement had been left with Mr. Daggett. There had been some irregularities which had come to his notice after the transaction had been completed, and he considered the loss suffered due to business incapacity on the part of several.

Mr. Hughes asked if witness included Mr. Daggett in this number, and he replied that the giving of the letter of credit to B. Frank Smith was hardly good business. The loss had been called to his attention by the late Premier Clarke, and witness had felt very badly over it. He had discussed the matter several times with Mr. Clarke, and finally the latter had made the suggestion that the shortage be made up from the party funds. Witness thought the suggestion a good one, and said he did not know of any better use for party funds. Later he had been told by Mr. Daggett that a note for the amount of the shortage had been obtained from A. C. Smith & Co., but he did not remember being present when the note was signed or having told Mr. Colby Smith that his firm would not have to pay the note, but might have done so.

This note from A. C. Smith & Co. had not been removed. There had been a renewal signed, but not used. The witness knew the note had been paid, but did not know for some time that the money had come from Mr. Sumner, and only knew of Mr. Tennant's connection with it from street talk. He had never been told that Mr. Hughes had made a contribution. He was told the shortage had been made up from party funds, and he had never had anything to do with either the collection or disbursement of such funds.

Questioned by Mr. Hughes in regard to a statement made on the floors of the house that nothing had been kept back so far as the disposition of the money was concerned, witness said that was true. So far as the money received was concerned, if the province got the money he did not see that it mattered whether it all came from the sale of potatoes or not.

Afternoon Session.  
On the resumption of the enquiry in the afternoon, Mr. Murray was asked by Mr. Hughes what connection J. S. Eagles had with the matter. Witness said that Mr. Eagles acted for Taylor and White in the transaction. Mr. Powell then asked the witness and in answer to questions by him Mr. Murray stated that he believed the sum of \$9,831.16 for which the official cheque had been issued was the full amount of the A. C. Smith & Co. claim, and the \$5,000 which he had advanced was to come out of that amount and it did come out of it. The settlement arrived at had been made on the suggestion of Mr. Clarke. Mr. Clarke was one of the cleanest and highest minded men he had ever met, and he did not think would suggest an account which was not right and proper.

The amount of the loss was made up by taking the number of barrels shipped at the price they were sold to the buyers, and making up what they would have brought had the consignees accepted them. Questioned as to whether he would consider it right to take money from the Valley Railway to pay the loss, witness answered no.

The next witness was William Cruikshank, who at the time of the transaction was deputy provincial treasurer. Mr. Cruikshank said so far as he knew there were only two payments made on account of the surplus potatoes to the finance department. One was \$23,861 for the potatoes, and the other was \$602.50 from the C. P. R., the latter item a refund on demurrage.

J. H. Crockett was called, and questioned about the payment of \$10,000 to the Gleaner. Mr. Crockett said he had received from H. W. Woods, party organizer, two sums of \$5,000 each in August and July of 1915. Questioned as to why he should get the money Mr. Crockett smiled and said, well, you know the Gleaner, like all party papers, has to be supported. He did not know who the money came from, but supposed it was from the party organization. He had been notified to meet Mr. Woods and had done so. On each occasion Mr. Woods had handed him an envelope with \$5,000 in it.

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He was not aware that Mr. Jones or Mr. Tennant had anything to do with the paying of the money.

Shown a cheque of A. C. Smith & Co. for \$250, bearing his endorsement, witness declared he did not remember anything about it, although the signature was his all right.

This concluded the witnesses for that day, and Mr. Hughes asked for an adjournment until next Thursday, as he wanted to have W. B. Tennant again on the stand.

Commissioner McQueen then adjourned the hearing until Thursday next, at 10.30 a.m.

Mrs. Louise Tufts has arrived from Boston and is visiting her sister, Mrs. Thomas Dean, Wall Street.

### DIED.

BARNES.—Entered into rest, Dec. 12, 1918, George Henry Barnes, in the 83rd year of his age. Funeral service at 215 Princess St., on Friday evening at 8 o'clock. Interment at Sussex on Saturday afternoon at 2.30 o'clock, from the home of Mrs. W. W. Stockton.

DUNHAM.—On December 12th, Helen S. Dunham, only child of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Dunham, 20 Kennedy street, leaving her parents to mourn. Funeral Saturday afternoon from her late residence, service at 2 o'clock.

FORBES.—On December 12th, at his residence, East St. John, William J. Forbes, aged 68 years, leaving one daughter to mourn. Funeral from the late residence Saturday afternoon at 3.30 o'clock.



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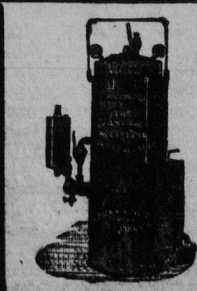
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