

THE HERALD

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Ottawa Weekly Letter.

THE GROWING TIME.

Fielding Wants \$72,604 463

For 9 Months, At the Rate of \$96,800,000 a Year, Whereas in 1897 \$43,000,000 Was Sufficient—Strange Career of Philip Wagner—Convicted of Fraud and Theft While in Office—Five Times in the Criminal Court and Served Two Terms With Hard Labor.

Dismissed from the Service by the Present Government.

When Oliver Becomes Minister He Rewards Wagner With Two Offices and Double the Former Salary—After Which Wagner Devotes Much Time to Machine Politics, and Supplies Galicians With Campaign Beer—Majority of Parliament Votes to Retain Wagner in Office, and also Commends the Moncton Land Deal—How the Department of Marine Buys 270 dozen Steel Files Which Were Shipped to Young Prefontaine for His Saw Mill—Strubbe Bought Them For \$2,315, And Turned Them Over to the Government for \$4,786.

OTTAWA, June 23, 1906.

During the past week the House of Commons has voted more supply, made some progress with the Lord's Day bill, and voted down several motions censuring improper transactions. The Arctic investigating committee has proceeded under difficulties owing to the refusal of the majority to allow the investigation to proceed in certain directions. The Public Accounts Committee had made discoveries which should be of interest to the unhappy tax payer. WAGNER THE CAMPAIGNER.

One of the motions voted down in the House of Commons related to Philip Wagner, whose dramatic history may be recorded here. Philip Wagner is a man of European birth, familiar with several languages, also with a gift for winning the confidence of ignorant people, as well as the favor of a certain type of politicians. Previous to 1899 Wagner had been residing in Edmonton, and according to the statement made by Mr. Oliver last year, he worked for the government in such a way as to make himself quite offensive to the other party. His sphere of influence was among the Galician and Russian people, whose language he spoke, and whom he persuaded at election times.

WAGNER THE PUBLIC OFFICER.

In September, 1898, Mr. Oliver, now Minister of the Interior, and then representing Alberta, had Wagner appointed government interpreter at \$30 a month. It would seem that he was at the same time carrying on a tailoring business, and through the same influence was engaged to supply uniforms for the government. Wagner entered upon his duties in January, 1899. By the next year his salary was increased to \$40 a month and he wanted more. In the meantime he had already begun to take advantage of the confidence of the simple Galician emigrants. During the second year Abbe Olaszewski, Catholic missionary at Beaver Lake, wrote to the government making complaint that Wagner was abusing the confidence of the poor Galician. He did not assist them at the land office. He had taken \$275 from one man to put in the bank and had kept it himself. He had sent \$729 to Hamburg for another Galician to have changed, and kept the proceeds

He had received money from many immigrants to make their payments upon land entries and used it for his own purposes, cheating the ignorant victim by giving him a useless slip of stamped paper.

PLUNDERING THE STRANGERS.

In the spring of 1900 Wagner was accused of stealing \$75 given him by an immigrant to be sent to his wife. This time he escaped conviction. The same thing happened when he was charged with stealing \$10 from an immigrant farmer. In November 1900 the Secretary of the Interior Department had occasion to write to Wagner to remind him that he had taken \$7 long before from an immigrant to pay the freight on baggage. The money had not been paid and the baggage was still held by the steamship company. Five times the Department wrote to Wagner on this matter, the letters growing more threatening at the end of the year 1900. Twice Wagner declared that he had forwarded the money, giving different dates, and both statements evidently false. He seems never to have paid it and finally the Government admitted liability, paid the money and the Galician family got their clothes sometime before the end of the winter.

OLIVER TO THE RESCUE.

At the beginning of 1901, Mr. Oliver, who had been assisted by Wagner in the elections of 1900, wrote asking for an increase of pay for his friend. The Department replied that Wagner's dealings with the Galicians were not so satisfactory as to justify the demand. In March 1901 Wagner was committed for trial for stealing the money mentioned above as sent to Hamburg for exchange. About the same time the commissioner of immigration in the West said he had received information which compelled him to recommend Wagner's dismissal. It may be said here that the jury disagreed on the charge of stealing.

WAGNER CONVICTED AND SENT TO PRISON.

Two other criminal cases began with information laid in March and came to trial at Edmonton in July 1901. On July 18, Wagner was convicted of inducing an ignorant Galician to sign a lien note for \$25 under a false pretence. The foreigner, who could not speak English, gave Wagner \$25 and the note also in connection with the purchase of a cow, in which transaction he had sought Wagner's help. For this fraud Wagner was sentenced to two months in prison with hard labor. The next day he was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labor for stealing \$80 given him by a confiding fellow countryman to deposit in the bank.

DISMISSED FROM OFFICE.

Meanwhile the Government had been purchasing uniforms from Wagner and held up the pay for some of them pending the settlement of claims. In April, 1901, the department of justice at Ottawa was seeking information and evidence from the interior department records to assist in the prosecution of Wagner for retaining some of money received from confiding Galicians to pay for home-steads. The interior department reported that Wagner had sent no money and no application from Wagner. But as the officer was in jail before this prosecution reached a head the department of interior was content with dismissing Wagner. The local commissioner was ordered to notify Wagner that his official career had ended May 31st, 1901. Commissioner Smith replied that notice had been given at once, but Wagner nevertheless continued to draw pay until the end of June or a few days before he went to hard labor at Fort Saskatchewan. This was because Mr. Oliver again interposed and declared, apparently on Wagner's high authority, that his friend had never received notice.

WAGNER NOW GETS TWO OFFICES.

After his release Wagner returned to Edmonton, where he resumed business and politics. He was there during the election of 1904, and in April 1905, when Mr. Oliver became minister of the interior, in less than three months after Mr. Oliver became minister he had Wagner appointed, not to one office at \$30 or \$40, but to two, at \$25 and 75, a total of \$100 a month. Mr. Wagner's dealings with the Galician homesteaders had been so satisfactory to the minister that he was made land agent. His treatment of the poor immigrants was so good that by a re-appoint-

ment as government interpreter WAGNER AND OLIVER IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION.

In the provincial election of Alberta in November, 1905 Mr. Wagner and Mr. Oliver took an active part, though Sir Wilfrid Laurier had given a solemn undertaking in parliament that government officials in the West should not be allowed to interfere in politics. An affidavit sent to the government and afterwards read in the house, showed that Wagner devoted his whole time for three months to campaign work among the Galicians. A foreign boarding housekeeper affirmed that he had been engaged by Wagner and well paid to gather a crowd of Galicians at two campaign meetings and afterwards to supply them at his own house with two barrels of beer on each occasion. So prominent was Wagner on this occasion that Mr. Oliver was asked about it at an Edmonton campaign meeting. The minister defiantly replied that Wagner was in public employ, and that though he had been in jail he was punished as much because he was a Liberal worker as for anything else. Yet the records show that Wagner was prosecuted by officials appointed by the government.

DECEIVING THE HOUSE.

Lastly, Mr. Oliver was guilty of deception when on March 14, 1906, he was asked in the House whether Philip Wagner, an employee of his Department, had even been convicted and sent to prison. Mr. Oliver's answer was "there is nothing on record in the Department of the Interior to show that P. Wagner had served any time in prison." Mr. Oliver had several days notice of this question and framed his answer deliberately. He knew of Wagner's imprisonment for he had discussed it a few weeks before at the public meeting at Edmonton. At the time that Wagner was tried at Edmonton, Mr. Oliver was trying to get the government to pay him for the time following his dismissal from the service. Because the House was not then informed of the fact Mr. Oliver made a substantially incorrect statement, taking advantage of the fact that the record was in the Department of Justice and not his own.

PARLIAMENT ENDORSES WAGNER.

It only remains to be said that on Tuesday George W. Fowler, M. P., for Kings New Brunswick, set forth all the above facts closing with the motion that Mr. Wagner should be forthwith dismissed, or if he denied the statements that an investigation be held in regard to them. Mr. Oliver opposed the motion, violently charged that the members supporting it were guilty of "gutter snipe politics" and asked the House to vote down the resolution. The majority of the House kindly did so on the usual party division.

THE GROWING TIME.

Mr. Fielding has brought down a second list of estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year beginning next month. As the dates are to be changed the period covered in these estimates is only nine months. The Finance Minister asks for \$5,987,916.71. In the main estimates he had taken \$87,936,547.70, making a total of \$72,604,464, which would be at the rate of \$96,805,752 for twelve months.

For the year closing with this month Mr. Fielding has estimated the expenditure at \$32,000,000 which shows an intention to increase the pace for the next nine months.

Let us take note of this growing time. For the ten years before the change of Government the outlay had varied from a little less than \$41,000,000 up to \$45,000,000. The following record shows what has happened since:

1897	\$42,972,755
1898	45,384,281
1899	51,542,635
1900	52,717,406
1901	57,982,868
1902	63,970,799
1903	61,746,871
1904	72,255,047
1905	78,804,138
1906	82,000,000
1907 estimated & voted	\$9,805,853

THE MONCTON RAKE OFF.

On Thursday evening the question of the Moncton land purchase already fully explained in this correspondence, was before the House. Mr. Ames of the St. Antoine division Montreal presented the case, was showing how the government had made a profit of \$3,500 on land which he purchased a few weeks ago before at a cost for land and expenses of \$5,975.

Mr. Emerson supported by the Finance Minister contended that the transaction was all right. At their request the House by a straight party majority endorsed the transaction.

A DEAL IN FILES.

Early this session curiosity was excited over an item in the Auditor's report showing that the Marine department had bought \$4,786.45 worth of tool steel and of files such as are used in saw mills and machine shops. The lowest price of these files went up \$14 per dozen. Tool steel cost 54 cents per pound. Not only was the price excessive but the order of 270 dozen of 3 240 instruments was surprisingly large. No one could understand what the Marine department intended to file with all these tools. The public accounts committee called the deputy, the engineers, and other officers. All said that no requisition for these tools had come in and that the order was far beyond any prospective demand. They only knew that the order had been given and that they were asked to distribute the goods.

HOW THE FILES CAME TO CANADA.

Friday morning brought to the witness stand a Montreal lawyer, Mr. Busted—from whom Mr. Barker obtained some explanation. This is his testimony:

In the spring of 1904, Mr. Busted was asked by a firm in France to collect an account for some \$5,000 worth of files and steel against Roland Prefontaine, son of the Minister of Marine, and proprietor of a mill at Ste. Agathe. Young Prefontaine repudiated the order and refused to take the goods. The lawyer pointed out to his French clients that the process of collection might be tedious and costly. He spoke to Hon. Mr. Prefontaine asking him in vain to assist in effecting a settlement. Ultimately one Mr. Strubbe, of Montreal, told Mr. Busted that he would take the consignment if the firm would let him have the goods at half price, and would pay him a commission of \$500 besides. Rather than go on with the suit the exporters accepted the offer.

107 PER CENT PROFIT.

Having acquired the hardware for \$2,315.45, Mr. Strubbe immediately turned the goods over to Mr. Prefontaine's department for \$4,786.45, making a sudden profit of \$2,470.90, or 107 per cent. It will be seen that Mr. Strubbe, of Montreal, like Mr. Lodge, of Moncton, had a happy foresight. He judged beforehand that the Government would need all these files at that particular time, and would be willing to pay twice the price which the seller would accept. An ordinary man would not have known that the department needed exactly the supply of files that had been shipped for Roland Prefontaine's mill, needed them at the time when the purchase relieved the legal situation, and was prepared to pay a price which left with the middlemen more than half the total amount.

DIED

At Covehead on the 24th, inst. Thomas Power, aged 32 years. May his soul rest in peace.

Expelled from the Legislature.

Boston advises state that during a session, marked at times by unusual disorder, the Massachusetts House of Representatives, on the 21st, inst., voted to expel Frank J. Gethro of Boston, thus upholding the report of the committee on rules, which, after a long investigation of charges of bribery made in connection with the defeat of the anti-bucket shop bill, recommended Gethro's expulsion. The vote was 142 in favor of expulsion of 54 against. Later advice says that on Saturday, the expelled representative, Gethro, issued a remarkable statement. He confesses his guilt and further says that to avenge his expulsion he will expose every member of the house who had been connected in any bribery proceedings. Although Gethro does not mention any names, he states that several members of the legislature have received bribes, and he further says that his revelations will be of such a nature as to make the giving or taking of bribes impossible in the Massachusetts legislature in the future. Gethro's statement, which is a lengthy one, is here given in part:

"That I have made untruthful statements, I admit; that I have done wrong I confess; that I have been wronged—criminally wronged, I assert and will prove." Referring to the anti-bucket shop bill in which his action resulted in expulsion, Gethro says: "I agreed to buy republican votes, got the contract and bought the votes. In negotiating for certain votes I was refused—because I was given to understand I did not offer the full price. To force me to raise the offer some of those interested began to talk. The matter got to the grand jury and I was indicted. Then the investigating committee was appointed. I was told that if I stood firm the committee would see me unharmed. When, however, I sat on the floor of the house on Thursday afternoon and saw myself held up in scorn and heard my punishment demanded, I swore then and there to avenge my expulsion and ruin as soon and in such a way that never again in the Massachusetts legislature would a bribe be taken, offered or mentioned. For whatever wrong I have done to Massachusetts I shall atone as best I may, but in my degradation I am buoyed by the knowledge that I have done the state some service. If I may ruin the structure of infamy reared by those men, and it shall fall."

An unknown yacht and two trading schooners were sunk, and it is believed all on board were drowned in a terrific storm which struck near Port Monmouth, N. J., Saturday afternoon. Geo. S. Russell, of Freeport, saw the yacht capsized and sink.

This is the highest price ever paid for wool in this country 32 cents per lb, Jas. Eston & Co., Victoria Rowe.

The Prices.	
Butter, (fresh).....	0.19 to 0.20
Butter (salt).....	0.00 to 0.20
Calf skins.....	0.93 to 1.10
Ducks (per pair).....	0.80 to 1.00
Eggs, per doz.....	0.14 to 0.15
Fowls (per pair).....	1.00 to 1.25
Chickens (per pair).....	1.00 to 1.25
Flour (per cwt.).....	2.30 to 2.40
Hides.....	0.94 to 0.10
Hay, per 100 lbs.....	0.42 to 0.45
Hickory, per lb (sawed).....	0.63 to 0.07
Oatmeal (per cwt.).....	2.50 to 0.00
Potatoes (buyers price).....	0.22 to 0.25
Pork.....	0.08 to 0.81
Sheep pelts.....	0.75 to 1.00
Turnips.....	0.10 to 0.12
Turkeys (per lb).....	0.12 to 0.00
Geese.....	0.00 to 0.00
Blk. cats.....	0.46 to 0.48
Pruned hay.....	0.00 to 0.00
Straw.....	0.00 to 0.25

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The Sisters of Charity. Memramcook, June 6—31

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A. It's the pink of Perfection in the Christy Hat making. Only a few of them, so come early if you want one.

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It's the best American Hat that's sold in Charlottetown today, and twenty years' of hat experience tells us so.

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Grand Pilgrimage to St. Ann De Beupre, July 3rd.

A Grand Pilgrimage to St. Ann de Beupre presided by the Right Rev. T. Casey, Bishop of St. John, shall take place on July 3rd. Tickets from Point du Chene and back \$5.50. Passengers from the Island holding a ticket may obtain from any agent, a ticket to reach Point du Chene on the Standard certificate plan, namely: paying one fare to come, securing from the agent a certificate which shall be signed afterwards by one of the directors of the Pilgrimage, and the said certificate shall carry them back without further cost.

The Sisters of Charity. Memramcook, June 6—31

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