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REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1910

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OUR OTTAWA LETTER.

Petty Post Office Patronage

Ottawa, Feb. 6.—C. A. Magrath, Medicine Hat, in the course of the budget debate, made some extremely pertinent comments upon the management of the Post Office, more especially in the West. "I believe," he said, "that local post-babs should not be appointed as dispensers of post offices. If the people ask for a post office and select wisely but not well according to hon. gentlemen opposite, there as a gentleman in the west selected as a post-bab, as purveyors of post offices. I have evidence of this—any quantity of it. And I say that this is wrong. It is immaterial to me what government adopts that policy, I say that the sooner it is changed the better it will be for a young country like Canada. I would like to see the Postmaster General place more post office inspectors at work in the west. And when a petition for a post office is handed in, if the inspector, on looking over the ground, states that a post office should be established and that John Smith would be a good man to appoint as postmaster, that should settle the matter clear of politicians. That is what the country wants. I recently read letters from the Postmaster General last session in which he informs me that he had done certain things, and added a paragraph to the effect that he had done so at the request of a gentleman in the constituency whom he evidently constituted a dispenser of post-offices. I do not object to any one assisting in securing a post office; it is a matter of indifference to me who helps to get it or by whom it is secured so long as it is secured. I wonder if the Postmaster General (Mr. Lemieux) has the idea that unless he puts such a paragraph in his letters, I will go into my constituency and say to the people: 'I have got the Widow Jones this post office at the munificent sum of \$10 a year' so that they will think I am a wonderful individual or that I will try to impress the man who is keeping a stopping place at which the mail service passes once a week that I am a wonderful individual because I have succeeded in getting a service twice a week, where by he is able to sell double the amount of oats for the mail driver's horses, which gives him that additional profit. If that is the conception of the Postmaster General as to the duties of a public man in this country, I may say that I do not see eye to eye with him."

The Patronage System

Ottawa, Feb. 6.—Mr. G. E. Foster last week moved for the abolition of the patronage system. The resolution he asked the House to adopt was as follows: "That in the opinion of this house the prevailing system of party patronage constitutes a menace to honest and efficient government, incites to great waste of resources and extravagance of expenditures, tends inevitably to corrupt and lower the tone of public morals, and should forthwith be eliminated from our federal administration." The most striking thing in Mr. Foster's masterly speech was his massing of the number of appointments within the gift of the Government, and permitted by the patronage system. The list is: The Inside Civil Service—8,000 to 10,000. The Intercolonial—8,000 to 10,000. The Post Office—12,000 postmasters, 600 railway mail clerks. The Customs—Very numerous. The Inland Revenue—Also numerous. The Interior staff—Immigration branch, lands branch, Indian Branches—Department of Marine and Fisheries—500 to 600 employees in dredges alone, 800 at one point, Sorel, alone; 500 persons in Government steamers; fisheries inspectors, marine agents, lighthouse keepers, buoy keepers, etc., etc. Department of Agriculture—A large staff. Department of Public Works—A very large staff, and the men working on ten or twelve million dollars worth of works yearly. Altogether, the outside service must number about 30,000. The Transcontinental Railway Commission—A very large employer. The Railway Commission. A vast number of temporary commissions. The Judiciary—Almost every judge is appointed for party reasons. The Senate—A vast reservoir of patronage for the Prime Minister. The House of Commons is part of the system. The Press—Its work of keeping the conscience of the nation sensitive is hampered by patronage. That is the system. The country spends now about \$80,000 a year, every dollar of which goes out through the vast machine sketched above. The Government rejected Mr. Foster's motion.

ROPER RECEIVES LONG SENTENCE FOR HIS CRIME

Jury Finds Him Guilty of Manslaughter in Harris Murder Case--Sentenced by Judge Newlands to Fifteen Years Imprisonment--Prisoner Will be Taken to Edmonton Penitentiary.

Harry Miljon Roper was arraigned before Judge Newlands on Tuesday to answer to the charge of the murder of Andrew Harris at Qu'Appelle last August. He pleaded not guilty. The crown prosecutor, Alex. Ross, in outlining the case to the jury, said it was one in which the prosecution must necessarily depend almost entirely upon circumstantial evidence, as the only man alive who could tell the real facts was the man standing in the dock. The murdered man was last seen with the prisoner on the morning of August 27. On the afternoon of that day, Roper drove into Qu'Appelle, where he stated he was hurrying home to England as his father was ill. The next heard of him was in Winnipeg a week later, where he was arrested following the discovery of Harris in a dying condition outside his shack, with a bullet wound in his head.

Doctor's Evidence

The first witness called was Dr. T. C. Bourne, of Qu'Appelle, who attended Harris when he was found still living on Aug. 31, and continued to care for him up to the time of his death, subsequently conducting the post mortem examination.

According to the witness death was due to a wound caused by a bullet fired from a thirty-two cartridge at an erect position, the bullet taking a straight downward course.

In cross examination witness stated that the wound could not have been self-inflicted.

Sergeant Dubuque, who later arrested Roper in Winnipeg, related the story of what happened as told to him by Harris upon his dying bed.

Dying Testimony

Harris, said the witness, stated that "My man Roper and I had words about the work. We got mad. There were blows exchanged. I struck first. There were more blows exchanged, and as I was driving away to town he shot me with a revolver that he had. He shot me as I was driving away, and then a short time afterwards he shot me again. The first shot went in my ear and the second through my skull. Between the first and second shots I remembered something, but after the second shot I remembered nothing." Harris ended the conversation by saying, "I am going to die, and this is as I am going before God a true and correct statement."

To this evidence, Avery Casey, counsel for the accused, strongly objected, and applied to the court for a respite of case on the ground that there was nothing to show that the man was beyond the hope of recovery, and that therefore his statement was inadmissible.

Following the mid-day recess, Walter Trear, clerk at the Dominion Hotel, Winnipeg, and John Lee, proprietor, gave evidence as to Roper staying at that house last August, registering on August 28 as H. S. Watson.

Identified Roper

Lee also spoke as to going with Roper to the Union bank to identify him before E. S. Fulton, the paying cashier. Roper was introduced as "Harris," and received the money in exchange for a cheque. Mr. Fulton refused to pay the \$50 to a man introduced by former witness to him as "Harris." He could not identify the accused as he saw so many people.

The next witness, W. Halliday, told how, in company with his father and John Howder, uncle of the deceased, he had found him lying on an ash heap among tin cans and other debris on his back and still alive. He was led to make a search for the dead man owing to his attention being attracted by the bawling of a cow which was staked out. The cow had been there since Friday, and he was led to make investigation on the Monday following with the result stated.

The last witness called before the court adjourned was John Howder, who corroborated the evidence of the previous witness and also that of Sergeant Dubuque relative to the dying statement of Harris.

Found Revolver

The revolver produced in court had been found in the top bunk of Harris's shack under his clothes. This bunk was the one Roper slept in. The deceased was his nephew and aged 24 years.

Second Day

When the court opened at 10 o'clock Crown Prosecutor Ross called Charles

Rutherford, who stated that he had known Harris, the deceased, for some six years. He had been acquainted with Roper since the end of last March, and was frequently across at the Harris farm last summer, as he was working on the adjoining farm at that time. While visiting the farm he had observed fire arms lying around the shack, particularly a revolver. When asked if he could identify the one produced in the court, witness was not able to do so. He had seen the prisoner use one similar to it, and had been present at several shooting practices. He visited the farm on September 11, and found certain articles of clothing, among them being the smock produced, which he identified as belonging to Roper. Witness noticed stains on the smock, and thinking it might be useful, he handed it over to Sergeant Dubuque. The distance from the Harris farm to Qu'Appelle he would place at about eleven miles, and from Fraser's dam to the town by the usual trail about seven miles. In reply to Mr. Casey, witness said that Roper and Harris were in the habit of practising shooting, Roper had not shot since. So far as he knew the relations existing between the two men were friendly, and he had formed a good impression of the accused.

Human Blood Stains

Dr. Charlton, bacteriologist and pathologist, gave expert testimony in connection with the stains on the smock and hat. In reply to Mr. Ross, witness said that he placed the coat under the microscopical test and as a result found the stains were made by blood. Blood, he explained, was divided into two classes, namely, the blood of birds, beasts and reptiles, and the blood of mammals. The blood stains on the coat were undoubtedly those of the mammalian type. Blood was formed of small corpuscles, and in examining and making his measurements, he found the characteristics of the corpuscles of a human. While he had not submitted the stains, on the hat to any test, he was of the opinion that they also were made by human blood. Looking at the hole made by the bullet and the marks around it, he would think the shot had been fired at close quarters. In reply to Mr. Casey, the witness stated that the tests he referred to were the only ones made. Mr. Casey read long extracts from some medical authorities on medical jurisprudence, including Taylor, which followed the contention that grave doubts have been cast upon the value of measurements obtained from corpuscles and dry stains. It had, read one of these authorities, been already ascertained that there are no chemical differences between the blood of man and animals. Witness was asked as to whether he would agree with that statement or not, and replied that it was possible that the author's opinion and it was possible that it might be some other view.

With the conclusion of this witness' evidence, Mr. Ross intimated that he had no further evidence to submit. Mr. Casey stated that he would call no witnesses nor put evidence in on behalf of the defence, and Mr. Ross immediately addressed the jury. Mr. Ross carefully went over the evidence and especially with that part of it pointing to suicide as the cause of the death of Harris. He pointed out that all the movements and statements made by Roper from the time of the death of Harris until his arrest, indicated a guilty man. Mr. Casey made an eloquent plea on behalf of the prisoner, pointing out that the evidence was purely circumstantial. Judge's Charge His Lordship then summed up briefly. His duty he said was to place the facts before the jury and to instruct them in the law applicable to the case. One of the three verdicts would have to be given, namely either guilty of murder or manslaughter or not guilty of anything. He reviewed the evidence as given by the various witnesses and dealt particularly with the dying statement. The reason, he said, of allowing such a statement in evidence was, that by experience he had learned that when a man was on what he considered his death bed, his statements (if he were rational) were generally true. A man who expected to be brought face to face with his Maker at any moment did not as a rule make statements that were not according to facts and for that reason the jury would have to look at the statement the same as they

would had it been made under oath. There was one point, he would have liked to have seen explained a little more fully by the medical evidence and that was the source of a bullet in the brain in relation to any statements that might be made. Taking the dying man's statement that he was shot while driving away, in conjunction with the course taken by the bullet in the skull, he thought that some evidence might have been adduced by the medicals to show whether or not (if he were rambling at the time the statement was made) the rambling would take the form of a mix-up of facts of a certain amount of imagination. His Lordship closed his remarks by stating that the jury were the sole judges of the fact and that the verdict must be unanimous one way or the other.

Long Sentence Given

The jury retired and the court rose at 12:30 until 2 o'clock. At this time the jury had not arrived at any conclusion but a few minutes before 4:30 announced that they had reached a verdict. This verdict was: "Guilty of manslaughter." In sentencing prisoner to fifteen years in the penitentiary, his lordship said that the reason for this apparently long term was that by good behaviour a prisoner might gain a remission of a certain portion of the sentence. The Crown had it in their discretion if conduct warranted it to grant a reduction of the term and it was better to give a long sentence that might be reduced in this manner than a shorter one. The prisoner when asked if he had anything to say why sentence should not be given replied "No, my Lord, I have nothing." The prisoner seemed to take the sentence very compositely. He immediately walked to the rig, which conveyed him to the gaol. He will at once be sent to Edmonton to the penitentiary where he will begin his long term of imprisonment, which may be shortened considerably by good conduct on his part.

Murderers Caught

Winnipeg, Feb. 2.—Mollie Becker, alias Elora Brown, alias Ruth Gordon, colored, wanted in Bloomington, Ill. for the murder of McKinley Becker, some weeks ago, was arrested here this morning. Inspectors Robertson and Newton of the local police force and Detective Fraser of St. Paul. The prisoner was taken to St. Paul tonight by Fraser.

The woman is 24 years of age, and is very light for one of her race. She had been in the city several days, but kept out of sight as much as possible. The arrest was a clever one as the woman worked several schemes to keep out of the way of the police. When arrested she took matters coolly and did not make a statement. Detective Fraser had been on her trail several days. Details of the murder as known are meagre, but it is known that the prisoner's husband was murdered in cold blood in her home at Bloomington, and insurance was collected.

The sudden departure of prisoner aroused suspicion and the police of the States have been in search of her ever since the murder. The object of the crime was robbery. She was smuggled here by sleeping car porters.

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POLITICAL SITUATION

In Great Britain—Much Speculation as to the Outcome—Asquith May Have to Resign.

London, Feb. 5.—The political situation remains the one topic of universal absorbing interest for the United Kingdom. The magnitude of the problems involved are unparalleled in the history of party government here, and the methods for solving them have all the fascination of uncertainty.

There has been no meeting of the cabinet since the elections closed. Prime Minister Asquith and his lieutenants are enjoying a brief hard-earned vacation, and have given to their followers no hint as to how the majority they command is to be utilized. The order of procedure happens to be a question of vital moment in the present situation, and two "schools of thought" on this subject are reflected in the ministerial press. The "forward" or advanced "school" recalls that Mr. Asquith gave a solemn pledge at the Albert Hall meeting before the elections that the government would not "hold or assume office until it had guarantees from the crown that power would be given to it to coerce the lords, if necessary, into a campaign of limitation of their elective veto. This "school" maintains that this pledge binds Mr. Asquith to secure those guarantees before he again introduces the rejected budget.

This "school" added that tactically this is the only safe course for the government to pursue, because if the budget should be passed and the money secured for the purposes of the government, the peers would have a free hand to provoke immediately another dissolution. The Tories could face the immense electioneering outlay without effort, but the Liberals could not, for the latter require time to refill their depleted war chest.

Caucus of Liberals At a caucus of the Liberals it was argued that if the King should refuse to grant Mr. Asquith demand for peers to clip the wings of the peers, Mr. Asquith should resign, then the King would send for Mr. Balfour who would form a ministry, raise a loan for the current expenses of the government, and then dissolve parliament.

The prevailing sentiment among the elected Liberal members of the house of commons, undoubtedly favors the advanced or "forward" policy. Many say they will resign their seats if there is any parleying with the peers. What the cabinet will do is not known, although Mr. Asquith's pledge seems to give him no option but to secure first of all the King's guarantee that enough new peers shall be created to carry any measure sent up by the Liberal government to the house of lords.

Wm. O'Brien and Timothy Healy have committed themselves to the Tories, alleging that the Liberal home rule professions are "dishonest" and that nothing is to be got from the

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Liberal party for Ireland except increased taxation. These Independents would not hesitate to support even the house of lords, despite its unrelieved record of hostility to Ireland, if by so doing they could provoke complications damaging to the Nationalist party. They have declared positively that they will oppose the budget on account of the increased tax which they will denounce the Nationalists as traitors to Irish interests if the latter fail to do likewise.

Whisky Tax John Redmond and the Nationalists will have a difficult card to play, for the whisky tax is intensely unpopular in Ireland. They say that this tax is collected now, and that Balfour committed himself to accept it if he were returned to power by the electors, so Ireland would gain nothing and would invoke a regime of coercion and oppression if they should assist Balfour to office. So the Nationalists look to the larger issue of crippling the house of lords, whose veto has been the

greatest obstacle to Irish reforms, and their action will be governed by that consideration.

Speculation is also busy with the probable attitude of the King toward Mr. Asquith's demand. It is believed in some quarters that the King gave to Mr. Asquith an understanding before the general elections that if the Liberals got a substantial majority he would give to Mr. Asquith the required guarantees.

Goes to Moose Jaw At a meeting on Monday night of Moose Jaw city council, Angus Smith, of Regina, was chosen to fill the position of City Engineer, in place of J. D. Whitmore, resigned. There were 61 applications for the position, from all parts of Canada and the United States, which carries with it a salary of \$200 per month. Mr. Smith was chosen because of his many years western experience, he having filled a similar position in Regina for the past four years.