

# Canadian Political Scandals Which Have Wrecked Careers and Upset Governments

Though the Present Ontario Mess Is Bad Enough, It Does not Compare in Unsavoriness With Some Past Episodes in Our History—Pacific Scandal, Gamey Charges, Manitoba Boodling, and Other Sensations of First Magnitude

By ARTHUR HAWKES

THEY are scandalizing about the Ontario treasury, and, at this writing, everybody is asking, "What next, and who?" It is sometimes useful to look over old scandal-fields. Now, it is said, is the acceptable time, lest the flurries in Toronto and in our neighbor Newfoundland be confused, as to magnitude, with what is going on at Washington, and with what has gone on at home in years well past.

Let two things first be said. The first is that, delving into unsavory episodes of Canadian public life, you are struck by the improvement in tone which distinguishes this century. Our politicians have been too perverse in office and too puritan out of power. Saintliness does not yet surround the franchise. But, compared with what we were, we are scarcely recognizable. Comparisons are not as odious to our contemporaries as they are to our predecessors.

Secondly, nothing in the Canadian situation need make us mourn any inferiority to our British relatives. In some respects public life is on a higher plane over there. But there is quite as much, if not more, to lament in the way British campaign funds are managed as there is in the financing of parties in this dominion. In Britain the Fountain of Honor, the monarch, has been drawn on to meet electioneering obligations. In Canada, poor in cash but more expansive in unexploited natural resources, charters and contracts have been manipulated. There hasn't been as much pharisaism about it as there has been and is over the bestowal of honors that have been bought and paid for. Every device of our corrupt electioneers was imported from the tight little island. Even the game of creating capital by the stroke of the pen, as a means of insuring profits that would otherwise look unjust, in comparison with the amount of capital actually invested in an enterprise, was practised by the Hudson Bay Company in the seventeenth century. It is only in our own time that commissions in the army were bought like cattle, and men achieved command over the lives of their fellow citizens because they paid for majorities and colonelcies.

Three generations have properly lauded Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia as a great patriot. Editor of the Nova Scotian, he became famous through a scandal which, perhaps more than any other, constructively served Canada. Halifax was governed by magistrates appointed by the governor, without an atom of responsibility to the citizens. In 1835 Howe attacked the bench as negligent and corrupt. They had by one stratagem and another improperly taken from the people over \$30,000. One active magistrate had for years filched from one establishment dedicated to the poor and destitute at least \$300 per annum. From the poor and distressed another magistrate whose services the country could well spare had taken a thousand pounds.

## A Sort of Family Compact

SUCH boldness in the press was unknown. The magistrates were in a sort of family compact. The revenue from imports levied by imperial authority, and from sale of crown lands, was spent by the governor at his own sweet will. Howe was instantly prosecuted for criminal libel, a charge which did not permit of the accusations being proved in court—the greater the truth the worse the libel.

Several lawyers advised Howe to make his peace and take his medicine in fine and imprisonment. He borrowed their books, read everything on criminal libel, decided, against their derision, to defend himself, though he had never made a public speech. He addressed the jury for six hours, and though the judge told the jury to convict him of libel, he was acquitted. An extract from his speech, attacking the magistrates for not suing him in the civil court:

There is a certain part of a ship through which, when a seaman crawls, he subjects himself to the derision of the deck, because it is taken as an admission of cowardice and incompetence. Had not these jobbing justices crawled in here, through this legal lubber-hole of indictment, I would have sent them out of court in a worse condition than Falstaff's ragged regiment—they would not have dared to march even through Coventry in a body.

It was the scandal of the Halifax jobbing magistrates that furnished Nova Scotia with her champion of responsible government, and helped to preserve the British Empire when it was menaced by those who would retain to the petty governors of colonies more power than the king wielded in the imperial capital.

It is remarkable that three premiers in British North America have been driven from office by the truthful tongue of scandal, three within the last dozen years—Fleming of New Brunswick, Roblin of Manitoba, and Squires of Newfoundland. Fleming was a storekeeper whose wife was said to have done much for his education. He was an attractive personality, and became premier when Mr. Hazen was called to Ottawa by Mr. Borden in 1911. He fell because it was proved that he received money from timber limit operators which no man in his position should ever have allowed himself to touch. It was not specifically proved that the cash went



SIR H.M. ALLAN.



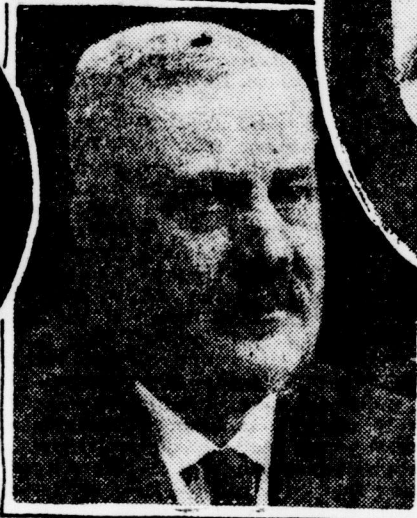
R.R. GAMEY.



Gamey called Sullivan to the Crossin Piano Works, having concealed shorthand writers in the room.

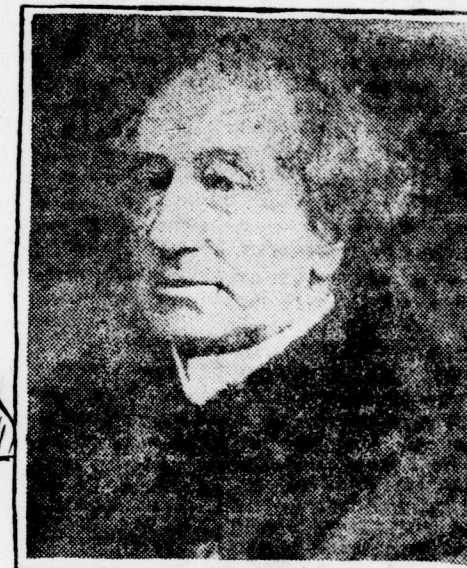


RICHARD MCBRIDE



J.K. FLEMING

R.P. ROBLIN



SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD



JOSEPH HOWE

into the party campaign fund; but that was the inference.

New Brunswick has had its share of strange political moralities, and after Fleming's disgrace it was actually proposed by his party to send him to Ottawa, but the scheme miscarried. As to that, Ontario need not feel exalted, for the present M.P. for Carleton is the same Garland whom Sir Robert Borden drove from the House because he dabbled in a war contract, using his clerk as a spy.

## Quebec's First-Class Scandal

QUEBEC, as it happens, furnished simultaneously two first-class scandals, one Liberal and provincial, the other Conservative, and federal. In 1891 Premier Mercier was dismissed by the Lieutenant-governor. Thomas McGreevy was expelled from the Commons and jailed, and the minister of public works, Sir Hector Langevin, perforce resigned. That dark year proved that the exposures of the Canadian Pacific scandal which had destroyed Macdonald's first Dominion government had not wrought the correction of corruption which reformers desired and of which experienced patriots despaired. Indeed, from many points of view the scandals of 1891 were far worse than the great campaign of bribery of ministers of the crown which gave Sir Hugh Allan a bad eminence in Canadian history.

Sir Hugh Allan was the richest Canadian with an income of over \$500,000 a year. He wanted to build the transcontinental railway which was essential to the emergence of Canada as a North American power, and was, indeed, part of the pact under which British Columbia had become a Canadian province. A vast fortune awaited whoever could make the dream run on rails. It was only half a generation since a railway had been built from Montreal to Toronto, the age was one of prodigious adventuring into railway enterprises. Members of parliament thought it quite respectable to head railway companies that got subsidies from parliament—there was no more compunction about that with most of them than there was among Puritans who bought public offices.

Allan wanted his charter. Like wealthy men eager for social glory in Britain, he was willing to pay the politicians who would give him it. "Don't write, send," is a wise maxim of the machine politician across the line. Ottawa, in 1872, was much too candid for any such precaution. Sir George Etienne Cartier, the Quebec chief of the government party wrote to Sir Hugh Allan on the day before the fifth birthday of confederation:

The friends of the government will expect to be assisted with funds in the pending elections, and any amount which you or your company shall advance for that purpose shall be repaid to you. A memorandum of immediate requirements is below."

On August 7th Allan wrote, "I have already paid away about \$250,000, and will have to pay at least \$50,000 before the end of the month. I don't know as even that will finish it, but hope so."

The first payments were Macdonald \$35,000, Cartier \$50,000, and Langevin \$115,000. Allan spent on railroads account \$350,000.

## Forced Government's Resignation

THE government won the election, but next session the truth was exposed, an investigation begun. It didn't seem to be getting anywhere, when the fatal letters and telegrams were disclosed. The government resigned. The Mackenzie government won the 1874 election and held office till 1878, when Sir John came back—and the old orthodoxes of maintaining power with him.

A Conservative member was J. Israel Tarte, who changed his views, and in May, 1891, charged, in the House that Thomas McGreevy, railroad promoter, contractor, member of the Quebec harbor commission, chairman of the House of Commons railway committee, and a close associate of Sir Hector Langevin, (they lived together in Ottawa) had systematically accepted bribes. Here are the main counts in Tarte's indictment:

Larkin, Connolly and Company, dredging contractors, to get Thomas McGreevy's influence gave his brother a thirty per cent. interest in their firm. McGreevy used undue influence to get them a Quebec harbor contract, for which he received \$25,000. He was paid \$22,000 for getting them a graving dock contract at Lévis, and \$27,000 for securing another dredging contract at much above the lowest tender. He demanded the money from that firm in Langevin's name. He was paid \$200,000 by the Larkin firm, in eight years, as their agent on the harbor commission, in parliament, and with Langevin.

Sir Richard Cartwright, in his reminiscences, says that while McGreevy was in jail a quorum for a cabinet meeting could often be gathered in the corridor. This scandal, which gave Canada a very bad name abroad, produced a delightful example of Satan rebuking sin. The New York Times published an interview with one Murphy, an excise commissioner of New York, who admitted fleeing to Canada in 1877 because he was \$50,000 short in his accounts. He became a contractor in association with McGreevy's brother, and in 1891 returned to New York to make restitution. Murphy said the Langevin crowd was worse than the Tweed gang ever were. "We bribed them all, and generally acquired nearly everything in sight. Public officials in Canada, so far as my experience goes, do not have that suspicious hesitancy in accepting money that characterizes some officials in this country."

It doesn't seem the Senate's business to probe a provincial financial affair. But a third of a century ago partisanship was a fiercer dog than it is now; and while the Liberals were after McGreevy and Langevin, the Tories went after the extraordinarily popular and brilliant Mercier. The Baie des Chaleurs Railway Company, to end disputes about control, sought an entirely dominion charter. Their case was dealt with by a Senate committee, which unearthed these facts: The railway was bonused by the province. Armstrong, its first contractor, lost money, and turned the job to another, who also failed, and 80 miles of the road were uncompleted. Premier Mercier became M.P.P. for Bonaventure and promised to finish the line. A reorganized company was given a subsidy for \$280,000 to finish the line and pay outstanding debts.

Armstrong put in a claim for the whole \$298,000, though \$75,000 would satisfy him. He reduced the claim to \$175,000, which was paid by Mercier's minister of public works. But he gave \$100,000 of it to Ernest Pacaud, editor of L'Electeur, nominally for services rendered in obtaining the settlement. Pacaud applied the money to meeting promissory notes given by Liberal supporters of Mercier for electioneering purposes. The Senate committee found that the province was illegally deprived of this \$175,000. Lieutenant-governor Angers, an appointee of the Conservative government at Ottawa, went after Mercier for paying so large a sum without an order-in-council. Mercier protested that nothing was wrong. He didn't say so, but he meant that that was the way election expenses were often met, which nobody could deny. He was dismissed, and died broken-hearted a few years later. During his heyday one of his daughters married a young lawyer of humble origin, Lomer Gouin, who was premier of Quebec fifteen years.

The latest Quebec scandal was the exposure a few months before the war of the chairman of the private bills committee in the legislature and two members of the upper House, one of them a legal partner of the premier, for taking money to put through a wide-open charter for a fair association, the whole cost of which, \$50,000, was put up by Lorne McGibbon, then owner of the Montreal Herald. Only about \$9,500 was to go

to the legislators—half of which was paid. The remainder chiefly went to the Burns detective Agency for running the decoy office in Montreal, equipped with a detectaphone, which turned out some remarkable conversations with the chairman of private bills on the corruptibility of his colleagues.

## The Big Gamey Sensation

IT is twenty-one years since the Ontario parliament buildings echoed so much scandal as has marked the first Fergussonian session. In 1903 the Gamey charges set the province alight, and assured the Liberal debacle which, in 1905, ended a Liberal regime of thirty-two years. As Joseph Chamberlain told Premier Ross in London, it was a great mistake for any party to hang on to office for so long; but the Liberal office-holders had not learned wisdom from political decay. In 1902 a general election gave Ross a majority of three—and a very shaky majority in view of skin-of-the-teeth victories and election protests. Liberal stalwarts do not point with pride to their party methods of that epoch. Just before the House met, R. R. Gamey, Conservative member for Manitoulin, in a Globe interview on January 30, said he would support the government. Manitoulin was his politics and he believed New Ontario would get fair treatment.

On March 13 Gamey told an astonished House this story: In August, Captain Sullivan, of malodorous electioneering reputation, informed him at Allandale that the government had plenty of evidence to invalidate his election. At Toronto Sullivan's son Frank, employed in the public works department, told him that as the government must have more support, he could make \$5,000 by a change of allegiance. In a few days young Sullivan and a Liberal lawyer named Grant told him of a stock company proposition in which he could make \$3,000 in six weeks and \$2,000 at the end of the legislative session. D. A. Jones, a Liberal worker of Beeton, pressed him to turn over.

Gamey then told J. R. McGregor, secretary of the Manitoulin Conservative Association, of this, having decided to lure the Liberals on, and then expose the plot. In September, both Sullivan discussed his getting \$3,000 down and \$2,000 after the session. They took him to Provincial Secretary Stratton, with whom the bargain was made, with the addition that he was to have the patronage of his riding, and any help possible in conciliating his Conservative supporters.

He was given a letter to sign, pledging his support to the government and declaring that he had received no consideration for so doing. That day Stratton instructed Mr. A. B. Aylesworth to withdraw the election protest. Next day he went with Frank Sullivan to see Stratton, and gave him the letter. He and Stratton retired to the smoking room, where a large envelope was brought in and laid on the table. He found in it \$3,000 in Bank of Ontario bills, half of which he gave to Sullivan. He kept McGregor advised of all this. Before giving out the interview to the Globe, various appointments were made in his riding on his recommendation. On October 30 a similar letter to the one presented to him by Stratton was mailed by him to the premier, according to promise to Stratton. On January 29, after leaving Stratton's office, where the Globe interview had been written, another \$1,000 was given him by Sullivan.

Two nights before making this statement, Gamey called Sullivan to the Crossin piano works, in which Gamey had a financial interest, and discussed all these proceedings with him, having concealed shorthand writers in the room, one of whom was a young fellow named William H. Price, of the Gore Bay Conservative, and now provincial treasurer, conducting a before-the-

## Savage Partisan Ferocity

THERE were debates before investigation and after. The government was savagely attacked by Whitney for appointing Chancellor Boyd and Chief Justice Falconbridge as royal commissioners. Reading of these debates gives one the impression of a partisan ferocity of recklessness which seems happily since to have been assuaged if not yet exorcised. Nothing is more remarkable in our public life than the style in which lawyers will assail judges who conduct investigations without their robes.

The two eminent judges finally found that Gamey was unreliable and that there was no proof that Stratton had bought him in the way alleged. There was no doubt about his having received money, but where it came from was not for them to discover. In the end the premier said of the finding: "We were on trial before the ablest jury and before the high court of the people of this country. We have passed through that unscathed; no blot on our reputation, no stain upon our escutcheon, no reproach cast upon the manner in which we have administered the affairs of the country." He also gave Stratton a glowing certificate of character. As to all of which, one who was very far removed from the passions of that time, can only say that he is very much amazed, at such claims in such a setting as the closing years of a government which old supporters like Sam Blake, N. W. Rowell, and W. E. Raney, refused to support. Premier Ross' final comment on the scandal was to drop Stratton before the next election. Gamey was made a Conservative hero, for whom a cabinet place was fully predicted. Mr. Whitney's final comment was not to call Gamey to the executive chamber.

Manitoba, wherein twice, since Confederation, the attempt has been made to run republics under the British crown, has had dirty troubles of its own. It has the sad distinction among the provinces of seeing one of its premiers and about half his cabinet in the criminal dock, in the midst of a war in which Manitobans were dying to preserve their pure and democratic institutions. Like the Gamey episode, that ending of years of devotion to the disreputable old orthodoxies of partisan warfare. An Ottawan, who in 1912 regarded Bob Rogers as seventy-five per cent. of the brains on Parliament Hill, said that the Manitoba machine had Cox's in Pittsburg, and the Chicago outfit beaten to a frazzle.

Sir Rodmond Roblin had been premier of Manitoba fifteen years, when the session of 1915 opened, following a general election of the preceding summer, which much reduced his majority. In 1913 a contract had been given Kelly and Sons for new parliament buildings. In the public accounts committee the Opposition became very curious about changes in the plans from piles in the foundation, with reinforced steel work above to caissons driven down to the rock and concrete substituted for the reinforced work.

The effect of the attack was that about eight hundred thousand dollars had been improperly spent, on the authority of the provincial architect, whose judgment had overridden that of Mr. Simon, the eminent English architect, on whose plans the great structure was being reared. It was difficult to get papers and evidence before the committee. On the last day of March the committee decided to report that everything was all right, and voted down an amendment by the Hon. A. B. Hudson, alleging improprieties. At 1.20 in the morning the legislature adjourned, to meet at ten, to clean the slate and be prorogued.

At ten o'clock the premier asked for an adjournment till three, so that he might consult

His Honor on prorogation. At three he said that the Opposition, twenty-one strong, had overnight memorialized the governor for a royal commission of investigation, and he could not ignore so solemnly made a demand. There would be a royal commission.

## Roblin Threw Up Sponge

SIR Douglas Cameron, the lieutenant governor, had taken the advice of Chief Justice Howell, telling him that he had lost confidence in his Attorney-general Howden. If Roblin had not agreed to the royal commission he would have been dismissed, as Mercier was. The evidence before the commission soon began to justify the government's assailants. Roblin thought the whole matter could be ended by the government's resignation and the quiet accession of Norris the Liberal leader. The basis of this hope seems to have been a statement by Kelly that he had given \$12,000 to the Liberal campaign fund the previous summer, in sure and certain hope that, if the Liberals won they would say nothing about his arrangements with the Roblin government. That idea fell down, and the investigation was carried to its logical conclusion, which landed Kelly in jail and Roblin and several of his colleagues in the dock, whence they were delivered by a disagreement of the jury, and the abatement of the sort of partisanship which not so many years before would have pursued them to the utmost.

The commission consisted of Chief Justice Mathers of the King's bench and his brother Macdonald of the King's bench, and Sir Hugh John Macdonald, son of Sir John A., and himself a former premier of Manitoba. It found that the charges in the Hudson amendment were true.

That there had been gross and culpable negligence by the government in letting contracts, and changing construction contracts, and that there had been systematic violation of contracts, connived at by the government.

That the province had been defrauded of sums exceeding \$800,000, (\$892,098 exactly.) That, as an example, one item of 10,397 yards of material charged for was never supplied by the contractors, and in this connection alone the province was defrauded of \$243,809.65.

During the inquiry a foreman named Salt, who was in difficulties with the records on his books, fled to the United States. Brought back, he testified that \$250,000 had been fraudulently paid for foundational work. The architect Horwood swore that from the beginning it was intended to alter the foundation methods. Several members of the government gave him to understand that he was to allow the contractors undue profits on the caissons, out of which they were to give \$100,000 to the Conservative campaign fund for the general elections in July, 1914. Dr. Montague had instructed him to destroy all letters and papers likely to reveal the truth. Coldwell advised the fixing and altering of Salt's books. Simon, the English architect, testified that he complained of the changes in plan and was told by Horwood, "Well, you know the government have to make a campaign fund out of the extras." He had written to Sir James Aikins, his lawyer, in December, 1914, that he was sick of the whole business and wanted to clear out. No wonder.

## Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C.

SASKATCHEWAN and Alberta, the youngsters of the provinces, have had flurries of alleged impropriety, for, even on the virgin plains, it seems that what Sir Wilfrid Laurier used to call human means may be used to win elections. In Saskatchewan there have been inquiries about contracts for school books, and payments for road work. Over the latter a high official of the local government board lost his job. But nothing was ever brought home culpably to a minister of the crown.

In Alberta there has been an investigation about financing the railway into the Peace River country, and there are authentic stories of how election funds have been used in an eastern way—a worker given so much to get out the vote in a given district, and all he could save for himself, provided the vote was cast, would be nobody's business but his own.

In British Columbia the McBride government was supported by what was called a machine as efficient as the one in Manitoba. The overbuilding of railways such as the Pacific Great Eastern, the white elephant between Vancouver and Port George, has been connected with electioneering funds in ways which differ not materially from the time-dishonored practices of farther east in former times. Premier McBride was a native son who became premier at thirty-two. His government for years was under fire, even though in British Columbia there was quite the average of talk about the pot calling the kettle black. Of investigations perhaps the most interesting—and it can only be very briefly mentioned here—was that of 1906 into a scandal ventilated by the Vancouver World, and known as the Pendray case.

The minister of lands and works was the Hon. R. F. Green, who afterwards became Dominion M.P. for West Kootenay and is now a senator. The firm of W. J. Pendray and Sons of Victoria wished to buy a small strip of government land for a factory. It was alleged that there was juggling with tenders—that Green or somebody in his department very close to him had wrongfully revealed the amount of a tender which came in first, and the disclosure of which enabled government kissing to go by favor, as it often had gone before. The story was not edifying, and the introduction of a woman's name into it gave gossipers some excuse to wag their heads, and purists occasion to thank God that they were not as politicians are.

The government did a remarkable thing—it appointed Fred Peters, K.C., a Liberal, to conduct an investigation. He exonerated Mr. Green saying, "I can see nothing wrong with it. Nothing has been done in the slightest degree worthy of censure. Under the circumstances the World could not be blamed for publishing the charges." That fall Premier McBride made a big fight at the interprovincial conference at Ottawa for better Dominion subsidies for British Columbia and placed himself on the way to another successful election. On the whole matter Castell Hopkins, in his review of British Columbia affairs for that year, said: "Any difficulties connected with the charges against Mr. Green were disposed of by his retirement from public life and the reorganization of the government."

## Considerate

A HARLEY STREET doctor who was acting as a locum tenens in the country was consulted by a man and woman whose child had swallowed a "thripney-bit." He told the parents what, course to pursue, but he was fetched out of bed at an early hour the following morning by the pealing of the bell. On opening the window he saw the father, who declared: "Oh, doctor, I thought you would be glad to know—the child did not swallow the 'thripney-bit' after all."