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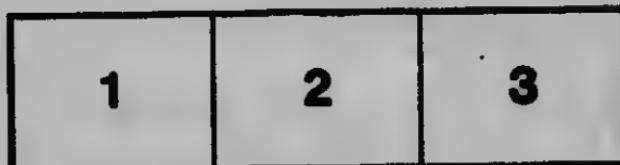
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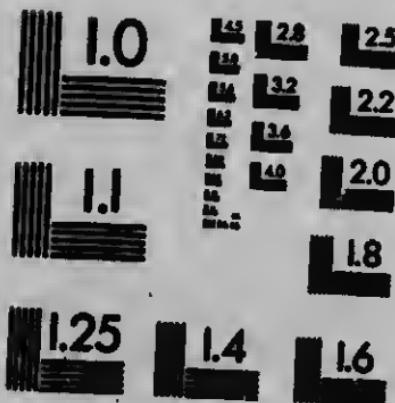
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# **"ARCTIC" EXPEDITION**

## **THE FACTS OF IT.**

Of all the subjects exploited by the Opposition none have received the same circulation as the alleged "Arctic" scandal. Allusions have been made to this vessel, and the expedition upon which she was despatched, upon many occasions when political exigency or party purpose might be served. Notwithstanding this, it may be said with perfect accuracy that all the facts relating to the incident have never been published, and few people know the truth of the matter.

## **ORIGIN OF ATTACK.**

On May 15th, 1906, during the discussion of the Estimates of the Marine and Fisheries Department the following item was before the Committee:

"Maintenance and repairs to Government steamers and ice-breakers, including steamer 'Arctic' \$375,000."

During the progress of the discussion, Dr. J. D. Reid, of Grenville, made the following statement—Hansard, 15th May, 1906, p. 3369 Vol. 11.—

"I, like my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, and like a great many more people in this country, am skeptical about that quantity of goods having really been placed on board this Steamer. I find in looking up the Department of Marine and Fisheries that the gross tonnage of the 'Arctic' is given as 762 tons—from this we would have to deduct the space that is occupied by the machinery. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE 'ARCTIC' WOULD CARRY THE TOTAL QUANTITY OF GOODS SAID TO HAVE BEEN PLACED ON BOARD THAT VESSEL. That is my own private opinion. It looks to me as if there had been some mistake. I have estimated the total weight of these goods, and as far as I can figure out, there would be 748 net tons of goods placed on board the steamer 'Arctic' on that trip. I have taken the items as given in the Auditor General's report and figured it up from those."

## **SUPPLEMENTARY CHARGES.**

It might be added that while the above forms the text of the main charge, Mr. Taylor of Leeds, and Mr. Northrup of Hastings supplemented it by alleging that "THE QUANTITIES PURCHASED WERE GREATLY IN EXCESS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EXPEDITION," and "THAT EXTRAVAGANT PRICES HAD BEEN PAID."

## **SIR WILFRID GRANTS ENQUIRY**

Sir Wilfrid Laurier met the issue promptly and frankly. After alluding to the charges of unnecessary purchases and extravagant prices,—Sir Wilfrid said—Hansard, Vol. II. 1906, 3391-2, May 15th, 1906:

"But a more serious charge has been made, and that is, that it was impossible to have placed on board such a quantity of stuff as was paid for. I think the hon. gentleman who spoke last (Dr. Reid) stated that he had made some calculations and they would show that the quantity of stock would amount to something over 700 tons, and that it was impossible after the ship had been supplied with coal, to put such a quantity on board. That is a very serious statement to make—and to this the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Taylor) adds, that this has been done for the purpose of giving a rake-off to somebody. These charges are too serious to be passed over, and I HAVE ONLY TO SAY THAT I AGREE AT ONCE TO THE SUGGESTION MADE A MOMENT AGO BY THE HON. MEMBER FOR LEEDS, WHEN HE SAYS THAT IF HE BE GIVEN A COMMITTEE HE WILL PROVE EVERYTHING THAT HE HAS CHARGED.

I can only say to my hon. friend that I think it my duty, speaking on behalf of the Government, to say that THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT ALLOW THESE SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS TO BE MADE WITHOUT GIVING THE HON. GENTLEMAN WHO MADE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUBSTATIATE THEM, AND TOMORROW IF THE HON. GENTLEMAN WANTS A COMMITTEE, HE SHALL HAVE ONE. If goods have been bought at extravagant prices, we must know it—if it is true that supplies were bought that were not actually put on board this ship, but have gone elsewhere, it is to the interest not only of the members of this House, but of the members of this Government, to know where they have gone. And if there has been any rake-off in favour of anybody, it is to the interest of the Government that we should know who benefitted by it. THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE PREPARED TO MEET THE SUGGESTION OF HON. GENTLEMEN OPPOSITE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A FULL AND COMPLETE INVESTIGATION."

## CONSERVATIVES SHIRK THE ISSUE

The charge, and the Premier's prompt acceptance of the challenge, and his willingness to provide a Committee if the Conservatives wanted one, all occurred on May 15th—YET THE OPPOSITION ALLOWED TWO DAYS TO PASS AND NOTHING FURTHER WAS HEARD OF THE MATTER, AND NO COMMITTEE WAS DEMANDED.

## SIR WILFRID DETERMINED TO INVESTIGATE

On May 16th, 1908.—Hansard. VII, 1906, p. 3620-1, Sir Wilfrid Laurier moved the following resolution:—

"Whereas specific charges have been made by members of this House from their seats to the effect that the supplies which were purchased by the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Government Steamer 'Arctic' were not all put on board the said steamer, but were in part diverted for other uses, by, and for the benefit of persons still unknown; and whereas, like charges have also been made that excessive prices were corruptly paid for said supplies; and that in connection herewith pecuniary benefits were received by officials 'of the said department.'"

"A Special Committee be appointed to inquire fully into all the circumstances connected with the purchase of said supplies, the disposal of the same, and the different matters above mentioned, with power to send for persons, papers and records, and to examine witnesses on oath, or affirmation, and that the said Committee do report in full the evidence taken before them and all other proceedings in the reference."

## **CONSERVATIVES OPPOSE MOTION**

Strange to say this motion of the Premier **WAS STRENUOUSLY OPPOSED BY THE OPPPOSITION**—the very men who had been loudest in denunciation and most eager for a Committee of enquiry, were the men who, when the Committee was offered, were not anxious to take advantage of it.

What was the reason of this?

The reason was that for months past the Opposition had indulged in innuendo, insinuation and suggestion of wrong-doing—when invited to make a specific charge, they had not responded. In this case, however, they had been less discreet than usual, and the following specific statements had been made:—

## **SPECIFIC CHARGES**

1. MORE GOODS HAD BEEN PURCHASED THAN WERE NECESSARY FOR THE EXPEDITION.
2. THESE GOODS HAD BEEN PURCHASED AT EXTRAVAGANT PRICES.
3. MORE GOODS HAD BEEN PURCHASED THAN WOULD GO ABOARD THE VESSEL.

There was no evading the issue. The Opposition had assumed the responsibility of making the charges, and undertook to prove them if given the opportunity. They must either proceed, or acknowledge the charges to be without foundation.

## **SIR WILFRID TAUNTS OPPosition**

Sir Wilfrid Laurier commenting on the attitude of the Opposition said, Hansard, VII, 1906, p. 3629-30, May 18th, 1906:

"I am a little better informed than I was when I proposed this motion—I had a suspicion, it is true, but only a suspicion. Now it is absolute knowledge, THAT WHEN HON. GENTLEMEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HOUSE MAKE CHARGES, THEY ARE TO BE ASSUMED TO BE NOTHING ELSE THAN FROTH AND WILD TALK. Hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House the other day said most emphatically, that in connection with the supplying of a steamer fitted out by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, of that time, not only a gross violation of principle, not only a gross violation of duty, has been committed, but that there had been larceny committed at the expense of the Government, but when we bring these hon. gentlemen to the task of determining whether or not this was wild talk, or whether it was a statement based upon fact, we have the suggestion that after all it amounts to nothing whatever. There is nothing to enquire into. I confess, sir, that in the future, I, at all events, will be wiser than I have been in the past, and when gentlemen

on the other side talk as wildly as they do, I shall henceforth realize that no importance is to be attached to their words."

Sir Wilfrid concluded by the following declaration of policy:-

"In my humble judgment nothing is more detrimental to the policy which ought to prevail in this country THAN THAT WE SHOULD ALLOW ANY DISHONEST ACT TO PASS UNNOTICED WHEN A CHARGE IS MADE, and in that view I again ask the House to agree to this motion and to HAVE THIS CHARGE PROPERLY INVESTIGATED SO AS TO SAY WHETHER IT IS TRUE OR NOT TRUE."

Mr. R. L. Borden moved an amendment to Sir Wilfrid's motion, asking for a committee to "investigate all expenditures of public moneys in the Department of Marine and Fisheries from 30th June, 1902, to date."

## ATTEMPT TO EVADE ISSUE

This was a glaring attempt to evade the issue. The position of the matter to date was:—

1. Clear cut definite charges.
2. A promise to prove them if a committee be appointed.
3. Appointment of Committee by the Premier.

Now comes the Leader of the Opposition with an amendment for a rambling committee of enquiry of the drag-net variety.

This amendment was pressed to a division, and Mr. Borden and the very gentlemen who had asked for a committee, voted in its favour, WHICH MEANT THAT THEY OPPOSED THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VERY COMMITTEE THEY HAD DEMANDED.

Sir Wilfrid's motion for a committee as originally promised, was then put to a vote and carried unanimously by the House.

## COMMITTEE NAMED

Sir Wilfrid, after consultation with Mr. R. L. Borden, named the following committee of investigation:—

Messrs. McLean, Lunenburg, Lih., Carvell, Lib., Demers, Lih., Pardee, Lih., McCraney, Lih., Macpherson, Lib., Bennett, Con., Bergeron, Con., Northrup, Con., Stockton, Con.

Events have been related in their chronological order. Then followed the sitting of the committee, taking of evidence and production of documents. Every facility was at the disposal of the committee to elicit the facts, AND THE OPPPOSITION MEMBERS WERE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THEIR CHARGES.

## OBJECTS OF "ARCTIC" EXPEDITION

The object of the expedition was to proceed to the northern waters around Hudson Bay, Baffins Bay, Davis Strait, and other waters adjacent to the northern portion of the American continent, and exercise Canadian sovereignty, collect customs dues, and generally to establish Canadian rights to northern waters and islands. Incidentally, a body of Royal Northwest Mounted Police and their supplies were taken to a point on Hudson Bay.

## LENGTH OF VOYAGE

It was estimated that the voyage would last three years, and the "Arctic" was provisioned accordingly. In consequence of a breakdown in her machinery the vessel returned after one year, **WITH TWO-THIRDS OF HER SUPPLIES INTACT, ON BOARD.**

Attention is directed at this point to the importance of outfitting a vessel destined for a voyage to the North, with due regard to the ordinary risks of such an undertaking. By some unforeseen accident common in northern latitudes, the vessel might have been compelled to remain longer than ordinarily contemplated. This contingency was guarded against by provisioning for three years, although it was not intended that the voyage would last that long. This point is of importance in discussing the outfitting of the "Arctic" because criticism has been directed to the fact that she was provisioned for a longer period than was necessary. Had this precaution been neglected, criticism might, with propriety, have been directed at the Department, had lives been sacrificed.

## RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

The committee sat, heard witnesses, examined original documents, and went thoroughly into the whole matter, from the beginning to the end, and found the following state of things, testified to under oath.

## PRECAUTIONS TAKEN

The officials of the Marine and Fisheries Department surrounded the outfitting, purchasing and putting on board of the stores with every possible safe-guard.

Captain Bernier, in charge of the expedition, a navigator of great experience in northern waters, submitted to the department his estimates of what was necessary for 40 men for 3 years, and he based his calculations on three similar expeditions; one, that of Capt. Scott (English) to the Antarctic, Steamer Gauss (German) to the Antarctic, and the U. S. expedition in the Mary and Helen to Behring Sea.

The Department of Marine and Fisheries sent letters to well known merchants, asking them if they desired to supply articles in accordance with the requisitions of Captain Bernier, stating that **THE DEPARTMENT WOULD EXPECT THEM TO SUPPLY THESE GOODS AT THE GOING MARKET PRICES.** The evidence proved that with one trifling exception, **THE GOODS SUPPLIED WERE OF GOOD QUALITY, AND WERE CHARGED AND PAID FOR AT MARKET PRICES.**

The most serious charge was that the supplies purchased were never put on board the vessel. In this regard the Government took every possible precaution. Capt. Bernier himself says he personally checked the items as they arrived at the vessel, and supervised their transfer to the hold. In this duty he was assisted by a purser, Mr. Weeks, and a special clerk, Mr. Moffet. The invoices were checked and O.K'd by these men. In addition, Sir Wilfrid Laurier sent down Col. White of the R. N. W. M. Police, and Mr. J. E. B. Roudreau, to check the goods and inquire into their quality. Mr. Bourdeau was furnished with duplicate orders, and his instructions in writing from the Deputy Minister conclude with these words:—

"THE MAIN OBJECT OF YOUR PROCEEDING TO QUEBEC IS, THEREFORE, TO SEE THAT THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF THE STORES ARE CORRECT."

Messrs. Weeks and Moffet kept tab of the goods on pads, and these pads were checked off by Mr. Boudreau, and placed in evidence before the committee.

Upon the return of the vessel, Mr. Weeks, the purser, compared what was on board with the account of what had been used AND THE TWO TALLIED WITH THE ORIGINAL PURCHASE, CONCLUSIVELY PROVING THAT EVERY DOLLAR OF GOODS PURCHASED WENT ON BOARD THE VESSEL. Watchmen were on board day and night so that it was impossible to remove anything from the vessel after it once went on board.

### COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS

The select committee reported as follows:—

"That in view of the contemplated expedition of over three years, and of the hardships and contingencies naturally attendant upon such a voyage, and the impossibility of replenishing stores, the quantity and variety of stores, merchandise and supplies and provisions WERE REASONABLE AND NECESSARY AND WERE OF THE BEST QUALITY."

"That all the stores, merchandise supplies and provisions purchased by the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the said Steamer, and for the purpose of said expedition to such waters WERE PLACED ON BOARD, and the said Steamer was capable of carrying, holding and accommodating AND DID CARRY, HOLD AND ACCOMMODATE ALL THE SAID STORES, MERCHANDISE SUPPLIES AND PROVISIONS, in addition to, and exclusive of, any stores carried for and on account of the North West Mounted Police service."

"NO PART OR PORTION OF THE SAID STORES, MERCHANDISE SUPPLIES AND PROVISIONS WERE, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, IMPROPERLY DIVERTED FOR USES OTHER THAN ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED, by, or for the profit of any person or persons;

"THAT FAIR AND REASONABLE PRICES were paid for the said stores, merchandise, supplies and provisions, WITH THE EXCEPTION of a quantity of tobacco purchased in Quebec, the particulars of which are as follows:—

805 lbs smoking tobacco at.....	95 cts.
200 " chewing "	78 "

The amount paid for said two quantities of tobacco, the committee find to have been excessive.

"That no officers, agents or servants of the Department of Marine and Fisheries unjustly, unlawfully or corruptly profited in connection with the purchase or disposition of any of the stores, merchandise supplies and provisions, purchased and placed on board, the said Steamer "Arctic."

"That all stores, merchandise supplies and provisions NOT CONSUMED DURING THE PROGRESS OF THE EXPEDITION of the said Steamer "Arctic," after making due allowance for the depreciation in quantities by reason of natural and unavoidable causes, ARE NOW IN POSSESSION OF, AND UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND FISHERIES."

## **CHARGES FAILED FOR WANT OF EVIDENCE**

Each charge failed for want of evidence—IT WAS FOUND THAT THE PRICES PAID WERE REASONABLE AND JUST, WITH ONE TRIFLING EXCEPTION.

IT WAS DEMONSTRATED THAT NO EXCESSIVE QUANTITIES WERE ORDERED.

IT WAS CONCLUSIVELY PROVED THAT ALL THE GOODS PURCHASED DULY REACHED THE VESSEL, AND WERE CHECKED UP ON BOARD.

Those who read this will know what credence to place in the "Arctic scandal." They will know that the Conservatives, after being given every opportunity to prove extravagance or wrong doing, utterly failed to prove either. In future, when the Arctic affair is alluded to, it will be remembered that the "Arctic" was a case in which certain charges were made in the House, and that when the time came to prove them THE CONSERVATIVES FOUND THEMSELVES UNEQUAL TO THE TASK.

## **EVERYTHING POSSIBLE SAFEGUARDED**

Could any Government do more to protect the public interest than was done in this case?

Captain Bernier prepared the requisitions based upon other similar expeditions.

Merchants were invited to fill the requisitions with goods of the best quality at the lowest market prices, and they were informed that unless these conditions were observed the goods would be returned at their expense.

Every package was checked and sampled as it reached the vessel, passing the test of the officials, especially charged with that duty, and finally receiving the additional O. K. of Captain Bernier, Col. White and Mr. Boudreau.

Finally, upon the return of the vessel, two-thirds of her supplies were found on board, and passed into the department stores after being checked up by the purser, Mr. Weeks.

Compared with other expeditions, that of the "Arctic" was conducted at a much smaller cost, and the rations per man were even lower than was provided by order in council for Government rations, passed by the Conservative Government years ago. See table "A."

The cost of the expedition fitted out for a similar voyage in 1886, when Mr. Foster was Minister of Marine and Fisheries, was \$1.30 per man per day—the cost of the "Arctic" expedition was \$1.03 per man per day. See table "B."

## OTHER SIMILAR EXPEDITIONS

	ENGLISH.	GERMAN.	CANADIAN
Meat.....	50 men, 3 yrs.	26 men, 3 yrs.	48 men, 3 yr
Biscuits.....	111,500 lbs.	104,157 lbs.	81,750 lbs.
Flour.....	56,000 "	36,440 "	34,000 "
Sugar.....	42,000 "	52,000 "	30,000 "
Butter.....	15,000 "	25,000 "	15,000 "
Milk.....	7,500 "	17,000 "	5,200 "
Lard.....	8,000 "	20,250 "	4,800 "
	15,000 "	5,148 "	2,000 "

### LIQUORS.

ENGLISH.	CANADIAN.
10,000 bottles Champagne, Whiskey, Brandy and various wines. Rum, 800 gals.	10 cases Champagne, 10 cases P. Wine, 5 cases Brandy, 1 bbl. Whiskey, Rum, 100 gals.

English expedition cost.....	\$600,000
Arctic                        do	..... 155,451

### TABLE "A"

#### COMPARATIVE RATIONS.

Government rations of meat gives 1 lb. 8 oz. per man. 48 men, 1,200 days equals 86,400 lbs. or 4,650 lbs. short.  
 Government rations, biscuit, gives 1 lb. 4 oz. per man. 48 men, 1,200 days equals 72,000 lbs. or 38,000 lbs. short.  
 Government rations, flour, gives 1 lb. 4 oz. per man. 48 men, 1,200 days equals 72,000 lbs. or 42,000 lbs. short.  
 Government rations, sugar, gives 4 oz. per man. 48 men, 1,200 days equals 14,400 lbs. or 600 lbs. short.  
 Government rations, butter, gives 2 oz. per man. 48 men, 1,200 days equals 7,200 lbs. or 2,000 lbs. short.

### TABLE "B"

#### COMPARATIVE COST.

Expedition, 1886, when Hon. G. E. Foster was Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

1886—Neptune.....	\$1.30 per man.
1897—Diana.....	.86 " "
1903—Neptune.....	1.14 " "
1904—Arctic.....	1.03 " "



