

NORTH ATLANTIC TRADING COMPANY

Wealthy Aggregation of Booking Agents who Combined for the Purpose of Stimulating Immigration from Continental Europe to Canada.

BONUS RESTRICTED TO AGRICULTURALISTS AND DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

Contract Cancelled because Company Failed to Live up to One of its Important Provisoes.

DESIRABLE IMMIGRANTS WERE SECURED.

The North Atlantic Trading Company has been exploited by the Conservatives as one of their choice scandals. The subject was introduced to the House by Mr. Foster in the session of 1906, and his presentation of it was accompanied by the usual assortment of exaggerations, misrepresentations and false statements which usually characterize his charges of scandal against the present government.

DOCUMENTS AND OFFICIALS EXAMINED

All the documents in connection with the case bearing upon the dealings of the government with this company, were before the House. Every officer of the department who had taken part in any of the negotiations were thoroughly examined before the public accounts committee, Mr. W. T. R. Preston was sent from England, and with Mr. Smart, ex-deputy Minister of the Interior, was examined most exhaustively by the committee, with the result that all the facts were well known, all the documents had been examined, and no man knew the history of the transaction better than Mr. Foster, and yet this gentleman reconciled it with his conscience to present to the House a distorted, misleading and absolutely false statement of the case.

Mr. Foster when presenting the matter to the House, disregarded the facts as disclosed in evidence and by the written documents, but seized the opportunity to make a vicious attack upon Hon. Mr. Sifton, who was absent from the House, and insinuated that he and some officials of the Interior Department were interested in the contract.—Mr. Foster had not the courage to make any direct charge.

FOSTER'S FALSE STATEMENT AS TO BONUS PAID

Mr. Foster also stated that the North Atlantic Trading Company was paid a bonus upon every immigrant coming from the countries covered by the contract, without any inquiries being made as to whether the Company were instrumental in bringing them or not. These were his words:—

“Just think of what it is—you draw a line around a certain portion of continental Europe, within that line is a fixed field for work, for any and every agency “to bring in immigrants to Canada—But, no matter how many agencies work, “no matter what the local or general influences are that send people to Canada, “when they come here on every one of them the government says we will pay \$5. “per head to the North Atlantic Trading Company.”

THIS STATEMENT IS FALSE IN EVERY PARTICULAR—THE CONTRACT CONTAINS NO SUCH PROVISION, NEITHER WAS THE BONUS PAID AS INDICATED.

PARLIAMENT DULY AUTHORIZED PAYMENT

Mr. Foster further stated that the payment to the Company was not authorized by Parliament—THIS IS ALSO FALSE, FOR PARLIAMENT VOTED EVERY DOLLAR OF THE MONEY FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS USED.

REASONS LEADING TO FORMATION OF COMPANY

What led up to the formation of the North Atlantic Trading Company?

During the eighteen years the Conservative Government were in power previous to 1896, the immigration policy was upon the same lines. They paid bonuses to booking agents and ticket sellers. When Mr. Sifton became Minister of the Interior in 1896 that was the system he found in force. Under the Conservatives it had not been successful—although they discriminated against British immigrants by paying for them a bonus of \$1.75 while they paid a bonus upon continental immigrants of \$5.00 a head.

Continental immigration under the Conservatives was practically at a standstill as the following table will show:

CONTINENTAL IMMIGRATION

1882	12,083	1890	2,938
1883	9,677	1891	7,607
1884	6,151	1892	8,360
1885	3,072	1893	9,562
1886	4,995	1894	4,825
1887	12,376	1895	3,834
1888	12,962	1896	4,451
1889	4,320		

STRICT LAWS OF CONTINENTAL EUROPE

It must be remembered that in certain parts of continental Europe THE LAW IS VERY STRICT AS TO OFFERING INDUCEMENTS TO CITIZENS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.—The system of having local Canadian agents was impossible in consequence of the risk of imprisonment, and as there is no habeas corpus in any of these countries, an agent of the government who might think he was conducting a legitimate business, would be liable to imprisonment for an indefinite term. Under these circumstances the government could not employ paid agents in Germany, and continued the system of giving bonuses to steamship agents.

Mr. Sifton found that dealing with INDIVIDUAL BOOKING AGENTS WAS NOT PRODUCING SATISFACTORY RESULTS, and it was decided to adopt another method. Instead of dealing with scattered booking agents, HE DETERMINED TO DEAL WITH ONE FIRM, COVERING A SPECIFIC TERRITORY IN WHICH A PROPAGANDA IN THE INTEREST OF CANADA WAS TO BE CARRIED ON.

VARIOUS AGREEMENTS ENTERED INTO

Therefore on 4th of November, 1899, an agreement was completed between Mr. Preston, acting for the Department of the Interior, and a syndicate known as the North Atlantic Trading Company, by which the Company undertook to carry on emigration work in Russia, Germany, Austria, Roumania, Switzerland, Northern Italy, Holland, Belgium and France. The bonus to be paid on male of females destined for Manitoba and the North West Territories, 12 years of age or over as follows:—17s 6d on any number less than 10,000 in each year; 20s. on any number between 10,000 and 15,000 and 25s. on any number exceeding 15,000 in each year. Heads of families to be possessed of at least \$100.00.

The money qualification was objected to by the Company on 15th April, 1900, and the agreement was revised in this way. The government agreed to pay 20s. on every bona-fide agricultural immigrant and domestic servant, except in the case of Galicians and Buckowinians, when the head of the family must possess \$200. \$50 to suffice for man and wife without children, \$100 where the family did not exceed two. Unmarried persons of 16 years and over must possess \$25 in addition to transportation. Norway, Sweden and Denmark were added to the agreement, and the Company agreed to expend \$10,000 per annum in advertising Canada.

By order in council 1st May, 1902, another change was made. The Company was to receive £1 for each man, woman and child of the agricultural class only, and for each girl 18 years of age and over of the domestic class from the countries mentioned in the agreement in force prior to January, 1902. Settlers from Galicia, Roumania, Servia and Russia to have money qualification, man and wife \$100, \$25.00 additional for each child, maximum amount for family \$200, unmarried men and women \$25.00 each. The government agreed to make a grant of £750 for special work in Norway, Sweden and Finland for two years, on condition that the Company spend at least £1,000 in this special work. The Company deposited £1,000 with the government on 14th April, 1902, as a guarantee of good faith. Northern Italy, Roumania, Servia and Belgium were subsequently removed from the operation of the agreement.

After this agreement had been in force some time, the Company experienced a difficulty, owing to the financial restrictions imposed, in making a satisfactory adjustment of accounts with the government, and suggested that all immigrants of all nationalities should be placed on the same footing, but that a restriction be placed on the number of bonus subjects from certain countries.

FINAL CONTRACT RECENTLY CANCELLED

The final contract was made on 28th November, 1904, which stipulated that no bonus should be paid upon immigrants in excess of 5,000 from Galicia, Bukowinia and Poland, (excepting Germans) in any one year.

THE COMPANY AGREED TO EXPEND THE SUM OF \$15,000 ANNUALLY IN ITS OPERATIONS, to be accounted for each year by receipted vouchers, sworn statements or other evidence of proof. The Company agreed to carry on an active educative work in the agricultural districts covered by the contract, by—ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC PRESS, BY PAMPHLETS PUBLISHED IN THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES OF THE COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE CONTRACT, AND BY PERSONAL CANVASS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMPANY. The contract contained a clause, that to assist and encourage the Company in a special effort in Norway, Sweden and Finland during the next three years, the government shall make a grant to the Company of £750 a year for special work in these countries ON CONDITION THAT THE COMPANY UNDERTAKES TO SPEND A FURTHER AMOUNT OF £1000 A YEAR FOR SUCH SPECIAL WORK.

DEPARTMENT MADE OUT BONUS ACCOUNT

It was agreed that the government should keep a record of all arrivals from countries covered by the contract, and of those upon whom the Company was entitled to bonus.

The above shows the history of the Company and the changes made from time to time in the contract to conform with existing conditions.

COMPANY'S OPERATIONS PUBLISHED IN BLUE BOOKS

This Company has practically been doing business with the government since 1899, AND THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR FOR 1901-2 RELATE WITH GREAT PARTICULARITY JUST WHAT HAS BEEN DONE, IN FACT THE CONTRACT WITH THE NORTH ATLANTIC TRADING COMPANY WAS REFERRED TO, and the very terms given in full, and the deputy Minister stated, that the work was better done, and with more satisfactory results than ever before.

WHAT THEN BECOMES OF THE SLANDEROUS IGNORANT STATEMENT OF MR. FOSTER THAT PARLIAMENT KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT, when this very report is given free to every member of the House? His charge that Parliament knew nothing about the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company IS MALICIOUSLY FALSE, AND HE KNEW IT TO BE, WHEN HE MADE IT.

PARLIAMENT DULY APPROPRIATED THE MONEY

Mr. Foster also said the contract was made without Parliament having appropriated the money. THIS IS EQUALLY FALSE WITH THE OTHER. The money was appropriated to pay the bonus due under contract by the supply bill of every year—1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, and 1906, AND HAD MR. FOSTER BEEN A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE FROM 1900 TO 1904 HE WOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS, BUT THE ELECTORS OF HIS OWN PROVINCE REJECTED HIM IN 1900. Had he been a member of the House when the report of the Minister of the Interior of 1901-2 was laid on the table, he would have been better informed, AND NOT HAVE COMMITTED HIMSELF TO A STATEMENT WHICH STAMPS HIS UTTERANCES AS UNRELIABLE.

BONUS ONLY PAID ON SMALL PROPORTION OF ARRIVALS

Mr. Foster stated that the government paid bonus to the Company upon every immigrant arriving from Continental European Countries covered by the Company's contract. THIS STATEMENT IS JUST AS FALSE AS THE OTHERS. The following table shows the total arrivals of immigrants from the countries covered by the contract, and, it shows also the comparatively small proportion of arrivals upon which bonus was paid.

Year	Arrivals	Allowed	Amt. Paid.
1899 and 1st 6 months of 1900	32,949	3,432	\$ 5,932.35
1900-1901	19,352	7,540	23,817.59
1901-1902	23,732	10,445	35,916.00
1902-1903	37,099	14,873	34,553.33
1903-1904	34,728	12,991	38,933.33
1904-1905	37,255	11,881	87,173.88
1905-1906	44,349	8,741	79,684.54
1906-1907	34,217	1,050	61,234.83
Total	262,881	70,953	\$367,245.85

It appears from this table that OUT OF 262,881 IMMIGRANTS COMING FROM COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE CONTRACT OF THE COMPANY THE GOVERNMENT ONLY PAID BONUS UPON 70,953, which not only stamps Mr. Foster's statement as false, but it proves the BONUS WAS ONLY PAID UPON THE PARTICULAR CLASS UPON WHICH IT HAD BEEN AGREED TO PAY BONUS. The large amount of the last payment is accounted for by the fact that there were a large number of disputed claims for bonus, and in the final adjustments upon cancellation of the contract, everything was paid up in full and COMPLETE SETTLEMENT MADE and the account closed.

OFFICIAL FIGURES DISPROVE FOSTER'S CHARGE

Mr. Foster made another statement which it is necessary to disprove by official figures. He said that the government handed over to the North Atlantic Trading Company \$5.00 per head upon every immigrant arriving in the country without regard to anything the company may have done in including the immigrant to come. The following table is interesting in two particulars. FIRST, BECAUSE IT UTTERLY DISPROVES HIS STATEMENT, AND SECONDLY, IT SHOWS THE SPLENDID WORK OF IMMIGRATION PERFORMED BY THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT SINCE 1896.

TOTAL IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

	British	Continental	U. S.	Total
Calendar year 1896	12.384	4.451	no returns	21.716
Calendar year 1897	11.383	7.981	2.412	16.835
Calendar year 1898	11.173	11.608	9.119	31.900
Calendar year 1899	10.660	21.938	11.945	44.543
1st 6 mos. 1900	5.141	10.211	8.543	23.895
Fiscal year 1900-1	11.810	19.352	17.987	49.149
Fiscal year 1901-2	17.259	23.732	26.388	67.379
Fiscal year 1902-3	41.792	37.099	49.473	128.364
Fiscal year 1903-4	50.374	34.728	45.229	130.331
Fiscal year 1904-5	65.359	37.253	43.652	146.266
9 months 1906-7	55.791	34.217	34.659	124.667
7 months 1907-8	104.864	67.331	39.664	211.859
Total	484.786	354.192	346.990	1185.968

THE ABSURDITY OF MR. FOSTER'S CONTENTION WILL BE MANIFEST BY A STUDY OF THE ABOVE FIGURES, but this gentleman is so careless in his allegations, and pays so little regard to the truth, that it is not remarkable.

COMPANY SPENT MORE MONEY THAN REQUIRED TO DO

Doubt was cast upon whether the Company had expended the \$15,000 a year, and the £1,000 required to be spent on special work in Scandinavia. The government sent the Chief Accountant of the Interior Department to Europe to audit the books of the Company. He reported that the Company had FORMED A WIDE-SPREAD PROPAGANDA IN ADVERTISING, AND PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTING SUITABLE LITERATURE, AND ALSO BY WELL ORGANIZED

AGENCIES THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT. He found that they had expended in the years 1903 to 1906, \$24,428.61 IN EXCESS OF WHAT THEIR CONTRACT CALLED FOR. That is they were required to spend \$45,000 on the continent and \$15,000 in Scandinavia during the period mentioned, and they actually expended \$84,428.61 as follows:

1903-1904	\$29,037.89
1904-1905	29,759.18
1905-1906	25,631.54
Total	<u>\$84,428.61</u>

CONTRACT CANCELLED

On April 14th, 1906, Hon. Mr. Oliver, Minister of the Interior notified Lord Strathcona that he proposed to cancel the contract upon the ground that having given an additional inducement to the Company to secure immigrants from Norway, Sweden and Finland, AND THAT THE ARRIVALS FROM THESE COUNTRIES SHOW A CONTINUOUS FALLING OFF, the Company had failed to carry out its obligations in good faith, AND ON NOVEMBER 30th, 1906, THE CONTRACT TERMINATED.

For a number of years the Company succeeded in inducing immigrant to come to Canada, and was paid a bonus for so doing, according to the contract. When it appeared THAT THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT WERE NOT BEING LIVED UP TO, THE CONTRACT WAS CANCELLED. It was from first to last an important and beneficial ingredient in the immigration policy of the government. NO MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT OR ANY EMPLOYEE, HAD ANY INTEREST IN THE MATTER OF A FINANCIAL CHARACTER, and when the contract ceased to be of any value to the government it was cancelled.

BOTH SIDES PROPERLY PLEDGED TO SECRECY

Much has been made of the fact that the names of the members of the North Atlantic Trading Company have been kept secret. This company was composed of an aggregation of influential booking agents, in a large way of business. TO DISCLOSE THEIR NAMES MIGHT RENDER THEM LIABLE TO PROSECUTION, FOR THE REASON THAT IT IS CONTRARY TO THE LAWS TO DUCE PEOPLE TO EMIGRATE FROM CONTINENTAL EUROPE. A pledge of secrecy was exacted by the members of the Company. THIS PLEDGE WAS CONCEDED BY THE OFFICIALS WHO MADE THE CONTRACT AND CONFIRMED BY MR. SIFTON, AND THE GOVERNMENT FELT IN HONOR BOUND TO KEEP IT INVIOIATE. Later Sir Wilfrid Laurier offered to give the names to Mr. Borden, if he desired them—but Mr. Borden declined the offer.

COMPANY DID GOOD WORK FOR CANADA

The North Atlantic Trading Company while in operation DID GOOD WORK FOR CANADA, for this work an ordinary bonus was paid upon the class of immigrants of the agricultural and domestic class so much desired in this country, but when the arrival fell off from certain countries, from which the government desired to draw immigrants, and in view of the fact that special inducements had been given to encourage the work in those countries, the contract was ended.