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## ARGUMENT OF COUNSEL IN THE CURRIE ENQUIRY

**Mr. A. G. LeBlanc, M. P. P. Sums Up for Speaker Currie, and Mr. Baxter Contra --The Charges Not Supported by Evidence--Ex-Scaler Murchie Hauled Over the Coals--No Improper Influence Used**

Moncton, Aug. 15.—The inquiry into the charges preferred in the legislature last spring by Dr. J. B. M. Baxter against Hon. William Currie, speaker of the house, was brought to a close this evening when argument by the various counsel was completed before the commissioner, James Friel, K. C. The result will be made known when Mr. Friel's report is submitted to the government.

Mr. LeBlanc, for Mr. Currie, argued that none of the charges had been supported by the evidence and quoted the evidence in support of his contention. If there was any irregularity, he said it was the fault of the system and not of the man and Mr. Currie had taken a lead in having the system remedied. His defence was eloquent and exhaustive.

Dr. Baxter, contra, argued that Mr. Currie's own evidence could be used to support the allegations of Murchie.

Mr. Copp for the government, contended himself with a brief reply to Mr. Baxter's intimation that he had not sought to secure all the evidence available by pointing out that it was Dr. Baxter's objections which had limited the scope of the inquiry.

### Mr. LeBlanc's Address

The final session, this afternoon, owing to the delay to the train on which some of those interested were travelling did not open until after 5 o'clock.

When the court opened, A. T. LeBlanc, M. P. P., colleague of and counsel for the speaker of the legislature addressed the commissioner, presenting his argument for the defence. Dealing first with the evidence of Mr. Purves, scaler for the Continental Company, that his estimate of the cut showed a total of 8,000,000 feet Mr. LeBlanc pointed out that this total included sixty per cent of fir, that the fir ran generally to small logs and thirty-five per cent of it would have to be discounted because it was rotten and no good. Another twenty per cent was cedar also very faulty.

The count made by Purves, the company scaler, he said was not a survey but an estimate. He did not count more than fifty logs at a brow nor scale ten of them. If the estimate ran high it should be remembered that the operators were getting out their timber at a very low rate and if they did not allow the jobbers a generous scale they would not get men to go into the woods.

Mr. LeBlanc remarked that he had tried to bring the tally sheets but found them too bulky and too numerous. From the total mentioned should be deducted 319,750 feet of side boards which according to Murchie, were not merchantable. This leaves a net total of 5,290,000 feet.

### Not Over 5,000,000 Feet

If further proof were needed there was the evidence of Mr. Tapley, a man of forty years' experience, whose estimate based on five days' survey was 5,739,000 feet. That should be sufficient evidence to show that the amount on which stumpage should be paid would be much more than five millions. And when Tapley made the survey the water was low and the bigger logs were sawn. It was known that ten-inch logs and under never cut with in eighty per cent of the scale in the

woods. In this case every circumstance went to make the cut less than the scale.

The commissioner had the word of Colonel Loggie, the deputy minister, who swore that what the department wanted was stumpage should be paid on the actual cut. Then there was the evidence of the circular sent to the scalers which stated that they should "give such a scale as would saw out merchantable lumber." There was no evidence of any change in this policy that was the only evidence on this point. Colonel Loggie had admitted that the department expected an estimate of the actual cut. He had sworn that the department was satisfied with the returns of the government scalers in most cases and that most of them were correct.

### Murchie Scored

Regarding the system supplied by the government scalers, the commissioner had had Murchie before him and could judge of his methods. Mr. LeBlanc was glad to say that the government had changed the system. Murchie, on his own evidence never went around to the camps. He had received \$800 to do work which he never did. He could not swear whether the Continental Company had cut one foot or ten million feet. If the old government had sent out scalers and knew that the returns were not full and were willing to accept their returns it had become by right of prescription the established law of the province. It was not theft but the accepted method.

The scaler went to the operator and asked how much he would make the scale. Bargains were made, and the government must have been aware of them. If another method had been adopted it was possible that the old government party would not have had such a large fund to oppose the election of himself and his colleague in February, 1917. If that was the recognized system the department was to blame.

There were two charges against Currie. One was that he had procured bribed or influenced Murchie to reduce his scale. That had yet to be proved. The other was that he had caused stumpage to be paid on the reduced scale knowing it to be reduced, and nothing had been produced in evidence to show that this was the case. The only evidence in support of the first charge was the scale; that was the only evidence proved him a perjurer. He had sworn that he had never been bribed to reduce the scale that was the only evidence on which he was emphatic, but Mr. Ayres and Mr. Barbour had sworn that they had paid Murchie \$100 to reduce the scale of the Prescott Lumber Company and had charged the amount up as paid for beef. Regarding the settlement for the stumpage Mr. LeBlanc pointed out that Daniel Richard who was not a political friend of theirs, had sworn that he had settled the stumpage with Murchie before the election. It might only be a strategic coincidence that Murchie had gone to Richards before the election to settle the stumpage, but he would leave it to the commissioner to judge which political party had reaped the benefit.

### Murchie's Showing on Stand

The evidence of Murchie, even if not contradicted, was such that no man of legal mind could accept it, the counsel said, and went on to quote the various conflicting statements made by the scaler. On the other hand he quoted the evidence regarding the alleged conversation as given by Mr. Currie in rebuttal. When the evidence was compared only one conclusion could be reached, and that was that Currie spoke the truth and that Murchie's evidence was a tissue of falsehoods.

Would it be logical for Currie to make such a bargain with one whom he desired to fire out, Mr. LeBlanc asked. Before this Murchie had accused Mr. Currie of putting John Kerr on the river to get an accurate account of the logs and squeezed on him to the government. Was that the action of a man who wanted to make such a bargain as Murchie alleged? The second phase of the charge involved the allegation that Currie had caused the stumpage to be paid knowing that it was less than it should be. Where was there a jot or tittle of evidence to show that he had such knowledge, the counsel asked. His honor—

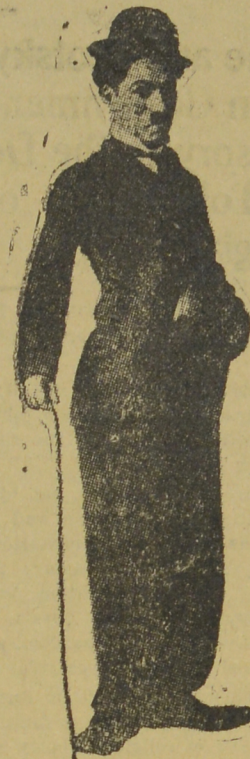
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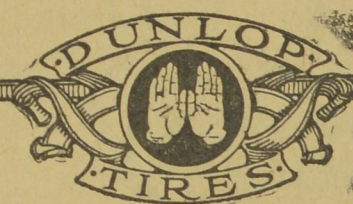
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