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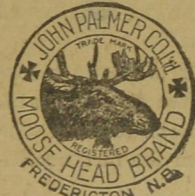
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Com'r McQueen's Report Discussed in the House

Hon. Mr. Byrne Calls Attention to Some Facts Which Accused Members Overlooked in Their Statements—Hon. Mr. Veniot Points Out That the Findings of the Commissioner Were Fully Justified by the Evidence—Remarks of Mr. Campbell, of St. John, When Moving the Opposition Amendment.

The McQueen report, over the threshold

The McQueen report and the resolution and amendment in connection therewith provoked an interesting discussion in the Legislature on Thursday. Many members on both sides expressed their opinion and it was 1.30 o'clock Friday morning before a vote was taken. Following is a synopsis of the report of the speeches of Hon. Messrs. Byrne and Veniot and Messrs. Campbell and Magee:

HON. MR. BYRNE rising to second the motion said it would have been more agreeable to him had this unpleasant duty fallen to some other hon. member. However, it was not a question of the task being pleasant or unpleasant. The Resolution moved by the hon. Premier had put the matter up to the members of the House in consequence of the charges referred to in it. They must decide concerning the conduct of the men referred to in the resolution and whether that conduct had tended to lower public life in this province, also whether it merited the censure of the House. It was not pleasant to rise and move for censure on a fellow man. Such an act must cause the thought to rise in the mind of every one of the necessity of removing the beam from one's own eye before seeing the mote in his brother's. It was not his intention to discuss this from a political standpoint but in view of the disclosures in connection with public life in New Brunswick made in recent years it was necessary for the members of this House to take action. An independent commission had reported in connection with transactions in Valley Railway

commissioner McQueen and the course of action which the legislature would take upon that finding. The evidence upon which the finding was based was full and detailed and if hon. members of the House decided that that finding was supported by the evidence they could take no other course than vote for the resolution. That evidence to a great extent had been given by the men themselves. As a hon. member of the House he must base his decisions upon that evidence.

When the hon. leader of the opposition speaking in the afternoon had referred to the fact that his son had gone overseas and had served the Empire, he had touched the hearts of all members. The statement of the hon. gentleman involved in the finding had been listened to attentively and had been taken into consideration. But this was not a question of sympathy. It was above sympathy. Each hon. member must perform his duty. He would have a heart like a rock who did not respond to the appeals which had been heard, but as a matter of public interest he must set aside his feelings and give a vote which would best conserve the business of the public. In the matter of the Patriotic Potato Gift the duty had devolved upon the late Minister of Agriculture to see that all payments were properly made. He would draw attention to an order-in-council for a special warrant for \$75,000 which made special mention of "The Minister of Agriculture upon whose order all payments shall be made."

As far as concerned the hon. member for Carleton (Smith) he must accept his statement that he was not a member of the legislature at the time he had made the purchase of potatoes, for that was a matter of fact and that particular if the public interest demanded. Afterward that gentleman had become a member of the House and had made a statement concerning the matter. The agreement entered into with that gentleman had been characterized as "one which never should have been entered into, which had been shamefully abused by Mr. Smith and which had caused much loss to the Province." Yet he was only one of those who had carried out the whole scheme. Conspiracy was a harsh term, yet something of that class which would work to the disadvantage of the Province though not indictable, was really that. A person could not get away from the fact that the taking of the man Daggett by Mr. Smith to the late Premier Clarke was most extraordinary. It looked as if each man had had his respective part to play in this

scheme. After the loss, after making it up, after the suppression of the facts, they went to the Premier.

He called in Tennant who said that if he could get a contract on the Valley Railway he could meet the potato loss. Evidence was that the late Premier to that proposition had said "very well". He did not wish to reflect upon the deceased Premier but he had brought Mr. Jones into the matter to carry on further negotiations. It was impossible to get away from the findings of the Commissioner, that Mr. Jones was part and parcel of this conspiracy to conceal the transaction. No person those on the other side of the House could do so. The conclusion was forced irresistibly upon the mind, no matter how unpleasant that conclusion might be, that all were acting together. B. F. Smith was to make the people believe that he had paid back money owing to the province. In the matter of the railway contracts it was known that the first contract was on a mileage basis. That was cancelled. The report showed that Mr. Baxter was present when the matter was discussed. It was part of the general scheme. The second contract was on a unit basis and called for \$200,000 more than the first. The Commissioner had started that there was evidence that more than one Minister knew of this matter. He was forced to conclude that an understanding and agreement existed and part and parcel of that agreement was an arrangement whereby what Tennant called advanced profits were to be taken from the Province.

MR. CROCKET rose to a point of order on the expression "This Man Jones" used by Hon. Mr. Byrne. It might be permissible to refer to "This Man Daggett" but the other was an hon. member of the House.

HON. MR. BYRNE replied that he used the expression in no offensive sense.

MR. CROCKET—Will the hon. member retract?

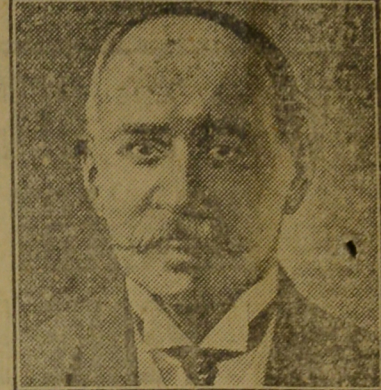
HON. MR. BYRNE—I could add to it. I cannot retract.

Continuing the speaker said that Mr. Jones had conveniently appeared on the scene and had received the money. The evidence had shown that and the Commissioner had found it. There were many who would say that this investigation had been entirely political. He was not desirous of being unfair but from the finding of the Commissioner supported by evidence, from public opinion throughout the province, he felt he must express himself in conclusion as being of the opinion that it would not be in the interest of public life and it would be derogatory to the legislature if, after appointing the Commissioner, it allowed his report to lie upon the table and if the House would not place itself on record as condemning the transaction. The actions of the men concerned had shown conclusively that there had been a conspiracy. In his address during the afternoon Mr. Jones had referred to the conclusion of Commissioner McQueen that he (Jones) had sworn falsely at either one or other of the enquiries, but he had not read all that the Commissioner had to say.

The speaker quoted from the Commissioner's report to the effect that

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he had been forced to come to this "harsh conclusion" concerning Mr. Jones. The latter had referred to his commercial connection in the County of Kings. In that he was probably correct as he very likely did a big business. For him he could say that he had never done him (Byrne) a personal injury.

Neither had Messrs. Smith, Murray or Baxter. No personal animus actuated him but there was nothing else to do but support the resolution and pass the vote of censure.

Opposition Amendment.
MR. CAMPBELL said he desired to move an amendment to the resolution offered by the 'Hon. Premier. While the mover and seconder of the resolution had been speaking there had been no opportunity of preparing an amendment and he would suggest a half hour's recess in order that he might place it in proper form. He further asked for a copy of the resolution.

HON. MR. SPEAKER left the chair at 10.05 to resume in twenty minutes.

MR. CAMPBELL, upon the House resuming, moved his amendment to the resolution.

MR. CAMPBELL thanked Hon. Mr. Speaker for the recess. He said he was about to offer an amendment and desired to say that the name and

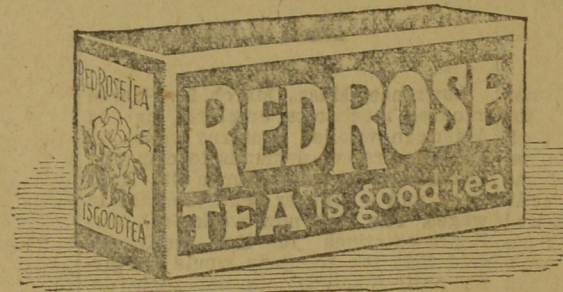
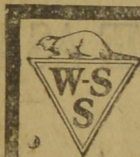
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ATTORNEY GENERAL BYRNE

construction to such an effect that a former prime minister of the province had resigned from the House and withdrawn from public life, and the fact must be remembered that on the journals of the House had been placed what was known as the "whitewash" resolution for that man. It was not for political purposes that he called attention to that fact but because it is now the duty of hon. members of the House to decide whether or not there should be another whitewash resolution.

The hon. Premier had referred to a decision taken by the late Government early in the war to make a contribution to the Mother Land. After that contribution had been made ugly rumors had begun to circulate concerning the transaction and the manner in which it was carried out. The people were told that charges made in that connection were purely for political capital, yet when the next general election came a change of government was brought about. An investigation followed and no one could say that the appointment of the Commissioner to hold that investigation was not justified. The finding of the Commissioner had been made known and ample opportunity had been given for reply by hon. members concerned in that finding. Notice was given then of tabling of the finding and ample time afforded for the preparation of a defence. It also was true that after the finding had been laid on the table of the House a vicious attack was made on Commissioner McQueen within the House. He had been characterized as ignorant, illiterate, partizan and incompetent. About the same time violent attacks upon him were made outside by a certain section of the press. If this were a party matter he would say that he would not be a party to a vote of censure. It was not surprising that hon. speakers concerned would make attacks on Commissioner McQueen. If the impression could be created in the public mind that he was biased and partizan it would be advantageous from their point of view. Nevertheless there was observable throughout the province among men of both political parties a feeling that action must be taken by the House. Within the Chamber itself there was evidence of the public interest in the finding of Com-



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