

DUNDONALD

Will be Asked to Get Out.

HON. MR. FISHER FULLY JUSTIFIED HIS ACTION.

Attempt Made to Create a Tory Regiment.

WAS NIPPED IN THE BUD.

Ottawa, June 11.—A full statement of the Dundonald-Fisher episode was made in parliament yesterday, and from what Sir Wilfrid Laurier said it is inferred that the commander of the militia will be dismissed if he does not resign.

Hon. Sydney Fisher made the following statement: "I am glad to take this the earliest opportunity permitted me to state the exact facts in regard to the incidents referred to by the general officer commanding, Lord Dundonald, in his speech at the military banquet in Montreal.

In regard to Lord Dundonald's general statement that I interfered with the organization of the corps and with the names of other proposed officers of the corps as well as Dr. Pickell, let me say this: That the only grounds on which I made any suggestions in regard to the establishment of this corps was the immense importance of the appointment of leading officers, with military qualifications, who knew the country and the people of the Eastern townships, the district where the corps was to be established, but I took no exception to anybody's appointment on political grounds alone as is evidenced by my recommendation and endorsement of many well known Conservatives; that no one believes more thoroughly than I do that the first necessity in the recommendation of officers on the establishment of a new regiment is personal qualification, and general personal suitability, and that no political considerations should be allowed to interfere with this.

In regard to what Lord Dundonald calls "a most flagrant instance of political interference," through my having stricken the name of Dr. Pickell from the list recommended by him to the minister of militia, have this to say:

In the list of proposed appointments signed by Lord Dundonald, in which the item appears of Dr. F. A. Pickell to be major, there is an asterisk opposite his name and a footnote stating, as a special case he will be required to pass the qualifying examination. When I first saw his name upon the list, knowing him personally and knowing something of military matters in the neighborhood, I was aware that he had never been connected with the militia and had never shown any interest in military matters or participated in any such movement. I therefore suggested that his appointment as commander of a squadron should not be made. Further investigation confirmed me in this, and also proved to the commanding officer who recommended his appointment that I was right. Dr. Pickell himself so appreciated this fact that he was reluctant to accept the position.

"On May 19, in the absence from Ottawa of the minister of militia, the commander of the regiment, Col. Smart came to my office, asking that I should press through the council the passage of the general order authorizing these appointments. The next morning I received the following from Colonel Pinault, deputy minister of militia:

"Ottawa, May 19, 1904.—Dear Mr. Fisher.—Will you kindly sign the enclosed for the minister, and if possible have it passed today. (Sgd.) F. L. Pinault."

"At the same time I received from Colonel Smart the following:

"Thirteenth Scottish Light Dragoons, Montreal, May 19, 1904. Dear Mr. Fisher.—Immediately on my return this evening I met Lieut.-Colonel Whitley and discussed fully with him all matters in connection with our interview. Col. Whitley was pleased to learn that everything was arranged satisfactorily, and at his request I telephoned to Sweetburg, with a view of getting from Dr. Pickell his final answer as to whether or not it was his intention to remain in the squadron, because, as I stated to you today, he had intimated to me his lukewarmness in the matter. I now have his final decision, which is that he gives up all connection with the squadron. In accordance, therefore, with Dr. Pickell's request, I can now, as commanding officer of the regiment, request you to kindly make the change in the Gazette by leaving Dr. Pickell's name out. I sincerely hope that this will meet with your approval, and in view of the short time between now and date of camp, you will kindly see that all recommen-

dations pass the council tomorrow. Thanking you for your kind consideration and assistance, believe me, (Sgd.) Charles A. Smart, Lieutenant-colonel commanding 13th S. L. Dragoons."

"In view of the above, I certainly recommend that Lieutenant-Colonel Smart's suggestion be followed. (Sgd.) Fred Whitley, Lieutenant-colonel commanding Eastern Townships Cavalry Brigade, Montreal, 19th May, 1904."

"I signed and sent the recommendation with the following note to the clerk of the privy council:

"Ottawa, May 20, 1904. Dear Mr. McGee.—I send you a recommendation from the department of militia and defence which I have signed for Sir Frederick Borden. He and I have discussed this matter and agreed that this should be put through. You will note that I have stricken out one of the appointments to be major, F. A. Pickell. I have just received a letter from the colonel who made these recommendations, saying that Mr. Pickell does not wish to have his name included. If you would be kind enough to make an order on these recommendations so as to put it through today, you will much oblige, as the militia department is very anxious to have it put through. (Sgd.) Sydney Fisher."

"This is a sample statement of the facts of the case, which, without referring in any way to the propriety of the general officer commanding, discussing in public official recommendations, without referring to the broad question of the propriety of an official of the government of Canada criticizing the official action of a member of that government—absolutely disproves the charge that for political reasons I had undertaken to strike out a name which has been submitted to the minister of militia for appointment in the service."

Confirmed by Dr. Borden.

Sir Frederick Borden minister of militia said I confirm literally and entirely the statement just made by my colleague, the minister of agriculture (Mr. Fisher). He had for several years advocated the organization of a mounted force. In the Eastern Townships, his own home, and the part of the Dominion for the general good government of which he has a right to feel a special interest and when the time came, to take the question up, I naturally looked to him for advice and assistance. Finding that I would be obliged to be absent from Ottawa from the 18th to the 26th of May, I instructed my deputy to take the general order containing the proposed list of appointments to the regiment in question, so soon as completed, to my colleague, the minister of agriculture, to be by him submitted to council, in view of the urgency of the case and this was done.

A Tory Champion.

At this point in the debate it developed that Lord Dundonald had sent his view of the case to Col. Sam Hughes, a Tory M. P., and just as parliament opened yesterday, had sent a copy to the minister of militia.

Col. Hughes—I would like to ask the minister if he will be good enough to read that memorandum.

Sir Frederick Borden—I have not had the opportunity of reading it myself yet.

Mr. Hughes—Will the minister read it?

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—The document belongs to the honorable member for North Victoria (Mr. Hughes.) It is addressed to him. It is only a copy which is addressed to my honorable friend the minister.

Mr. Borden thought the government should produce the statement. Sir Wilfrid Laurier—If General Lord Dundonald had any document to send to anybody he should have sent it to his minister. He has not chosen to do so, but has chosen to send it to Col. Hughes and it is for Col. Hughes to do with it what he pleases.

Col. Hughes spoke at some length reading the letter he had received from Lord Dundonald. This letter was long but did not contain anything particularly beyond a letter which Dundonald had received from Lieut.-Col. Smart which did not agree with Smart's letter to Mr. Fisher. In the letter to Dundonald, Col. Smart gave the impression that Mr. Fisher was interfering with the putting through of the list and the letter to Mr. Fisher already published is of a different kind.

Mr. Fisher Replies.

Mr. Fisher said he would not comment upon the medium which Lord Dundonald had selected to place his case before parliament. Mr. Fisher showed that officers whom Lord Dundonald had recommended around Sweetburg were Tory politicians and relatives of Senator Baker, opposition leader in the district. When the list was presented to him (Fisher) he objected to the regiment being made a Tory organization. He (Fisher) pressed for appointment of Conservatives as well as Liberals. And in place of Dr. Pickell he recommended Lieut. Dye Carr, a Conservative. "If" said Mr. Fisher, "Lord Dundonald had used that courtesy which one gentleman owes to another, or had he exercised a little of the commonsense his two years experience in this country ought to have given him, he would have sought explanations from the head of the militia department before making his statements in public."

The minister said that he had letters in his office from Col. Smart and Mr. Whitley expressing their ex-

treme satisfaction with the course he had taken as a friend of the regiment.

Laurier's Ominous Words.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier said that it was preferable at this moment not to push further discussion of the consequences which might follow from Lord Dundonald's remarks, not that he had any doubt as to what would follow, but it was best to proceed with prudence and deliberation. Lord Dundonald was charged with the reorganizing of militia but he had to take counsel when reorganizing a regiment. The general was a stranger and the minister of agriculture, who knew the district well, might have been consulted. Col. Smart fell into the hands of a family compact.

Sir Wilfrid wanted Lord Dundonald to know that the country would not be dragooned. There was responsible government in Canada.

The debate was continued by Houghton, Lennox, Northrup, Monk, Haggart, Clarke, Pope and Fowler.

Mr. Fielding said that lest there be some misapprehension on the question, he would say that the question under discussion was not the conduct of Lord Dundonald which was a different matter and which the government had purposely refrained from discussing.

After some closing remarks from Col. Hughes, the matter dropped.

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