

SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT THE ALLEGED "ARCTIC" SCANDAL.

Conservatives Made Definite Charges in the House and
Liberals Insisted Upon Most Thorough In-
vestigation.

EVIDENCE PROVES CHARGES ARE WITHOUT
FOUNDATION.

(Special to Herald.)

Ottawa, July 20: A lie travels further than the truth, and it is much easier to give circulation to a false allegation than to correct the same afterwards. With the best intention, partial repatriation only is possible. An injurious statement once given publicly it can never be recalled, neither can its baneful effects be prevented.

ALLEGED "ARCTIC" SCANDAL.

There has been much said in the press of the country, and upon the public platform. Conservative orators have harangued on the subject of the "Arctic" scandal, so called. How many citizens of Canada really know the plain, unvarnished facts with relation to the Arctic? The subject was brought up in the House—it became the object of an enquiry by a select committee of Parliament—it was ventilated upon every possible occasion, and after it had ceased to be a public question of interest to the members of the House, it was made to do party political duty in a vague, undefined way as the "Arctic Scandal".

WHAT WAS ALLEGED.

"These charges are too serious to three allegations. First, that the supplies purchased for the Arctic were paid for at extravagant prices; second, that the quantities were greatly in excess of the requirements of the expedition, and, third, that it was impossible to have placed on board the quantity of stuff purchased."

It was suggested, but not definitely charged, that some of the goods purchased found their way into the possession of government officials, but this feature of the case was not made specific enough to demand particular attention.

WHAT SIR WILFRED DID.

No man has ever charged that Sir Wilfred Laurier would connive at wrong doing, neither has any man brought forward a specific charge against any official of the government, but what Sir Wilfred has expressed his willingness to grant the most searching investigation. Time and again the premier has intimated that he would pay no attention to generalities, but he invariably pledged himself to appoint a select committee to examine into the truth of any straightforward charge.

It did not come as a surprise to the House therefore when the prime minister at once arose in his place and used these words:

WHAT SIR WILFRED SAID.

"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 honourable member for Leeds (Mr. Taylor), when he says that if he is given a committee he will prove everything that he has charged. I can only say to my honourable friend that I think it my duty, speaking on behalf of the government, to say that the government cannot allow these serious charges to be made without giving the honourable gentlemen who make them an opportunity to substantiate them, and tomorrow, if the honourable 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 aboard the 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 benefited by it. The government will be prepared to meet the suggestion of honourable gentlemen opposite that we should have a full and complete investigation."

GOVERNMENT INVITES INVESTIGATION.

The first point to be observed is, that, following immediately upon the charges made by the Conservatives, Sir Wilfred Laurier promptly announced his willingness to appoint an investigating committee to inquire into their truth. There was nothing wrong, therefore nothing to be feared, and the most searching inquiry was invited by the prime minister, who named the following select committee: Messrs. Maclean, (Lunenburg) Carvell, Demers, Pardee, McCracker, Macpherson, Bennett, Bergeron, Northrup and Dr. Stockton. The resolution of May 18, 1906, to which the committee was to address itself, read as follows:

RESOLUTION PASSED BY HOUSE.

"Whereas specific charges have been made by members of this House from their seats, to the effect that the supplies, which, in the summer of 1903, 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 therewith, pecuniary benefits were received by officials of the said department.

"Therefore resolved that 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 on the reference."

CONSERVATIVES DODGE ISSUE.

No sooner did Sir Wilfred comply with the request of the Opposition to give them an opportunity of proving their charges, than they attempted to dodge the issue. This should not be overlooked, for it has an important bearing on the matter. First came the explicit charges, then came the committee to investigate the very charges made. The men who had so glibly attempted to discredit the government, hesitated to accept the government's challenge to make good their charges, and objection was made to the terms of the resolution.

SIR WILFRID'S TIMELY RETORT.

To this the premier replied that he was better informed than when he agreed to allow an investigation—"We are," said he, "met with the statement from gentlemen opposite. Don't take us too seriously when we talk wildly, it is all froth, it means nothing at all. 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."

PREMIER INSISTS ON INQUIRY.

The charges having been made, Sir Wilfred insisted that the committee should investigate, and he declined to drop the matter as the Conservatives were anxious to do, and in asking the House to pass the resolution he concluded with these words: "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 see whether it is true or not true."

WHAT THE EVIDENCE PROVED.

The "Arctic" was to be provisioned for a voyage of three years, and the deputy minister of marine and fisheries wrote to Captain Bernier that it would be his duty to make certain requisitions for the supplies that were required for the voyage. The amount involved was about \$118,000. Captain Bernier, who was in charge of the vessel, handed in his requisitions and they were duly supplied by the department.

MARKET PRICES PAID.

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 market prices. The evidence showed that with a trifling exception the goods supplied were of good quality and were charged and paid for at market rates. This disposes of the charge of extravagance as to prices paid.

NO EXCESSIVE QUANTITIES PURCHASED.

As to this charge it was met very fully. Captain Bernier, who was sailing master, had had a long experience in Arctic exploration and was quite competent to make suitable requisitions for supplies. Before sending in his requisitions for supplies Captain Bernier carefully examined the records of the different Arctic expeditions under German, English and American authority, and upon the basis of their experience made out a list of things required.

EXPENDITURES COMPARED.

The "Arctic" was fitted out for 18 men for three years. The English expedition in "Discovery" for three years cost \$600,000. The total cost of the Arctic expedition was \$155,451.04. The "Discovery" with a crew of 50 men carried 111,500 pounds of meat. The Mary Ellen of the American expedition, which was composed of 40 men, and was for two years, got 50,000 pounds of meat. The "Gauss" expedition was composed of 26 men, and was to occupy three years, carried 104,457 pounds of

meat. The "Arctic" expedition was for three years with 38 men, and the quantity of meat carried was 51,750 pounds.

The English expedition carried 84,000 pounds. Both the English and the Canadian expeditions carried the same quantity of sugar 15,000 pounds. The English expedition carried 7,500 pounds of butter, the Canadian carried only 5,200 pounds. The English expedition carried 8,000 pounds of milk, the Canadian 4,880 pounds.

The liquors carried on the English expedition made up 10,000 bottles of champagne, whiskey, brandy and various wines. The Canadian expedition had 10 cases of champagne, 10 cases of port wine, 5 cases of brandy, 1 barrel of whiskey. The English expedition had 800 gallons of rum, the Canadian only 100 gallons.

RATIONS MUCH BELOW RULE.

The rations allowed for meat, by well established rule, and order in council for the mounted police are 1 lb. 3 oz. per man. The "Arctic" had 48 men aboard, and their rations for 1,200 days would be 76,400 pounds. So that the "Arctic" was 2,650 pounds below the quantity allowed by an order in council which was passed by the Conservatives.

As to biscuits, the government ration allows the Northwest Mounted Police 1 lb. 4 oz. per man. 48 men in 1,200 days would require 72,000 pounds, so the "Arctic" was under the allowance by 38,000 pounds. The government ration for flour allows 1 lb. 4 oz. per man. On that basis the "Arctic" was short 42,380 pounds. The government ration allows 4 oz. per man. 48 men in 1,200 days would require 14,400 pounds. The "Arctic" had 15,000 pounds in board.

FOLLOWED PRESCRIBED RULE.

Captain Bernier followed somewhat the rule in force with regard to government rations, rather than the quantity of supplies taken by other expeditions, and even then he made requisitions for a lesser quantity than the law allows, and this law was made by the Conservatives.

It is quite clear, therefore that no excessive quantities of supplies were purchased, for by comparison with other expeditions the "Arctic" was considerably underprovisioned, and did not even take the quantity provided by law.

WERE SUPPLIES RECEIVED.

The most serious charge was that the supplies purchased were never put on board the vessel. In this respect the government took every possible precaution. Captain Bernier, himself, says he personally checked the items as they arrived at the vessel. In this duty he was assisted by a purser and a special clerk. The invoices were checked and o. k'd by these men. In addition Sir Wilfred Laurier sent down Mr. Boudreau and Col. White, of the Mounted Police, to check the goods and examine into their quality. In fact every precaution possible was taken by the Government to see that the goods supplied were of good quality, of reasonable price and that they duly arrived on the vessel.

CHARGES NOT SUSTAINED.

Each charge fell to the ground for want of evidence. It was found that the prices paid were reasonable and just. It was demonstrated that no excessive quantities were ordered. It was conclusively proved that all the goods reached the vessel and were checked up on board. What then becomes of the Arctic scandal? After every opportunity to prove what they charged, the Opposition signally failed to make good.

OBJECTED TO HOSPITALITY.

However, it transpired that certain meals had been given to the Esquimaux, and that these people had been entertained on board the Arctic to some dancing. This was at once magnified into a crime, terrible heinous. What the natives were given to eat was described as reckless extravagance, and the innocent entertainment provided for the Esquimaux, was denounced as debauchery.

A more absurd climax to serious charges (charges which had been met by the government with stout denial, and opportunity to submit proof), could scarcely be imagined. The Canadian government fits out a vessel to proceed to the far north and exercises sovereign rights. The natives are invited to trade, are hospitably entertained and courteous-ly treated. Everything done was with a view of inspiring confidence and respect. It is submitted to the good sense of the Canadian people, that such criticism as Conservatives direct as this expedition is without warrant and unjust.

NO SCANDAL ONLY POLITICS.

Those who read this will know what credence to place in the "Arctic scandal." They will know that after having had every opportunity to prove extravagance or wrong-doing, the Conservatives failed utterly to do so. In future when the "Arctic scandal" is alluded to, it will be remembered that the "Arctic" was a case in which certain charges were made in the House, and when the time came to prove them the Conservatives

found themselves unequal to the task.

INTANGIBLE SCANDALS.

There are other alleged scandals that have no more basis than the one in reference to the "Arctic," but it is worthy of note, that having failed so ignominiously to prove wrong-doing in this respect, the Conservatives have not asked for any more committees of investigation. It is much easier to allege scandal than to prove it.

So long as Sir Wilfred Laurier remains in power public affairs will be honestly administered, and any man in the House who is prepared to make a charge will find every opportunity given to him to prove it. The Liberal party stands for reforms and purity in official life, and for this reason it is received and for long years to come, will retain the confidence of the electorate.

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7:00 a.m.—Woodstock and Gibson Branch Stations, daily.

WAY MAILS—East Side St. John River.

7:00 a.m.—For Keswick Ridge, Southampton, etc., Mondays and Thursdays.

West Side St. John River.

7:00 a.m.—For Springhill, Kingsclear, Prince William, etc. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

6:30 a.m.—St. John River via Steamer.—For Oromocto, Shefford, Gagetown, etc.

9:15 a.m.—St. John, etc., C. P. Railway stations, East, Nova Scotia and P. E. Island.

10 a.m.—For St. Mary's Ferry, Gibson and Marysville.

WAY MAILS.

2 p.m.—For Nashwaak and St. Mary's Ferry, daily, New Brunswick, New Maryland, Hanwell, Lower St. Mary's and Royal Road, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

4:15 p.m.—For Gibson, Marysville, Boiestown, Dacktown, Blackville, etc., Chatham, and I. C. Railway Stations, north and south.

4:45 p.m.—For St. Stephen, Woodstock, United States, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and North West West Provinces.

8:15 p.m.—For St. John, etc., Nova Scotia and P. E. Island.

4:50 p.m.—British mails via New York, Mondays and Thursdays.

MAILS RECEIVED.

9:30 a.m.—From St. John, etc., and Nova Scotia.

From Hamtown, Royal Road, etc.

11:00 a.m.—From New Brunswick and New Maryland, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

12:00 noon.—From Montreal, Ottawa, Northwest Provinces, etc., and United States.

1:20 p.m.—From I. C. Railway Stations, North Shore and Quebec.

Scotia and P. E. Island.

St. John River via Steamer.

5 p.m.—From Oromocto, Shefford, Gagetown, etc.

9:05 p.m.—From Woodstock and Gibson Branch Stations, daily.

8:20 p.m.—From Nova Scotia, P. E. Island and St. John.

WAY MAILS

7:50 p.m.—West Side River, St. John.—From Meductic, and Way Offices, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

St. John.—From Woodstock and Way Offices, Tuesdays and Fridays.

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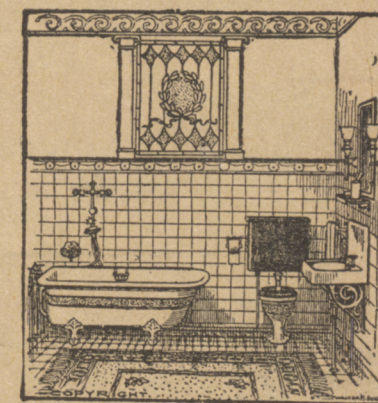
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