

BOTTOM DROPS OUT OF BLAIRMORE TOWNSITE SCANDAL

Conservatives Based Their Charges on Montalbeti's
Supposed Perjury—Jury's Verdict Says "Not
Guilty"—Review of Other Scandals Which
Have Disappeared

(Special Cor. to Herald.)

Ottawa Aug. 3.—Several so-called "scandals" were ventilated by the Conservatives in the House of Commons during the past two sessions, and one by one they became intangible and disappeared.

At the time of their exploitation much political capital was sought to be made of them, and the Opposition press of the country was jubilant. Time is a great rectifier, and the truth ultimately prevails in politics as in other affairs. All that is required to dissipate the scandalous allegations made in the House, and repeated throughout the country, is information as to the real facts.

MONTCALM SCANDAL

When it was charged as an extravagance that certain vessels used on the St. Lawrence had been supplied with wine glasses, ice pitchers and table appointments a little above what might be reasonable for men before the mast, it was explained that such provision was made for guests of the Government, or other notables, who might be entertained on these vessels. His excellency the Governor-General is now on board one of the vessels, which would not have been possible had not some accommodation been made. Notwithstanding the reasonable explanation made by the responsible minister, the Conservatives had found a succulent morsel, and they decline to recognize in the proper fitting up of the "Montcalm" other than an extravagance, yclept scandal.

SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY LAND.

The history of the South Saskatchewan Valley Land Company, has been told often and often, but few people know that the land involved in the transaction was open for settlement for years, and was passed over by thousands who did not regard it as possessing the value of lands far removed from its locality. The Opposition were at no pains to inform the people that very onerous settlement conditions attached to the ownership of this land, and that before patents could issue settlers had to be put in at great expense. The people were not given the additional information that patents have not yet issued for the whole of the land, for the reason that the conditions of purchase have not yet been performed although large sums have been spent. For all this the Saskatchewan Land Company was a toothsome scandal until something else equally intangible and unsubstantial was found to take its place.

ROBINS IRRIGATION SCHEME

The Robins Irrigation Company was made to do duty as a scandal for a time. This was a delectable morsel for the opposition when they found that the land had been sold in England before any work was done upon it. It did not transpire, however, through Opposition sources that the English company was under contract to spend one million dollars of cash upon the property in irrigation works before it could exercise the privilege of ownership. Had this been stated by the Opposition, of course the scandal feature would have disappeared. Therefore, they concealed half the truth, which was worse than circulating a lie. All they saw was that the land was being sold for \$1. an acre, they managed to lose sight of the other million in cash which must be spent in Canada before the company can exercise the privilege of buying at the dollar an acre.

This land without irrigation is worthless, and the advantages to be derived when the company commences operations will be far in excess of the temporary gain by Canada of a million spent in improvements, for it means that hundreds of thousands of acres of now barren lands will be made to blossom as the rose. To sell barren lands at \$1. an acre and provide for the expenditure of a million dollars more to change the character of the land into agricultural land of the best quality, would strike the average thinking man as an operation from which the country would receive a direct and lasting advantage; but the Conservatives describe this as a scandal.

INSURANCE INVESTMENTS.

The Opposition was insistent that a Royal Commission should be appointed to examine into the character of the investments held by insurance companies. They are not now so anxious to circulate the results of the commission, which disclosed that the leading Conservative critic in the House, Hon. Geo. E. Foster, was adjudged guilty by the Royal Commission of wrongfully using insurance funds to his own advantage.

The insurance scandal has petered out since these facts have been made public, and the Opposition have been busy ever since the report of the commissioners was brought down, not in devising legislation to correct the evils found to exist, but to find excuses for the conduct of members of the Conservative party whose acts were ruthlessly exposed by the commissioners. In this particular instance the Opposition has taken hold of something so hot that they cannot

let go of it, and it is a scandal they would be happy to bury in oblivion, but it partakes of the nature of Banchi's ghost, it won't down.

BLAIRMORE TOWNSITE SCANDAL.

One of the latest Conservative political sensations is known as the "Blairmore Townsite Scandal." This affair has not only occupied the time of the House, but has been the subject of denunciation on many platforms throughout the West.

It has been made to appear that a certain parcel of land, once open to settlement to the first comer, and now having additional value because the centre of a considerable population, was fraudulently given by the Department of the Interior to one McKenzie, who happens to be a Liberal in politics, and of course it is assumed that favoritism was shown.

HISTORY OF THE CASE

The facts are very simple and differ in no respect from the hundreds of other cases with which the department is called upon to deal, with this exception that this particular quarter section has an additional value, having been selected as the townsite of Blairmore. The department followed precisely the same rule in this case as in others, if there was any variation it was in the direction of protecting conflicting interests, as will appear.

Some five years ago, one Montalbeti, squatted on a certain quarter section, and commenced improvements including the building of a house, on the land on which he resided. In course of time the Canadian Pacific located a station upon a portion of the land, and of course installed a station agent, one Lyon. It must be remembered that Montalbeti was then, and had been for some time previously, occupying the land and claimed it by virtue of his squatter's right.

Lyon, doubtless seeing the possibilities of the location made some improvements on a part of the land, as did one Pelletier. In course of time all three made application to the department for the quarter section, and the same being in dispute the matter was presented to the Dominion Lands agent of that time to determine the rights of the parties. After hearing the evidence he adjudged the land to Montalbeti and he became the holder by patent right.

ONE DISSATISFIED CLAIMANT.

Lyon was not satisfied with this decision and appealed to the Exchequer court to have the patent set aside upon the ground of fraud. The Crown granted the petition and gave Lyon every facility to prove that he had been defrauded of the land. The result of the trial was against Lyon's claim.

It appears that during this trial the judge before whom the Exchequer case was tried, made some observations, which reflected upon the representations made by Montalbeti when making application for the land, which might have imperilled his title if substantiated. Upon this the scandal was based by the Opposition. It was stated that Montalbeti had committed perjury, in furnishing his proof of settlement, and as he has since transferred his title to one McKenzie, and as the land had become very valuable as a townsite, Lyon charged Montalbeti with perjury, and he was sent up for trial.

OPPOSITION CASE DESTROYED.

Had the case remained where the Opposition left it, there might have been a lingering doubt in the minds of some people as to whether Montalbeti was clearly entitled to the land, but all this was set at rest at the trial which occurred at McLeod, for the jury, after considering the evidence returned a verdict of not guilty.

The only ground upon which the opposition based their case was that of fraud on the part of Montalbeti in securing his title, a title which he afterwards transferred to McKenzie. This has finally been disposed of by a jury, who found that no fraud had been committed.

MINISTER PROTECTS ALL CONCERNED.

The Interior Department, however, has gone further than the law in doing justice to all parties. As both Pelletier and Lyon had apparently made some improvements on the land, the department has not yet acknowledged the title of McKenzie and will not do so until he has conveyed a certain portion of the land to both Lyon and Pelletier. It has been stipulated that Pelletier shall have thirty acres, and Lyon's interests will also be protected when he agrees to accept the arrangements made in his interest by the department.

Thus provision is made by the department which fully protects the rights of all parties, although the legal aspect of the case would vest the property in McKenzie, the assignee of Montalbeti, who has now been cleared of any imputation of fraud.

This verdict destroys the case set up by the opposition. The courts have held that Lyon had no claim up on the townsite, and that Montalbeti was not guilty of fraud; and has been demonstrated that the whole

case was dealt with upon its merits by the department.

The "Blairmore townsite scandal" may do duty as Tory politics until the facts are well known throughout the country, afterwards it will take its place with the other delict scandals at which the Conservative Sargasso Sea is crowded.

WELL CONDUCTED DEPARTMENTS.

That the Interior Department is being conducted with a due regard to the rights of individuals is very evident in the case of the Blairmore townsite—other evidence, however, is not wanting to substantiate this assertion.

The more the people say about the Laurier Government, the more anxious they will desire that it remain in power. The more the people look into the alleged scandals, the more convinced they will be that the opposition has no lasting foundation upon which it can build public favor. Men are judged by what they do, and not by what they say. The Laurier Government is a government that does things, and does them well; the Conservatives talk, but they don't talk to any purpose. The people will heed a serious charge, well founded and properly substantiated, but little attention will be paid to temporary sensations created for political purposes only.

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MAILS CLOSING

In effect, October 1, 1906.

6 a.m.—For St. John, etc., S4, Stephen and Charlotte Co., Carleton, Victoria and Madawaska Counties, and United States.

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, Shedfield, 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 Maryville.

WAY MAILS.

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

4.15 p.m.—For Gibson, Maryville, Boiestown, Doaktown, 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.

4.30 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 Nasownorth 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.

5 p.m.—From Oromocto, Shedfield, 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

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

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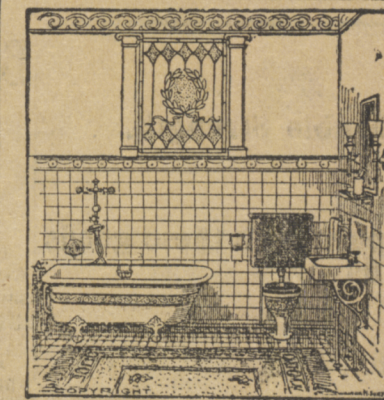
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