

OTTAWA LETTER.

Ames Tried to Stop Investigation When He Failed to Prove Timber Scandals.

Liberals Object to this and Insist Upon the Most Exhaustive Inquiry into Departmental Procedure.

"THIN RED LINE" IN MANITOBA EXPLAINED
TORIES USED A "THIN BLACK LINE."

House of Commons Endorses Principle of Hudson Bay Railroad.

(Special Cor. to the Herald.)
OTTAWA, April 11.—The attitude of the Opposition to public questions from being absurd and inconsistent, has now become contemptible.

Take as a flagrant example, the subject of timber scandals, so called. In the House, before the public, in the public accounts committee and in the party press, it was time and again alleged that exposures would be made of the methods of granting timber limits, which would involve the official honesty of a former commissioner of Crown lands, now a member of the House, and that gentlemen upon the Liberal side, members of the House, would be connected with these exposures in a manner that would lead to but one result.

The whole time of the committee was monopolized by members of the Opposition in examining witnesses and exploiting matters with which the committee had nothing to do, and which were in fact beyond its powers to investigate. The affair was carried to a point which made it logical for the Opposition to call Mr. Turfitt and examine him under oath. But the Opposition did nothing of the kind. By calling Mr. Turfitt their house of cards would fall to the ground, and they knew this. Mr. Turfitt, however, insisted upon giving evidence, taking the position that his integrity, as a former official of the government had been brought in to question.

Mr. Turfitt was called by Mr. McLean, a Liberal member of the committee, and the result was that the Opposition case, such as it was, suddenly collapsed. Mr. MacDonald desired to secure more evidence, in the public interest, and as the Opposition had commenced nearly all the time of the committee so far, he asked for an adjournment which was granted.

CONTEMPTIBLE TORY TACTICS.
Up to this time the tactics of the Opposition had been frivolous, now they became contemptible. When the committee met again it was not convenient for Mr. MacDonald to be present, so Mr. Ames, who had been so persistent and so suspicious throughout, made a vigorous plea that the proceedings be brought to a conclusion, which would have had the effect of preventing further investigation into timber matters. This was combatted and it was finally arranged to continue the investigation.

The point to be remembered is that all the forces of the Opposition were brought to bear upon one feature of the case—To wit, Did Liberal members secure unfair advantages through the good offices of Mr. Turfitt, when he was Land Commissioner? Failing to prove this, they were more than willing for the enquiry to drop. They had no interest in any other negotiations which members of the committee thought it desirable to examine. Failing to connect Mr. Turfitt with anything unseemly, their interest in the proceedings waned. When it was found impossible to prove collusion between Mr. Turfitt and any Liberal member, there was no more political capital to be manufactured, consequently from their standpoint, no necessity for further inquiry.

AMES ANXIOUS TO STOP.

This is the conception of duty entertained by the Opposition. The Liberals on the committee felt that their full duty to the people will not have been discharged until a thorough investigation has been made into the whole question, quite outside the transactions with which the gentleman named may have been connected and it was to frustrate this that Mr. Ames so strenuously objected to any further inquiry into timber matters. The timber scandal has become too hot for the Opposition to hold, and they are anxious to let go, but the Liberals propose to sift the matter to the bottom, and it is in consequence of the easy terms upon which Tories gave away the timber to their own followers that makes any extended inquiry particularly unwelcome to Mr. Ames and his friends in the committee.

THIN RED LINE.

Hon. Mr. Aylesworth, Minister of Justice, promised to introduce a bill amending the Dominion Elections Act and he has done so, and the bill has been read a first time. Captious critics already are finding fault with the terms of the bill and are saying that it is simply perpetuating the "Thin Red Line outrage." Some people have heard of the Thin Red Line, but few know just what it means. Conservatives say that by the use of the Thin Red Line thousands of voters were disfranchised. They say

that the lists for the 1904 elections in Manitoba were printed at the Printing Bureau at Ottawa, and after their arrival in Manitoba an agent of the Liberal party emasculated the lists by running a thin red line through several thousand Conservative names.

This seems like a somewhat harsh proceeding, but what are the facts? The election law provides that provincial lists must be used in connection with Federal elections. But in the election of 1900 difficulty arose because the electoral divisions for the Dominion did not coincide with those for the province, and consequently an adjustment of the voters' lists had to be made. The lines of polling sub-divisions overlapped in several instances. The following example will serve to illustrate the difficulty.

WHERE THE TROUBLE IS.

There is one township, a part of which is in the division of Dauphin for election purposes, while the other portion is in the district of Portage la Prairie. On the provincial lists there were 49 names of voters belonging to Dauphin, the others being properly voters of Portage la Prairie. To get a true list for Portage la Prairie these names had to be omitted. The returning officer took the list and ran a thin red line through the 49 names.

This was the birth of the thin red line. Conservatives have been pleased to regard this as an outrage, and say that the men whose names were thus struck off were disfranchised. This is not the case, but even if it were, then Liberals and Conservatives were treated alike. The thin red line was not used to disfranchise any person, it was used to cross off the list names that were improperly on it. Had these names remained on, the voters might have voted in two divisions.

ALL PROSECUTIONS DROPPED.

In this connection it may be said that the provincial authorities who have charge of the administration of justice undertook to prosecute the returning officers and others who charge of the elections for doing this work, but the charges have all been dropped and the Attorney General of Manitoba has withdrawn all prosecution with regard to the affair.

THIN BLACK LINE.

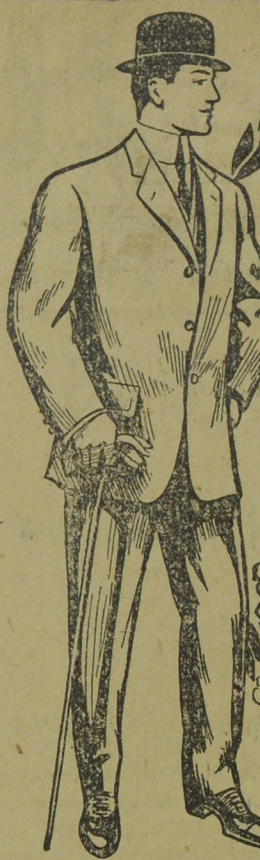
Let us look at the other side of the question. If it was a scandal in 1904 to draw a thin red line through names improperly on the list, it must be equally scandalous and outrageous for the Conservatives to draw a thin black line through names improperly on the list in 1907. Yet this is what actually occurred. There was a redistribution in the province, and to get a list for the new divisions, the provincial authorities, no doubt under the direction of the Attorney General (who started a prosecution against the Liberals for what they had done in 1904, and afterwards dropped the case), did exactly what the Liberals had been prosecuted for; that is, they took the lists which had been prepared, and through a number of the names, not a thin red line, but a thin black line. This was the birth of the thin black line.

WHAT THE TORIES DID.

In one polling division they struck off 95 names, and left on 45. In another they struck off 57 names and left 95. In the first polling division they not only struck off 95, but they added 235 names without any authority whatever. There is no doubt the returning officer met the same conditions as those experienced by the returning officer in 1904, and he applied the same remedy, but of course it makes some difference whose ox is being gored. The Conservative returning officer, however, gave his work a distinguishing mark by using a black line instead of a red one, and he went one better by adding 235 names to the list without authority, a proceeding too outrageous even for the men responsible for the thin red line.

TO REMEDY THE EVIL.

The Minister of Justice seeks to remedy this anomaly and render such things as are related above impossible for the future, and it is well that the public should understand something of what the thin red line means, because the matter will, no doubt, be misrepresented or the issue clouded in some way or another by the Conservatives, who would lose some popular campaign material if deprived of their thin red line. It might be well, also, not to forget



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the fact about the thin black line, about which there has been very little said so far.

HUDSON BAY RAILWAY.

On Tuesday last the House passed the following resolution unanimously:

"In the opinion of this House the government should, on account of the rapid development of Western Canada, and the continued inadequacy of existing transportation facilities, take early action towards the construction of a railway to Fort Churchill on Hudson Bay."

All the members from the West on both sides of the House gave the resolution their support, and Mr. Borden also declared himself in favor of the project. Some very interesting statistics were given, and the plea was put forward that the people of the west and north west were entitled to the best, most economical and most obvious for their produce. By bringing the northwest 1,000 miles nearer a market, the wheat growers would be able to ship to Europe to much better advantage than they do now. It was shown that cattle will stand a journey of three or four days in the cars, and then go aboard ship and improve their condition, but should the railway journey be longer than this, they go on board and lose weight. Hudson Bay is the natural shipping port for the Northwest, and the very best port from which to ship grain and cattle, for in both cases there will be no change of cargo, everything would go through to the ocean port in bulk.

TWO STRIKING EXAMPLES.

Two striking examples of the benefit to the farmers of the West were given to the House—The one that was upon the 82,000 head of cattle shipped to Montreal from the West last season, the saving in freight alone, by shipping via Hudson Bay would be \$6 a head, or in round figures \$650,000 or twenty per cent of the selling price. The other was that upon 20,000,000 bushels of grain the saving in freight would be 15 cents a bushel, a saving of \$3,000,000 to the shipper.

THE ROAD WOULD PAY.

Upon the question as to whether the road would pay, it was estimated by one speaker that 50,000,000 bushels of grain would require the services of 50,000 cars loaded with 1,000 bushels to the car, with fifteen cars to the train, it would require 3,333 trains to carry the grain to the ocean.

To ship 82,000 head of cattle would require 5,125 cars, with fifteen cars to the train, it would require 341 trains to carry the cattle to the ocean, or altogether ten trains a day for a whole year.

LAURIER FAVORS IT.

The building of the Hudson Bay railroad in some manner will shortly be accomplished. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has already expressed himself in favor of a line from some point in the West connecting with Hudson

Bay. The people of the west have received with infinite delight the assurance of the Prime Minister that the government are aware of their responsibilities with respect to this road.

(Continued on third page.)

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The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages and that is catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.

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NOTICE OF LEGISLATION

The City of Fredericton will apply at the next session of the Legislature of New Brunswick for an Act to amend 82nd Victoria chapter 61. "An act to authorize the city of Fredericton to aid The Hartt Boot and Shoe Company" by providing for a release of the Mortgage given to the City under said Act, and authorizing some other agreement with said company.

J. W. McCREADY,
City Clerk
City Hall,
April 10th, 1908.
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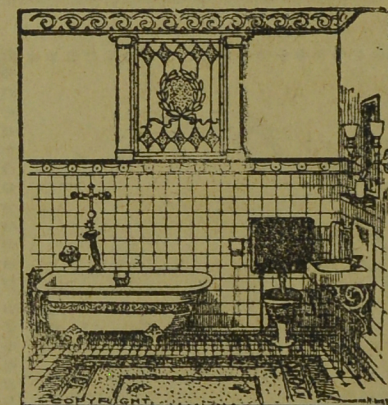
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