

# ABOUT OUR IMMIGRATION.

## Mr. Sifton Replies to Some General Criticisms.

### WORK NOT MADE SCARCE.

### A Large Factor in the Prosperity of the West.

### An Excellent Class of People Brought to Canada—The Premier Announces Mr. Blair's Resignation.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)

Ottawa, July 14.—The proceedings in the House to-day were disappointing to the crowds in the galleries. Some statement on the Ministerial situation was expected, but Mr. Monck precipitated an hour and a half debate on the Ottawa Valley Railway bill, so that before Sir Wilfrid rose to make the brief announcement that Mr. Blair had resigned, Hon. R. W. Scott had given the information in the Senate, and it was generally known in the House. The balance of the day was taken up with a discussion on immigration. The House rose at 12.40 a.m.

#### Ottawa Valley Railway.

On the opening of the House Mr. Monk moved to refer back to the Railway Committee the portion of the committee's report throwing out the preamble of the bill respecting the Ottawa Valley Railway Co. He spoke nearly an hour in support of this motion.

Mr. Charles Marcell opposed granting any further privileges to the parties connected with the Atlantic & Lake Superior Railway Co. until the creditors of that company were settled with.

Mr. Leonard, speaking in French, supported Mr. Monk's motion.

Mr. Prefontaine explained the reasons which had led to the throwing out of the bill, which involved old and intricate dealings. In answer to a statement of Mr. Monk's that he was personally connected with Mr. C. N. Armstrong's enterprises, Mr. Prefontaine stated that he had endorsed paper for Mr. Armstrong in connection with railway enterprises, and had lost some \$26,000 through him.

The motion to refer back was lost on a division by 87 to 51.

#### Destruction of Game Fish.

Mr. Prefontaine introduced a bill to amend the fisheries act. He explained that it deals with the use of explosives in hunting whales, the use of purse seines and the use of trap nets.

Mr. Osler complained that under the local laws the salmon fisheries of the rivers in Quebec and in New Brunswick were being destroyed by reason of the use of nets. Many fish caught by rod and line were found to have received injuries in breaking away from the nets in which they had become entangled. If the Government were to obtain a report of the condition of these sporting rivers they would make an alteration in the conditions under which the net licenses were issued.

Mr. Lemieux (Gaspé) said that the fisheries of the Province of Quebec were increasing every day, and that the salmon was better protected than ever before. Anyway, this was a subject for the Provincial authorities.

#### Mr. Blair's Resignation.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when the orders of the day were called, for the information of the House volunteered the statement: I have to inform the House that Hon. Mr. Blair has tendered his resignation as a member of the Cabinet and Minister of Railways, and that the Governor-General has been pleased to accept his resignation. The Ministerial explanation will probably be given on Thursday next.

Mr. A. C. Bell (Pictou) inquired whether there was any truth in the report that the Colonial Secretary had been invited to discuss certain amendments to the militia act.

Sir Frederick Borden replied that a short time ago Hon. Jos. Chamberlain intimated that as he understood amendments to the militia act were to be put through this session, he would be glad if the Minister of Militia could, after the close of the present session, go to England to adjust the matter with him and with the Secretary of State for War. The First Minister had intimated his willingness that that should be done.

Mr. Ingram, speaking to a question of privilege, quoted from a report published in The Globe of Saturday last of the discussion before the Committee on Redistribution, and denied

that he had proposed or originated any of the four propositions regarding the division of Elgin before the committee, and added that as far as he knew no Conservative had made any of them.

#### Marine Regulations.

Hon. Mr. Prefontaine's resolution making provision for the abrogation of steamboat inspection fees and dues for the better regulation of yachts propelled by gas, fluid naphtha or electric motors, was discussed in committee and reported.

Mr. Walter Scott, on behalf of Mr. McCreary, voiced the protest of the fishermen of Manitoba against fishing tugs being required to have a licensed engineer, while yachts of much larger size, with many valuable lives on board, were allowed to run without certificated engineers.

Hon. Mr. Prefontaine admitted the strength of the arguments advanced by Mr. Scott, but pointed out that the engineers wanted a still more severe examination and regulation.

A bill founded upon the resolution was given first reading.

The resolution by Mr. Prefontaine providing for the issue of a new certificate to masters and mates of ships, to be called a "home trade certificate," was also reported by the Committee of the Whole, and a bill founded thereon given first reading.

#### Immigration Policy.

On the motion to go into supply, Mr. J. H. Wilson took advantage of the opportunity to discuss the immigration policy of the Government. He complained that the Canadian officials did not turn back immigrants affected with minor diseases, such as trachoma and lupus, only rejecting those who have smallpox, fever or similar diseases. No provision was made to keep out criminals or paupers, with the result that many undesirable immigrants, who would not be allowed to enter the United States, were permitted to remain in Canada. In support of his statements Mr. Wilson quoted a letter from Mr. Robt. Wanhorn, the United States immigration officer at Montreal, and insisted that this Government ought to make arrangements with the Government of the United States for mutual action in reference to the inspection of immigrants, on the ground that people who were not desirable settlers for the United States were not good enough for Canada. The great increase in the number of immigrants coming into Canada Mr. Wilson attributed to the fact that the steamship agents in Europe, knowing that the inspection was lax, booked undesirable immigrants to Canadian ports. During the season of 1902, of 4,986 persons inspected at the port of Montreal by the United States officers 2,028 were rejected, 419 because they were contract labor, 812 were paupers, 8 idiots, 5 ex-convicts, 496 as having loathsome and contagious diseases. None of these, Mr. Wilson said, had been deported by the Canadian authorities. In consequence, we get in Canada all the diseased and all the undesirable immigrants which the United States refuse to accept. Mr. Wilson questioned the accuracy of the statistics of homestead entries and arrivals in Canada. Upwards of five thousand of the fourteen thousand homestead entries were by Canadians, therefore the entries by immigrants from abroad only represented a small proportion of the reported arrivals, indicating that the people were not going on the land. The expenditure by the department on immigration was criticized by Mr. Wilson, who claimed that the money paid to agents in the United States was thrown away, those settlers coming from the States having been induced to come by the efforts of the land companies and the railways. He appealed to the Minister to abolish the system of commission agents in the United States.

#### Good Word For Immigrants.

Mr. Roche (Halifax), from his own experience and observation of these immigrants as they came off the vessels, spoke highly of the character and appearance of the immigrants being brought in from Silesia, southern Russia, etc.

Mr. Oliver thought that unselected immigration was not desirable, although it was a good thing to obtain all the immigration of a good class. Owing to the influx of American and British settlers, there was no necessity for bringing in inferior settlers, and he suggested that the system of having reliable immigration agents select suitable settlers should be continued and extended. Immigration was not now a matter of bringing immigrants, but of saying which we would accept.

#### Mr. Puttee's Complaint.

Mr. Puttee agreed with Mr. Oliver as to the importance of having a good class of immigrants. He was glad that the class who were coming in some five years ago were not now being brought, and that a better class were coming in. He said that the British public were being misled as to which were Government agencies, and read an advertisement guaranteeing immediate employment to mechanics, the address given being only a couple of doors from the new Canadian Government offices in London. Mr. Puttee said it appeared almost as if the Canadian Government agent was in collusion with this agency, as he did not put the matter right before the British public. Discussing the influx of immigrants during the last few months, Mr. Puttee said there has been altogether too large a percentage of the arrivals who were anxious and determined to settle in the cities, and the influx has been to some extent alarming to the man who has to earn his living. In the city of Winnipeg this influx has had deleterious effects, so that the wage earners could hardly live at all. It was not a reasonable policy to put before the working men, that they should be taxed in order to keep immigration agents at work sending people out here to compete with them and keep their own wages down. Now that the immigrants were coming in such large numbers, he suggested that an efficient inspection of the accommodation given by the steamships be provided, also a stricter scrutiny physically of the people who come to Canada.

Mr. M. K. Richardson (South Grey) expressed the opinion that not numbers but the quality of the immigration received should be the basis upon which the expenditure for immigration should be criticized. He spoke of the desirability of retaining within the Dominion as much as possible the young men of a wandering disposition and the necessity of engendering and stimulating in the great northwest a broad national spirit.

#### The Pioneers of Canada.

Hon. Wm. Ross (Victoria, N.S.) asked what gentlemen opposite would

do with people who had come to Canada at their own expense, to hew out homes for themselves, because they had little means. Would they send them back? He urged that such people be received with Christian spirit and assisted to work out their destiny.

Mr. A. C. Bell (Pictou) recognized that with its tremendous resources and its small population there was in Canada great hunger for population, and especially was this the case in the west. But the representatives of the west had expressed a desire for a better class of settlers. The tendency at present, however, was to get as large a share as possible of the British and United States immigration, which could not be classed as undesirable. The amount spent in immigration had been well spent, judging by the results, both parties having for many years past endeavored to secure the best class of immigrants. He believed, however, that the Canadian inspection was inadequate, compared with that of the United States. A cause of complaint by Canadians was the fact that the railways would not give the settlers from the older Provinces who desired to remove to the northwest the same favorable rates that the European immigrants enjoyed.

The debate was continued by Dr. Sproule and Mr. T. O. Davis.

#### Mr. Sifton's Reply.

At 11.30 Mr. Sifton rose to reply, and said that he would not at that late hour detain the House very long, but would reply briefly to some of the criticisms that had been made by the Opposition. It was not, he said, a wise policy for the Government to spend public money to aid the movement of population from one part of the Dominion to another, and he had no hesitation in making the statement that so long as he was Minister of the Interior he would not be in favor of such a policy, for the reason, first, that it would have the effect of reducing the population of the eastern Provinces, and, secondly, because it would tend to pauperize the people. He did not believe the people of Canada desired or required the expenditure of public money for such purposes. During the seven years he had been at the head of the department no person had been given assistance except under the most pressing circumstances, and then when the circumstances were beyond the control of the person to whom it has been given. In regard to the difficulties of transportation, representations have from time to time been made to the railway companies, who have so far refused to give the same rates to people desiring to move from eastern Canada to the west as are given to the foreign immigrants. They had, however, made arrangements for the movement of large numbers of people from Ontario and Quebec, particularly, who had been of the greatest value in gathering the crop. The movement of young men to the cities and towns of the east instead of to the lands of the west was because they did not desire to follow agricultural life. It had been the policy of the Government to encourage the movement of no laborers to Canada except agricultural laborers. The Government have not encouraged the movement of mechanics of any other country to Canada.

#### No Lack of Work.

Replying to Mr. Puttee, Mr. Sifton said he had no great degree of sympathy with the views he had expressed. Certain organizations in Canada had persistently opposed immigration of all kinds and under all conditions, and have made strong statements. But, so far as the people of Winnipeg were concerned, they were happy and prosperous, there is a great demand for labor at good wages, all of which were the result of the immigration policy of the Government in settling up the lands of the west, which he was quite prepared to justify. Mr. Sifton combated the statement that many of the immigrants remaining in Canada were of an undesirable class. He insisted that, man for man, the 125,000 people who have come to Canada this year will compare favorably with a like number anywhere. The 40,000 that came from the western States were the very salt of the agricultural population there. The English immigrants were of the best, and with respect to the continental immigrants, he had to say that they were industrious and self-reliant, and no class of people who come to Canada were more thoroughly capable of taking care of themselves. From the moment they landed in Winnipeg, and were directed to the place they were bound for, there were no people gave the officials less trouble than they. Who would have taken off the magnificent crops of recent years had it not been for these people? The crop would have rotted on the ground if these people had not been available. If, following the advice of the hon. gentlemen on the opposite benches, the Government were to stop the entrance of these people at the Canadian ports, he ventured to say that within one week the farmers of Ontario and the northwest would be prepared to vote the Government out of power.

#### Would Not Accept U.S. Classification.

Mr. Wilson had, Mr. Sifton continued, expressed great concern about the health of the immigrants, and held that because the United States inspector at Montreal rejected immigrants for the United States, Canada should allow the United States officials to pronounce them undesirable for Canada; in other words, that the United States officials should say who should come to Canada and who should not. So long as the department was under his charge the officers of the department would be the parties who should decide that question. Mr. Sifton insisted that the method of inspection pursued at Canadian ports by the department was most effective, and said that the United States officers declared that immigrants rejected for other and frivolous reasons were diseased, as shown by an instance at Sault Ste. Marie, where a man with a sore finger was rejected. There was, Mr. Sifton added, a most complete and effective primary selection at the ports in the country of origin whence continental immigrants came. The North American Trading Company, with which the Government had a contract, confined its operations chiefly to the Scandinavian countries and central Europe. As a result of the operations of the department for the past seven years, there had been, he said, a very large and desirable addition to the population of the Dominion, and the House and country would endorse a policy which has resulted in the filling up of vacant lands, which every business man knew had contributed largely to the prosperity of the country. If the Government now withdrew from its active propaganda and advertising campaign, the tide of immigration to the Dominion would speedily be stemmed, and in two years there would not be more than 10,000 or 15,000 people arriving, instead of 125,000 as at present.

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#### In Committee of Supply.

The House went into supply at midnight on Mr. Sifton's main estimates for immigration.

Mr. Monk suggested that, in view of the late hour, and the late session of last night, that the \$10,000 for salaries and employees in Canada, Great Britain and foreign countries, and two small items, should be passed, but that the remaining item of \$483,000 for contingencies should be held over.

Mr. Sifton accepted the suggestion, and the House adjourned at 12.20 a.m.