

NORTH ATLANTIC TRADING CONTRACT.

Debate on Mr. Foster's Resolution Continued.

HOT SHOT FOR THE MOVER

Mr. Crawford and Mr. A. K. Maclean Direct the Guns.

Mr. Gunn of South Huron and Mr. Fowler Represent the Opposition—Aid for San Francisco Sufferers Refused With Thanks.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)

Ottawa, April 26.—The division on Mr. Foster's amendment censuring the Government in connection with the North Atlantic Trading Company's contract will not take place until Tuesday. Mr. Borden, leader of the Opposition, who has been absent for a few days, will by then have returned from his native Province down by the sea, where he has been on business. The debate to-day was continued with unabated vigor on both sides. The speech of Mr. A. K. Maclean (Lunenburg, N.S.), a young member, who seldom occupies the time of the House, was the distinctive feature of today's debate, and established his reputation as a keen and effective debater of good Parliamentary style and excellent delivery. Other speakers were Mr. Crawford (Portage la Prairie), Mr. Gunn (South Huron), and Mr. G. W. Fowler (King's and Albert). This afternoon Mr. Fielding brought down a communication from the British Minister at Washington, thanking the Canadian Parliament for the grant for the San Francisco sufferers, and conveying the intimation that a conclusion had been reached that outside assistance was not needed. Mr. Fielding added that the vote would be taken anyway, in case changing circumstances might render it necessary.

Names Torn Off Contract.

Mr. Foster this afternoon called attention to the fact that in the return brought down in July last purporting to be a copy of the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company the bottom of the page bearing the signatures of the President and Secretary of the company and the corporate seal, had been torn off. He asked that the original contract be brought down.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier replied that he could not produce the original contract, because he learned on inquiry to-day that the documents were in the custody of a committee of the House, where they had been at the disposal of the Opposition for some weeks past.

Mr. Fielding had some recollection of a suggestion having been made last session, when the Government objected to give the names, that the contract might be brought down without the names. He had, however, shown a copy of the contract to Mr. Borden, leader of the Opposition, and some other members of the Opposition.

Mr. Foster said he would not dispute Mr. Fielding's impression of the suggestion of last year, but his recollection was that the Opposition objected and demanded that the names be given. However, he would not press the matter further.

San Francisco Relief Refused.

Hon. Mr. Fielding submitted for the information of the House the following despatch received from Sir Mortimer Durand, British Ambassador at Washington, addressed to the Governor-General:—"United States Government requests to convey to Canadian Government expression of their deepest gratitude and most profound appreciation of magnificent contribution by Canadian Government for relief of distressed citizens of San Francisco. The Government is assured that the Canadian Government will understand that they appreciate the generous action none the less highly because of the conclusion they have reached that outside assistance will be unnecessary."

Mr. Fielding said as soon as the House unanimously intimated its approval of the vote, the intervention of the British Ambassador to convey the intimation of the intention of Parliament was secured, with the result shown by the message. However, the Government would ask Parliament, now that the vote had been brought down in due course, to approve of the item, so that should circumstances arise to cause the United States Government to change its views upon the question the money would be available.

Opposition Threat Resented.

Mr. Crawford (Portage la Prairie), who resumed the debate on Mr. Foster's want of confidence motion in connection with the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company, resented the threats by Mr. George Taylor, chief Whip of the Opposition, and other speakers on that side, that the House would be kept in session the whole year. He gave the Opposition notice that the Government members were better able to endure the inconvenience and strain of a prolonged session. The Opposition having started a campaign of mudslinging, he warned them it was a game at which they were at a disadvantage, so far as the supply of ammunition was concerned, because if the Government supporters wanted to retort in kind, they found a much larger supply of material at their disposal in the mud hole furnished by the Conservative record

than the Opposition could ever hope to find available for their campaign. Turning to the consideration of the question of immigration, Mr. Crawford displayed the sanguine characteristics which animate the western members whenever the question of development of the west is touched upon, and waxed eloquent upon the beneficial results which had attended the immigration policy of the present Government. He contrasted the condition of stagnation in settlement prior to 1896 with the rapid home-steading which had marked recent years. An examination of the record demonstrated the utter inability of the Conservative Government to appreciate the needs of the west, and formulate a policy which would convert the silent prairies into smiling farms, teeming with life and musical with the notes of agricultural industry. The bonuses paid on selected immigrants under the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company were not too high. A great deal had been said by the Opposition speakers about "undesirable" immigrants, but the department had not paid any bonus upon that class, and Mr. Crawford combated the suggestion that all continental immigration is undesirable. Mr. Crawford criticized the former Government for their land policy from 1879 down, citing the arrangement with the C.P.R., which tied up a strip of land ten miles wide across the country from settlement. If Canada could get good settlers from the European continent for \$5 a head we should get them.

Mr. Gunn Called to Order.

Mr. Gunn (South Huron) spoke briefly in criticism of the "suspicious circumstances" in connection with the North Atlantic Trading Company contract. He proceeded to quote from Mr. Smart's evidence before the Agriculture Committee when he was called to order, as the report was not before the House. Mr. Speaker supported the objections, but subsequently allowed him to proceed when it was shown that the evidence had been submitted. Mr. Gunn, however, admitted being disconcerted by the objections made, and concluded by praising Mr. Foster. "If there is one public man in this country that I admire more than another it is the hon. gentleman who introduced this amendment."

Plan to Injure Reputation.

Mr. A. K. Maclean (Lunenburg) vigorously replied. He said there was an organized plan in the Opposition to injure the reputation of members on the Government side. In discussing the present contract their speeches had been marked by misstatements and concealments. It had been made abundantly clear that the payments to the company were not remitted directly to Mr. Preston, but to Mr. Preston and Lord Strathcona jointly. Mr. Maclean continued the debate after dinner, and pointed out that Mr. Foster had earned the applause of the Opposition and had misled the country by leading them to believe that \$1,000 had been sent to Mr. Preston personally on account of the North Atlantic Trading Company, and that Mr. Preston handled the money. All the evidence showed that Mr. Preston had not handled any money on behalf of the Government. Mr. Maclean charged that Mr. Foster and Mr. Northrup and other Opposition speakers had, when purporting to quote from documents made an effort to conceal the truth. Mr. Foster had read from the contract that the company were only to "carry on an educative work," and gave the impression that any kind of educative work would fill the bill by neglecting to quote the remainder of the sentence, "to promote emigration to Canada and to make known the advantages offered by Canada for settlers." Mr. Northrup had quoted in the House a letter from Mr. Smart to Mr. W. T. R. Preston, and commented upon a reference in the letter to "your company" as proof that Mr. Smart was cognizant of Mr. Preston's connection with the North Atlantic Trading Company. Mr. Maclean said he had searched the files, and from beginning to end no such letter addressed to Mr. Preston by Mr. Smart was to be found. There was, however, a letter addressed by Mr. Smart to the North Atlantic Trading Company, an entirely different thing. He was reluctant to believe Mr. Northrup would willingly mislead the House in the matter.

Mr. Foster's Insinuation.

Mr. Foster had insinuated that Mr. Sifton, Mr. Smart and Mr. Preston were all leagued together to rob the treasury of this country. The meanness of the insinuation could be hired for a money consideration to slander the purest in the country. (Cheers.) "You can go around

the slums of a city or the barrooms, where ignorant, unfortunate humanity live, and you will find it is a very usual thing every day for such people to slander those who are very much better than themselves," said Mr. Maclean. "I submit it is a fair proposition that a mere slanderous attack by any one member upon another proves nothing, and that the obligation rests upon any member of this Parliament when he charges an ex-Minister of the Crown with malfeasance of office that he should at least invoke the machinery of Parliament and afford himself an opportunity to make good the charge." (Cheers.) Something had changed the nature of Mr. Foster since 1896. Before that time, Mr. Maclean said, he had been informed the ex-Minister of Finance was sometimes seen to smile, but since then he was something like an old English King, who after a certain unfortunate event was never seen to smile again. Mr. Foster since 1896 had been always morose and sullen, and was apparently constantly repeating to himself:

"The time is out of joint; oh, cursed spite,

(That ever I was born to set it right.)

(Cheers and Laughter.)
Mr. Foster when Minister of Finance had charge of the Insurance Department, and when he was in need of a position the Union Trust Company, which is practically the Independent Order of Foresters, by which it is controlled, and whose funds it handles, offered him the position of manager. Mr. Foster had thrown suspicion upon the North Atlantic Trading Company, because Mr. Smart had, as Deputy Minister of the Interior, business relations with it. It would be, Mr. Maclean said, just as fair and honorable for him to say that Mr. Foster had been given a position in the Union Trust Company because he had, as Minister of Finance, winked one eye at some business transactions of the I.O.F., and in so doing was preparing a bed for himself when disaster fell upon his party. (Cheers.) It was probably true that Mr. Smart would have never become agent for the N. A. T. Company if he had not first been Deputy Minister of the Interior, and it was fully true that if Mr. Foster had never been Finance Minister he would never have had business relations with the I.O.F., and would never have been invited to manage the Union Trust Company. (Cheers.) Mr. Smart had burned his private correspondence when moving away from Toronto. He challenged Mr. Foster to say he had never destroyed any of his private correspondence received between 1882 and 1896.

Lord Strathcona Posted.

Instead of Mr. Smart and Mr. Preston having made the contract with the N. A. T. Company in secrecy, as stated by the members of the Opposition, Mr. Maclean quoted a letter from Lord Strathcona, who, it was apparent from the correspondence, knew every stage of the negotiations and approved of the contract, the essential feature of which was suggested by him. Lord Strathcona wrote to Mr. Sifton, approving of the contract, and impressed upon the Minister that the contract "must be very confidential, and that on no account should it be made public." Mr. Maclean accused Mr. Foster of misrepresenting the terms of the contract, and said that, in fairness, he should hand back the applause he had received under false pretences. The company had to carry on an educational propaganda. He admitted the difficulty of tracing the results of that propaganda in immigrants arriving, and made an analogy with the case of Mr. Foster, who, when he was at one time employed to give temperance lectures, if he had been requested to produce the proof of his work, would have had to go out testing the breaths of the men who had signed the pledge. (Laughter.) Mr. Maclean maintained that such a contract as the North Atlantic Trading Company's, properly enforced, would be a good thing for the country.

Mr. George W. Fowler (King's, N.B.) entered into an explanation of the land deal to which Mr. Duncan Ross had referred a few days ago, in which several Opposition members figured. He said they bought the land from the C. P. R. at the market prices in open market.

"On a Siftonian basis?" asked a Liberal member.

"Not on a Siftonian basis," Mr. Fowler replied; "we paid for it ourselves; the country did not pay for it." (Opposition cheers.) Recently, Mr. Fowler said, a friendly suit had been instituted to determine the rights of the parties under the original contract. Mr. Fowler denied that Mr. Foster was responsible for the difference which was being ventilated in the courts between himself and Mr. Pope on one hand, and Mr. Bennett, Mr. Lefurgey and Mr. Pencher on the other. The only connection Mr. Foster had with the matter was as an officer of the Great West Land Company, which was in no way interested in the dispute. But the Liberal members had gone with a muck-rake to get something with which to attack the member for North Toronto, and Mr. Fowler held the Premier responsible for the lowering of the tone and dignity of the House by his followers, because he sat placid and silent. The Right Hon. gentleman was so drunken with the insolence of power, fed by the flattery of his followers and supported by a slavish press, that he thought the people should only speak to him with bowed head and bated breath. If members of the Opposition chose to enter upon such a campaign some spicy and sensational things could be said about the members on the Government side, from the Prime Minister down to the back benches. Mr. Fowler charged that the Government's policy was responsible for the fact that the Yukon had not half the population it had a few years ago, and that the revenue did not nearly pay for the administration, which the Territory should do. The Minister of the Interior had, after defending the contract for two hours, announced that he had cancelled the contract. That gentleman evidently had a streak of honesty left, and would not allow this contract to remain longer in the office; it so smelted to heaven he could no longer stand its presence. He opposed the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company as immoral, inasmuch as the company were not required to do anything to earn the bonus which they claimed from the Government. The Opposition had brought up this question and pursued it, in spite of the efforts to hark inquiry by the full force of the Government majority, encouraged thereto by the Prime Minister, who was himself responsible.

At 11 o'clock Mr. Miller moved the adjournment of the debate.

Before the House adjourned Sir Wilfrid Laurier, replying to Mr. Foster, indicated that as Friday was an inconvenient day to conclude the debate, the Government bills would be taken up to-morrow. The division on Mr. Foster's amendment will therefore not be taken until Tuesday.