

MR. KOCOT SAYS HE WAS AWARE OF THE WESTERN BRIBERY

Former Sault Brewer Appears Before Select Committee and Gives Evidence

Regina, Sask., March 4. — The scandal involving members of the Legislature and prominent hotel men is developing amazing proportions. The capital is confronted with two police court trials of a number of men prominent in the political and business life of the province. While one royal commission and two special committees are sitting to probe charges of graft, bribery and perjury, at the same time the Legislature is the scene of exciting charges and counter-charges involving persons whom the breath of scandal has never previously touched.

Out of the mass of contradictory reports vigorously circulated by the partisans of each side, two chief facts present themselves — first, that a royal commission with sweeping powers alone can clear the atmosphere; second, that the masses all over the province are gravely concerned over the numerous arrests, flights of prominent men from the city, the destruction of public documents and the intemperate language being used by the partisans of both sides on the floor of the House.

The hotel interests make no secret of the fact that a large sum of money was appropriated to defeat the banish-the-bar bill introduced in 1913 by Scott as a Government measure. It was withdrawn, on second reading, by the Premier as suddenly as it had been introduced, and the only explanation given was that the temperance people failed to agree as to the terms of the measure. This explanation is denied. Yesterday the sworn statement was made in committee that it was the plan of the hotel men to repeat in 1915 their alleged bribery of 1913, but that the price had risen to \$50,000, and the trade did not think it worth the effort.

It is said now that the big two million dollar asylum at Battlefield has been the source of a huge scandal, and that the jail site in Regina, which cost \$50,000, actually netted the campaign fund \$30,000.

C. Kocot, manager of the Regina brewery, giving evidence before the select committee, read a copy of a letter he sent to Premier Scott a short time ago. The original of this letter, he said, had been destroyed by the Premier in the presence of Kocot last Tuesday, and the Premier had asked him to destroy the copy. The letter advised Premier Scott not to refuse a royal commission, and related statements made by Mr. Cross, the big Calgary brewer, at a meeting of brewers in Saskatoon shortly before the temperance legislation in 1915. Cross stated there that a member of the assembly had told him that \$50,000 would be enough to defeat the bill if used to bribe members. Kocot opposed the plan, he said, and the meeting broke up. He advised Premier Scott in the letter that the majority of his supporters were purchasable. The letter also urged Mr. Scott to appoint a royal commission and clear the names of all good Liberals.

Kocot said he knew nothing directly about the 1913 bribery, but said Clayton Peterson, the man generally accused of really handing out the money, had told him late in December, 1913, that everything was "fixed up," and that he took from that that the bribery plans had gone through.