

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 1903.

DEBATE UPON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Government Refutes All the
Charges Made.

INQUIRY NOT BURKED.

A Morning Session to be Held
To-day.

Ordinary Business Will be Wound Up
This Morning—Adjournment to
Follow Until Next Week for
Gamey Debate.

The report of the Public Accounts Committee was the subject of discussion before the Legislature all yesterday afternoon and for an hour or more during the night session. As a result little progress was made with the ordinary business before the House, and the contemplated adjournment until next Tuesday had to be postponed until this morning. The House will sit again this morning from 11 o'clock until 1 o'clock.

The debate upon the Public Accounts report centred about the Shannon and Capreol timber limits, and the charge that the Government had shut off the committee to prevent the submission of further evidence. Hon. Mr. Davis and Hon. Mr. Latchford each made strong replies to these allegations, and showed conclusively that Col. Matheson had failed in his effort to demonstrate that the Government had shared in the profits on "Cap." Sullivan's transactions.

This morning's business will include supply and concurrence in the Provincial Conference resolutions.

Public Accounts Report.

Mr. George P. Graham, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, presented the report of the committee, containing the typewritten evidence taken before it.

After the report had been presented Col. Matheson said that the committee had obtained evidence of transactions which he considered a disgrace to the Government. He reviewed the evidence on the Rutherford and Capreol limit matters, and drew his conclusions therefrom that T. C. Taylor, the Crown Lands Department official under suspension, had held up the Minister of Crown Lands, and that Sullivan held up Chew brothers, and that Taylor obtained \$1,000 to keep his mouth shut. Col. Matheson declared that the committee had shut down upon them, and had done their best to block the presentation of evidence.

No Evidence Blocked.

Hon. Mr. Davis, Minister of Crown Lands, complained that the member for South Lanark had, as was customary with him, made a number of statements that were not borne out by the facts. The Charlton brothers had spent much more than they had at first estimated for taking out the timber on the Rutherford limit. It had been thought that the distance the logs had to be taken to water was one mile, and it turned out to be four miles. The total cost of getting out the timber was \$20.05 per thousand, and when the accounts were finally made out, expert testimony went to show that Charlton brothers could scarcely get out without a loss.

Mr. Davis devoted some attention to the arguments based on the sale of the Rutherford limit by Sullivan for much more than it cost him. Limits were often sold at public auction, and a few hours later resold at a much higher price. The limit had been under license two or three times previously, when all the pine might have been cut. The Crown Lands Department, therefore, knowing that the pine on the limit was not likely to be of good quality, had not placed a high value upon it.

Mr. Davis regretted that Mr. T. C. Taylor had been implicated in a timber deal. His long record in the department had proved him an exemplary and capable employee. It was to be remembered that Mr. Taylor had sworn that he had not given any departmental information to Sullivan or to anyone else.

Charge Failed Utterly.

Referring to Col. Matheson's charge that the Government had shared in the profits of the sale, Mr. Davis said that not a tittle of evidence had been adduced to support the allegation. Mr. Davis then reviewed the history of the Capreol limit. There was no evidence whatever to show that Chew brothers had obtained the limit in any but a regular way. They had, it was true, resold it at a substantial increase, but this was due to a natural advance in the value of the limit. The island limit on Georgian Bay which had formerly belonged to Chew brothers, was now valued at \$50,000, so that the Government had not made a very improvident bargain. An examination of the Cane brothers' transaction also showed that if anyone had suffered it was the Cane brothers.

Mr. Davis wound up with a vigorous declaration that the Government had not sought to burk the inquiries of the committee. The annual transactions of the Department of Crown Lands involved about \$1,500,000, and, with the multitudinous details also involved, it must be admitted that the record of the department was as clear and commendable as in the case of any private company carrying on an equally large volume of business.

A Pestiferous Sinkhole.

Mr. Gamey said that the Rutherford timber was worth \$5 a thousand, and the Government should have had some sort of an idea of the quantity of the timber on the limit. These things brought out in committee were only a part of what was going on. There were many more of them, but it was only now and then they could get their fingers on them.

Mr. Whitney characterized the ad-

ministration of the Crown Lands Department as a "sinkhole of corruption, a pestiferous sinkhole of corruption." The Public Accounts Committee, he said, had become a laughing stock. The Public Accounts Committee had been closed, in order that the Minister of Crown Lands might come down to the House to tell his story without authority, when the real evidence had been carefully shut out. From a party view he rejoiced that such a step had been taken.

Mr. Whitney denied that there had been any agreement to which he had assented to conclude Public Accounts Committee's sessions yesterday.

Mr. Graham, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, stated that he had proceeded in committee with the understanding that an agreement had been made between the leaders of the two parties to close the Public Accounts Committee that morning.

Agreed to the Conclusion.

Col. Gibson said that he and Dr. Willoughby had agreed to close the committee yesterday.

Dr. Willoughby acknowledged having had a conversation with Col. Gibson about finishing the business of the House, but if he had agreed to any conclusion of the Public Accounts Committee's work he had done so without knowing it.

Col. Gibson declared that his own honest impression was that Dr. Willoughby had agreed to the Public Accounts Committee ending its work that morning.

Mr. Graham, continuing, said that every essential piece of evidence, and much more, had been presented to the committee, and nothing more could be obtained by further sessions.

Mr. Samuel Clarke (West Northumberland) said that the only thing brought out in the committee that could be laid at the door of the Department of Crown Lands was that the Shannon limit was sold too cheap. He thought it a wonder that the member for Manitoulin had been unable to put his finger on many other deals than those brought out in committee, for he had seemingly got his fingers on many other things.

Mr. James Reid (Addington) said that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee had acted very fairly. The only fault he had to find was that he had been too easy.

Mr. St. John spoke briefly upon the same subject.

Mr. St. John.

Mr. J. W. St. John spoke briefly before the 6 o'clock adjournment, and he continued when the evening session opened. He said that Mr. Clarke (West Northumberland) was quite right in defending the name of Sullivan. But in doing so he was defending the last shred of character of a man who had twice been reported for bribery. He also censured The Globe for its treatment of the Public Account Committee, complaining chiefly of a heading in the following words, "Time Wasted in Public Accounts," on an occasion when a long argument resulted about a question asked by Mr. St. John of Mr. T. C. Taylor.

Mr. Latchford's Reply.

Hon. Mr. Latchford upheld the action of the Public Accounts Committee in deciding to conclude their work. He said that the Opposition members had been anxious to be obstructed in committee, and were greatly disappointed because they were not obstructed. He reviewed some of the proceedings of the committee, to show that there had been no obstruction, and that every witness desired by the Opposition had been summoned, and every pertinent piece of testimony had been produced.

Another matter that came before the committee was the appointment of Mr. McMaster as overseer of the Markstay road. That matter had not been referred to in the House by the Opposition. That matter was cleared up thoroughly, and shown to be quite regular. What the hon. gentlemen opposite had set out to prove they had