

### Thinks Blackmail in Story About Fire

Sudbury Publisher Denies Any Talk About Having Fire Set. Alleges Plot into Which he was led Unexpectingly.

Because of the prominence of some of those concerned in the case as witnesses and also because of some of the sensational statements or implications made, the enquiry into the Sudbury Transit Company's garage fire at Sudbury is rousing very wide interest. In the enquiry the name of W. E. Mason, publisher of The Sudbury Star, has been bandied about and one of the forms his reply has taken has been the publication in The Sudbury Star of a very detailed account of the enquiry. A comprehensive, though more concise is given in despatches in other daily newspapers a summary of Saturday's hearing being as follows:—

Giving evidence at the Saturday night session of the enquiry into the Sudbury Transit Company's garage fire, W. E. Mason, publisher of the Sudbury Star, and chief shareholder of the transit company, alleged a plot into which he has been unsuspectingly led. The purpose of the plot, he said, was to force him to drop court proceedings against Kero Koleff, former managing director of the company. The witness denied he had ever offered John Soltynski, former bus washer, \$500 to "make a good fire," or that he had paid Kero Koleff \$300 to give Soltynski for setting the fire, as alleged by witnesses earlier in the day.

Soltynski is awaiting sentence after pleading guilty to a charge of arson in connection with the fire, which caused \$16,000 damage to the company's building and equipment September 6 last.

The first witness to appear in the morning was Robert H. Grant, former city treasurer and who was brought to the city for the inquiry.

He made a survey of the financial situation of the Sudbury Transit Company with a view to bankruptcy and he had prepared the necessary documents and had understood he would become custodian on the Monday following the fire, early Sunday morning, September 6. Mr. Mason denied such arrangements had been made by him.

"I understood there was to be no assignment made because of the fire," testified Mr. Grant. He stated that Mr. Mason "was sick of it" because of the totals of the money that had been advanced, but that the company did not owe any great amounts.

Charles Belinsky, day despatcher and brother-in-law of Kero Koleff, former manager, stated on the night of the fire he had gone to the garage and there Soltynski said he was getting \$500 to set the fire.

John Soltynski, bus washer, who is awaiting sentence after pleading guilty to arson in regard to the transit company blaze, through an interpreter, stated that on the night of the fire between 11 and 12 o'clock, he was working when Mr. Mason came to the garage and asked how he would "like to make \$500." He was advised "to make a good fire." The witness stated he was afraid and was told "you don't have to be afraid many do it."

He had saturated the buses with gasoline and thrown matches on the floor, where there was some gas, later going to the Sudbury transit terminal. While on his way back to the fire, he was detained by Sergeant F. Davidson and later when released, went to the Sudbury transit terminal. There Mr. Mason, stated the witness, had inquired if he was there and instructions were given him to remain at the terminal. Later, when Mr. Koleff came back from Toronto, the bus washer was dismissed.

"Koleff pressed me and I admitted it," he stated. On other occasions he had gone to the Sudbury Star office and been told by Mr. Mason that payment would be made when the insurance had been collected. He had received sums of money from Koleff and the last amount was \$60, making a total of \$300. He had sent some to his native country and opened up a bank account, the book being produced in court.

Kero Koleff, former manager Sudbury Transit Company, stated he had left the transit firm in December. Mr. Mason had called him back from Toronto when the fire occurred and later he had been told of how the fire was set by the bus washer. Mr. Mason had instructed him to pay Soltynski out of the day's receipts of the firm and then, as a result, the reports showed shortages.

When a new bookkeeper was coming to the firm in December, Mr. Koleff approached Mr. Mason and a receipt was given "so that the new bookkeeper coming in will not know anything about it," a suggestion of Mr. Mason's. Later on, he had told Mr. Miller, insurance company solicitor, that if Mr. Mason prevented Mr. Koleff from starting up in business, then he would "squawk." On December 23, Mr. Mason had said: "Well, Kero, you haven't left town yet" and Mr. Koleff stated his reply was: "No. When I go to sleep I sleep quiet and when you go to bed you are too crooked to sleep quiet."

Under cross-examination, he admitted "that if Mr. Mason had never tried to put me out of town, or stop me from starting up business, I would never have told."

W. E. Mason stated he had lived in Sudbury for 23 years and he had given the Sudbury Transit Company no personal attention until 1930, when business was on the decline.

He reiterated how the financial organization of the firm had been changed on various occasions, until as

a last resort, when payments were being pressed by creditors and he had been "hounded" by finance companies, he had advanced large sums and accepted the deeds to the real estate, chattel mortgages and notes of the concern's directors.

"That is not true," he said, when asked if H. R. Grant was to have become custodian.

After relating his movements on the night of the fire, he said: "I naturally expected to be asked those questions" and "I knew I was under suspicion." He denied he had been to the garage.

"Then you positively did not have the talk with Soltynski, as he swore to today," he was asked and replied, "absolutely no."

The first he knew of the fire was a call from Bob Dixon. He did not know there was a bus washer at the garage at night; did not know John Soltynski and the reason he went to the police office was because "I was told by Chief Andrews that the bus washer had been taken in for questioning."

He went to the police office only once, which differed from testimony last Monday of Sgt. Fred Davidson, who thought it was twice he had been questioned by Mr. Mason. The witness denied he asked the sergeant why the officer didn't let the bus washer go. He admitted talking with Koleff over the long distance telephone and telling the then manager to come back.

The cheques for the loss from the fire was turned into the bank, he stated, and amounts owing were paid. He denied using the words to Mr. Koleff "all over now and forget all about it," that he had never sat down on the bus at the garage, as claimed by Mr. Koleff; that he had never apologized to Mr. Koleff, and that the manager had never seen him regarding John Soltynski.

"Never," he replied to a question: "Did you ever instruct him (Koleff) to keep out money from the Sudbury Transit Company to pay the bus washer?" He admitted John Soltynski had come to the Sudbury Star office on December 17 and said, "me, John, bus washer, police," but the reply to Soltynski was "get out." "I did not know him before then and never saw the man," he testified. He said the first he had heard of the alleged plot was about Nov. 26. On November 23 he had loaned \$300 to Koleff, going to the bank to draw it out to make up what the witness claimed were shortages in funds and then three days later, Koleff said he paid the \$300 to the bus washer to burn down the garage. "I looked him straight in the face," said Mr. Mason. "I said, what are you trying to do, blackmail me?" "I was dumfounded. I was a pretty sick man for a while. A thing like that is hard to swallow." He said it was not long after the cheque for about \$14,000 had been received, and he was sure Koleff was starting out to get something "out of me." Later, a conference had been held between G. M. Miller, K.C., Mr. Mason, Chief Constable Louden and Crown Attorney Wilkins and statements had subsequently been taken from Koleff and Soltynski by the chief constable, and given to Mr. Mason. The reason Mr. Mason gave for not telling the authorities about what Koleff had said in November about the fire being incendiary, was because he did not believe it and later the witness added he was "looking for blackmail."

Corresponding evidence was given by G. M. Miller, K.C. He had engaged Grant and produced forms of bankruptcy prepared by the former city treasurer, but not executed.

### Large Crowd at Legion Event at South Porcupine

The first of a series of entertainments by the Dome and South Porcupine members of the Canadian Legion was held last Thursday evening in the Oddfellows' hall at South Porcupine. The attendance numbered over the 200 mark and all had a wonderful time. Songs and a short sketch was given by Comrades Lowrey and Raymond. Comrade Bellamy also rendered two popular numbers. Square and Round dancing featured the evening, the music being given by a 4-piece orchestra which kept the attendance on their toes all the time. The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Legion (Dome and South Porcupine), served the refreshments, these being of a very good variety. Special credit is due these ladies as the attendance far exceeded the estimate expected, but all were cared for and enjoyed the special brands provided. This, the first of its kind to be held in that part of the Porcupine camp, has given the committee in charge a big boost and plans are now being prepared for the next event under the same auspices. Comrade Countryman acted as M.C.

### High-Grade Samples from Week's Run of the Press

Toronto Star:—Soviet gasoline having reached America, the cars will be Russian around more than ever.

Winnipeg Free Press:—Another lesson learned in adversity is that a tire is not the only thing you can patch.

North Bay Nugget:—University of Toronto has discontinued research into alcoholic poisoning because there is so little of it in Ontario. Prohibition papers please copy.

Blairmore Enterprise:—A druggist has gone bankrupt because he kept too large a stock of perfumes. He should have had more common scents.

McGurgle—"I hear that your old friend Hector has married a third wife."

McGulp—"Aye mon. Hector has been a verra expensive friend. He has cost me two wreaths and three presents in sixteen years."

—Exchange

### When the Red Flag Waved Here Before

Recent Times Not the First When the Red Flag was Displayed in Canada, but There was a Big Difference.

Many people who say that never will the red flag be allowed to wave in Canada may not know that once upon a time it did wave here. It was different, however, to the recent red flag stuff, because it was not a foreign emblem, nor waved by foreign people to annoy the natives, but simply an ensign for a reform movement among some of the people themselves. At that, it should be remembered that the majority of the people were against the waving of the red flag, no matter how much they might agree that there was necessity for reforms. Then, as now, they believed that reforms could be achieved by parliamentary means and measures, and they did not have as good a chance then as now in this direction.

The story of the former waving in Canada of the red flag is told as follows by John Northman in a recent issue of The Toronto Mail and Empire, and is given herewith as a sidelight on Canadian history:—

"Waving the Red Flag in Canada is not a modern innovation. According to unwritten history, the pastime originated in Percy Township, Northumberland County, 94 years ago; and the consequences echoed to the foot of the Throne.

"It was not then the Red Flag of Russia; it was the Red Flag of Reform. For those were days of rebellion and unrest. Lord Durham had confirmed the fondest opinions of the Reform party. The Reformers taunted the Tories unmercifully, and some inspired radicals devised a red banner in honour of their champion.

"On June 5th, 1838, the Percy division of the Northumberland militia assembled for annual training at Percy Mills. Quite appropriately, they made their headquarters at Stone's Tavern. Early that day a band of men from the adjoining township of Cramahoe came in and paraded through the village, carrying a red flag which bore this legend: 'Lord Durham and Reform.' One of them climbed on top of the tavern and nailed the flag to a pole.

"Old political enmities flamed anew. Citizens gathered. Some boldly joined the Red parade. Others murmured angrily. Even the militia became restless, for under their tunics they nursed political preferences. Someone suggested to their O. C., Lieut.-Col. D. Campbell, that he use force to remove the flag. He refused. As a British officer he would not show disrespect to a British nobleman. And yet the Durham flag annoyed him. Nature came to his aid with a shower of rain. He seized the opportunity to march his warriors off to an old barn on a neighbouring farm.

"When most of them had gone a young lad came from behind the tavern flaunting a piece of white cotton attached to a pole. On the cotton he had painted an eagle and the word Liberty. An old sergeant, veteran of Waterloo, seized it. He was knocked down, beaten and trampled; and the men from Cramahoe, continually augmented in numbers cheered, jeered and defied any Tory to touch their flag. Somewhere a shot was fired. The situation became tense.

"After parade, Lieut.-Campbell addressed his men earnestly. 'This,' he said, 'is no time or place for political squabbling. I know you only as soldiers; as such you can assemble only under the national flag. That red flag was brought here to excite angry feelings. I hope you will disappoint the mischief makers by dispersing quietly to your own homes.'

"Most of them obeyed. Twelve remained—twelve ultra-loyalists who resolved that the insults they had suffered should not go unavenged. Among them were two brawny Scotsmen, brothers, named Cameron—two typical men from Glengarry. Totally unarmed, except for an axe to fell the flag pole, they returned to battle the hosts of Cramahoe.

"That was an epic fight. Twelve men against 80! And the 80 were armed with sticks and stones; they even raided a blacksmith shop and got themselves whiffletrees and iron bars. Led by the Cameron men, the loyalists charged bare-handed. At every blow a reformer went down; and every time one fell, his weapon was taken and thrown over a fence. The elder Cameron alone put seven men hors de combat. Seventeen reformers were left lying on the field.

"Down came the Durham flag. 'But the odds were too great. The elder Cameron was knocked unconscious. Fearing that he had been killed, his brother bore him away. When almost every loyalist head had been broken, the little band retired, overwhelmed, but satisfied. Then the men from Cramahoe hoisted the Red Flag again, chaired one of their number named Curtis, and staged a march of victory.

"When the sun went down on that eventful day, the Red Flag was still flying.

"But time wrought great changes. Law was vindicated by firing the boy who assaulted the sergeant. Canada became a united country; and the Red Flag never waved here again until Russia revived it as an emblem of revolution."

"Do you like electricity?"  
"No, it makes me ohm sick."  
—Exchange

### Ten per cent. Cut in All Govt. Salaries

Members, Senators, Cabinet Ministers, Civil Servants Included in Order Announced by Premier Bennett.

Announcement from Ottawa this week is to the effect that a ten per cent. cut is to be made in all Government salaries, including members, Senators, Cabinet Ministers and all civil servants. That the "higher-ups" are included in this case suggests that the reduction is an honest one and meant in all earnestness. The only fault to be found with it is that it will be a serious hardship to those on small salaries—those receiving \$1,000.00 or less per year, and there are quite a number of these. The way it would appear that the plan would have been most equitable and reasonable would be for salaries of \$1,000.00 or less to be exempt, ten per cent. cut made in salaries, say up to \$2,500.00 per year, and then a rising rate of reduction on those in excess of the second limit. Cabinet Ministers should be reduced more than \$1,200.00 when they still have eight or nine times the amount of some of the other salaries.

The following is the summary of the announcement made by Premier Bennett on Monday:

Reductions of 10 per cent. will be made in the sessional indemnity of members of Parliament and senators and in the salaries of Cabinet ministers and civil servants, Premier R. B. Ben-

nett announced in the House of Commons.

This declaration of retrenchment was received in the House with spasmodic applause by Government supporters and stony silence by the Opposition. Members of Parliament and senators receive \$4,000 a year and Cabinet Ministers, \$12,000 additional.

This horizontal cut in indemnities and salaries will represent an annual saving to the treasury of between \$7,500,000 and \$8,000,000 the Prime Minister said. It does not affect judges.

"Conditions in Canada are better than in any other country in the world" declared Premier Bennett in defending the actions of his Government in utilizing the tariff to change an adverse trade balance to a favourable balance.

"The tariff," he exclaimed, "is the only instrument whereby Canada, a borrowing country, can stabilize its trading position."

Premier Bennett also referred to some criticisms made by Hon. Mackenzie King as to submitting a resolution in reference to a slanderous statement in regard to the prime minister before dealing with the address from the throne. Mr. Bennett said he was surprised at Mr. King. The premier noted that in the Commons he (Mr. Bennett) had never troubled to do more than make denial of matters touching himself personally, but that the case of Senator Gordon's charges were different as it touched the honour of the office of the prime minister of Canada. The charge was not against Mr. Bennett as an individual but as premier. "The premier," said Mr. Bennett, "was

charged with having stolen from the public purse."

"It was charged by a member of His Majesty's Privy Council," Mr. Bennett said, "and my Rt. Hon. friend (Mr. King) has often spoken of the desirability of maintaining the dignity of that Privy Council at a high level. My Rt. Hon. friend (Mr. Gordon) himself is a member of that council and at any time might be called upon by His Excellency for advice and counsel. That being so, and the charge being levelled not against me personally but against the office which I hold, I felt that it was not fitting that anyone occupying that office should ask the House to consider the Address until such time at least as a committee was appointed to consider whether or not these charges were founded. For, sir, there is one thing certain, and that is that no man, whoever he may be, is fit to be Prime Minister of this country who is guilty of the offence charged against me in this instance.

"That is all I have to say to that, and I offer no apology for taking the course I have taken which I think any high-minded Canadian must have taken when such a charge was levelled not against him personally but against his office, when it involves as a matter of public honesty, to discharge the high duties of his office, especially when that charge is made by a member of the Privy Council."

Meaford Mirror:—Toronto citizens read 4,000,000 books from the public libraries last year. Yet Toronto might be better informed than it is.

### ANNUAL MEETING FEB. 14TH OF THE HARKER GOLD MINES

Shareholders of Harker Gold Mines Limited are in receipt of official notice calling a special meeting of stockholders for Feb. 14. They will be asked to confirm a proposal whereby Harker will purchase an interest in all the copper properties of the Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration at the end of and in the vicinity of the Coppermine River. This is in accordance with N.A.M.E.'s policy of exploration and development. Officials of N.A.M.E. regard the Coppermine River deposits as of outstanding importance. Huge masses of high grade bornite have been developed and it is thought that a profit could be secured on this even at present depressed metal prices.

New Liskeard Speaker:—After some 33 years of steady work on his farm in Dymond township, which he hewed practically from the woods, Mr. J. F. Peckover thinks he is entitled to a holiday and intends making it a real one. He leaves for the Old Country, England, Sunday, Jan. 31st, from Halifax, sailing on the "Western Land." He visits in Ottawa and Montreal with friends who will take him throughout these cities, showing him the best to be seen—then on to England. Mr. Peckover will be away probably two months and will visit in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk. What a time he will have and what tales to tell when he comes home. His friends wish him a pleasant voyage and a happy holiday.

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