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OUR OTTAWA LETTER.

The week has been given up to the wearisome debate on the Address which since Sir Hibbert Tupper's wild and rabid attack on the eve of the Easter holidays has practically narrowed down to a more or less acrimonious discussion of the policy of the Government in the Yukon. For months the country has been surfeited with charges against the Administration and its officials in the far-off gold fields, until newspaper readers were nauseated with the subject and editors hesitated to give it further space. Now, however, the whole matter has come before parliament—the only place where practical results can be arrived at as the outcome of the discussion and it is interesting and instructive to note the course of the debate and the progress the developments of the week have witnessed.

The Story of The Fight.

The scrimmage opened with the five and a half hours attack, principally personal upon the Minister of the Interior and his work, by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, in the course of which he raked up all the old stale newspaper rumors, and the indefinite yarns of disappointed prospectors, and dignifying these with the name of "charges" he hurled them one after another across the floor of the House and then wanted to know what the Government was going to do about it. This done and having finished his speech at midnight on Thursday, the discreet ex-Minister of Justice, took the very next train for the Pacific coast and was nearly 3,000 miles away before the man he had so recklessly attacked could get an opportunity to reply.

But the answer came quickly when the opportunity did arrive; it did not take the House long to find out what the Government was going to do about it. With a care and thoroughness that overlooked no possible detail Hon. Clifford Sifton went over the ground covered by his antagonist and took up each charge, even when the said charge was nothing but the merest rumor, "without form and void"—fatherless and motherless without so much as a distant connection even by adoption to own it, the good hearted Minister took it up and gave it decent burial.

What Became of The Charges.

He went over the record of the "unscrupulous soundrels" who had "robbed and tyrannized" over the hapless Klondiker "acting in every respect dishonorably and corruptly," and showed by the blue books that many of these officials were old civil servants originally appointed by the Conservatives and he showed further that every man had been specially selected for his fitness for the parti-

cular duties required of him. The charge that constables and others took bribes to facilitate mail delivery was shown to have so little foundation that detectives employed for the purpose had not been able to discover a single instance. Referring to officials taking up claims the Minister showed that under the old Conservative Administration this was perfectly legal and constantly done, that Captain Constantine was the first official to stake a claim in the Yukon six months before the present Government came into power, but that on his, the Minister's recommendation, the practice was now for the first time in the history of Canada made illegal. The famous waterfront lease at Dawson was mentioned and it was shown that public tenders were called and the highest bidder given the lease, subject even then to termination at a month's notice. The accusation of improper trafficking in liquor permits was demonstrated by documentary evidence to be equally without foundation, and so on and so forth; throughout the entire list there was not one charge that was not torn to shreds, and indeed everyone realized then what the Globe remarked next day that the Liberals could want no better campaign literature than the speeches of Sir Hibbert Tupper and Hon. Clifford Sifton, published and perused side by side.

Sir Hibbert T. aron Over.

What was the immediate result of this complete and masterly refutation of the allegations rehearsed by the Minister of Justice? Why, the simple but somewhat startling expedient was adopted of dropping the whole business and starting fresh. Mr. Borden, of Halifax, followed the Minister of the Interior and presented a brand new set of charges, "which had come to hand since Sir Hibbert Tupper had spoken" though Sir Hibbert had been the last speaker on that side of the House. Col. Prior also had a new string, ignoring his leader's charges entirely, and then came that experienced politician, Dr. Montague, who deliberately and in so many words repudiated Sir Hibbert Tupper's speech thusly: "If the charges made by the Hon. Member for Pictou were not specific certainly that cannot be said of the speeches of the hon. members for Halifax and Victoria." That is all very well, but the Opposition are not so simple as they appear at first sight.

They Know Perfectly Well

that it is an impossibility to send details of these new and until now unheard of charges up to Dawson City, have them investigated and the result returned to Ottawa before Parliament prorogues. Their first bill of indictment, the evidence to support which they took no trouble to examine, has been ruthlessly thrown out by the judgment of the House and by public opinion and they know by this time if they did not before—and it must be admitted that they are mighty slow to learn—that there's precious little likelihood of the new accusations having a better fate. They don't want them examined into and reported on before the House prorogues, it would be better to dangle them before the country a few months before they are finally swept into oblivion.

While of course the main interest of the week centred around the magnificent effort of the Minister of the Interior, "who speaks like a British Minister, and not like a shrieking demagogue," there were many good things uttered by gentlemen in the ranks behind him, who ably assisted to "batter, shatter, pound and pulverize" the Opposition as Hon. D. C. Fraser aptly described it. Mr. Maxwell, of Vancouver, for instance again reminded the House that the Government had done everything in its power to get evidence in support of the charges and read a circular sent to every Senator and member of the Commons in British Columbia begging them to prepare and submit any evidence they could secure. This the hon. member followed up by asking how it was that all the alleged charges, all the so called knowledge of wrong doing came to the Opposition while the Government had utterly failed to secure anything tangible upon which to work; "surely" added Mr. Maxwell, "if there are grievances to be redressed those most likely to be able to redress them are the men in power and not the gentlemen on the Opposition benches."

Dr. Montague Drops It.

The speech of Hon. Dr. Montague, already referred to was without doubt the most effective contributions from his side of the House and one of the best speeches of the entire debate. It was noteworthy for more than one reason. Not only did he practically repudiate Sir Hibbert Tupper as mentioned above, but he to all intent and purposes dropped the Yukon question entirely. Dr. Montague is one of the most experienced campaigners in the House, he recognizes the weakness of the Opposition attack in this direction and it is his advice prevails in the Councils of the party, methinks the whole miserable business will be allowed to die a natural death. True an amendment is threatened dealing therewith, but I venture to predict it will be a very hollow affair.

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