

THE DAILY NEWS

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DAILY EDITION

Wednesday, Feb. 12, 1913.

A RELIABLE COMMISSION NEEDED

Now that Sir Richard McBride has announced the intention of the government to appoint a commission to enquire into the question of the production and sale of coal in British Columbia, the public will watch with some interest to see who may be appointed to perform this task. The public confidence in this commission will depend largely upon its personnel. If, as has been customary with the government so far, mere political office seekers, those in want of a job, and willing to carry out any instructions that may be given them by the government and whose chief aim will rather be to shield, and, if possible, commend the government, are chosen, the enquiry, of course, will be worse than useless. Men of that stamp in the first place are not, as a general thing, competent to make an enquiry, that will be of service, and if they were competent, they could not be trusted to act honestly. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the government will select a commission in which thorough reliance can be reposed.

If the commission is composed of competent and conscientious men we should have a report dealing with the whole question so carefully and with such clearness, that it would not be possible for some years at least to come, for the public to be treated as they have been in this matter of coal supply in the past. Once the public knows where the fault lies such a demand will undoubtedly be made for speedy redress that it will be impossible to resist it. If, too, there is found to have been intentional culpability on the part of any of those concerned in furnishing the supply to the public it is desirable that their operations should be exposed. In fact the fullest information should be furnished in every respect regarding this important matter.—Vancouver Sun.

TOO MUCH FOR HAWKES

In the Macdonald by-election, Hon. Robert Rogers with the aid of Premier Roblin of Manitoba carried on a reign of terror, imprisoning Liberal workers without charge, holding them until they could be of no further use and then freeing them, while confessed Tory personators were let off with illegally light punishment. At the Richelieu by-election efforts were made on behalf of Hon. Robt. Rogers to corrupt the whole riding with the bribe of a railroad if they would defeat the Liberal candidate. At the recent provincial by-election at Antigonish, Hon. Mr. Rogers attempted to bribe the constituency by the unprecedented indiscretion of announcing an elaborate programme of public works for that riding.

Small wonder that Arthur Hawkes, who led the appeal to the British born in the Tory campaign of 1911 has turned upon his former partners. In his paper Mr. Hawkes says: "In Manitoba as a part of electioneering, men have been thrown into jail and afterwards released without any sort of evidence being produced against them. In Nova Scotia a man has been taken straight from jail to the Government service on the representations of a defeated candidate who must have known the reputation of the appointee. . . I read in the paper an account of how titles are arranged in London on the payment of money to campaign funds and how a forger was taken out of a jail in Nova Scotia and made a government wharfinger. Both stories made you sick. Mr. Hawkes' appeal to the British born is hardly bearing the fruit he anticipated.

POOR EXPLANATION OFFERED FOR HANDSOME DONATION

PREMIER MCBRIDE MAKES POOR ATTEMPT AT EXPLAINING WHY THE GOVERNMENT GAVE \$75,000 TO J. S. H. MATSON, OF THE DAILY COLONIST.

Victoria, Feb. 6.—For the first time there was an opportunity this morning to enquire into the reason for the government giving J. S. H. Matson, proprietor of the Daily Colonist, Victoria, \$75,000 for his alleged services in connection with the taking over of the Songhees Indian reserve.

Unfortunately for the administration, they had to account for the expenditure in the annual statement, and when the public accounts committee met this morning Parker Williams at once challenged it. Chairman Lucas' explanation was not at all lucid, though he intimated that he was simply the mouthpiece of the Premier on the occasion.

Made First Overtures.

In effect, what Sir Richard wishes the public to understand is that Mr. Matson approached him and offered to bring about satisfactory terms with the Indians. The Premier offered him a handsome fee if he could do so, and also he was to have the right to sell the land, for at that time it was understood that it was to be subdivided into town lots.

It was estimated that several millions of dollars would be realized from the property, and when the government changed its policy in regard to the reserve they apparently still retained their policy of rewarding a faithful supporter, even though he had done nothing, for Mr. Matson got his \$75,000.

Was Not Satisfied.

There was only one member of the public accounts committee apparently who was not satisfied that the transaction was a legitimate one. This was Mr. Williams. He put the chairman through a rather severe examination, and Mr. Lucas seemingly did not relish being made Sir Richard's scapegoat.

To begin with, Mr. Williams asked Mr. Lucas the following questions:

"Did the Premier indicate any written agreement in reference to this payment?"

Answer: "No, he did not."

"Was this amount a final settlement for all services, or is there more to come?"

Answer: "It was a final settlement, though it is not stated in so many words. The report is certainly not worded very clearly."

"Did the Premier indicate to you how much time the owner of the Colonist gave to the work in question?"

No Definite Answer.

Answer: "He said the gentleman gave considerable time to the matter, but not definitely how much."

"Did you say that the Premier offered to give the committee any information on the matter if they so desired?"

Answer: "No; he did not say that, but we have the right to ask him if we wish."

"Would it not be just as well to have Mr. Matson himself before the committee to ask him a few questions on this subject?"

Answer: "He is at present in England."

Mr. Williams asked next why all lithographing work of the government was given to the Colonist Printing & Publishing Co. Was it not possible to call for tenders.

In reply Deputy Minister Smith said that the amounts were so small that it was not worth while to make competition.

Amounts to \$3,000

"But I see," said Mr. Williams, "that it amounts up to \$3,000. Surely that would be worth while issuing tenders for."

Mr. Smith then shifted his ground. No other firm in the country, he said, had the machinery to do the work, and if the government did it itself, it would involve the employing of an expert at a salary of \$3000.

One item in the accounts showed that the Canadian Northern Railway Company has been paid \$5 a head for the entrance of 444 immigrants into the province.

"What was this money paid for?" asked Mr. Williams.

"It looks to me," said H. E. Forster, "as if it were paid out to bring men in to work on the C.N.R."

"If that is so," replied Mr. Williams, "the government is not only false to its election promises, but it is paying a railway company to procure laborers to build its lines."

To Probe Standard Oil

Washington, Feb. 11.—The soaring price of crude oil is being investigated by the department of justice in connection with the enquiry to determine whether the decree dissolving the Standard Oil Company has been violated. The government wants to know whether any of the remaining subsidiaries of the trust have created conditions responsible for the enormous rise, and whether there has been any concerted action.

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Cold at Fort George.

Last Friday, one week ago, the thermometer registered a temperature of 65 degrees below zero. It was the lowest temperature experienced by men who have lived in this country for ten years past. The lowest registration hereabouts seldom falls below 30 degrees below zero, and such intense cold does not last for many hours. There is never any wind during these cold snaps.—Fort George Herald.

Now a Contractor.

J. A. Green, who has filled the position of assistant engineer for the G. T. P. between Moricetown and the summit, and who is better known as "Doc" Green, has severed his connection with the railway company and has joined with John Bostrom as a railway contractor. "Doc" has been in town for several days with Mr. Bostrom getting their supplies loaded and sent out to their Fort Fraser camp.—Omineca Herald.

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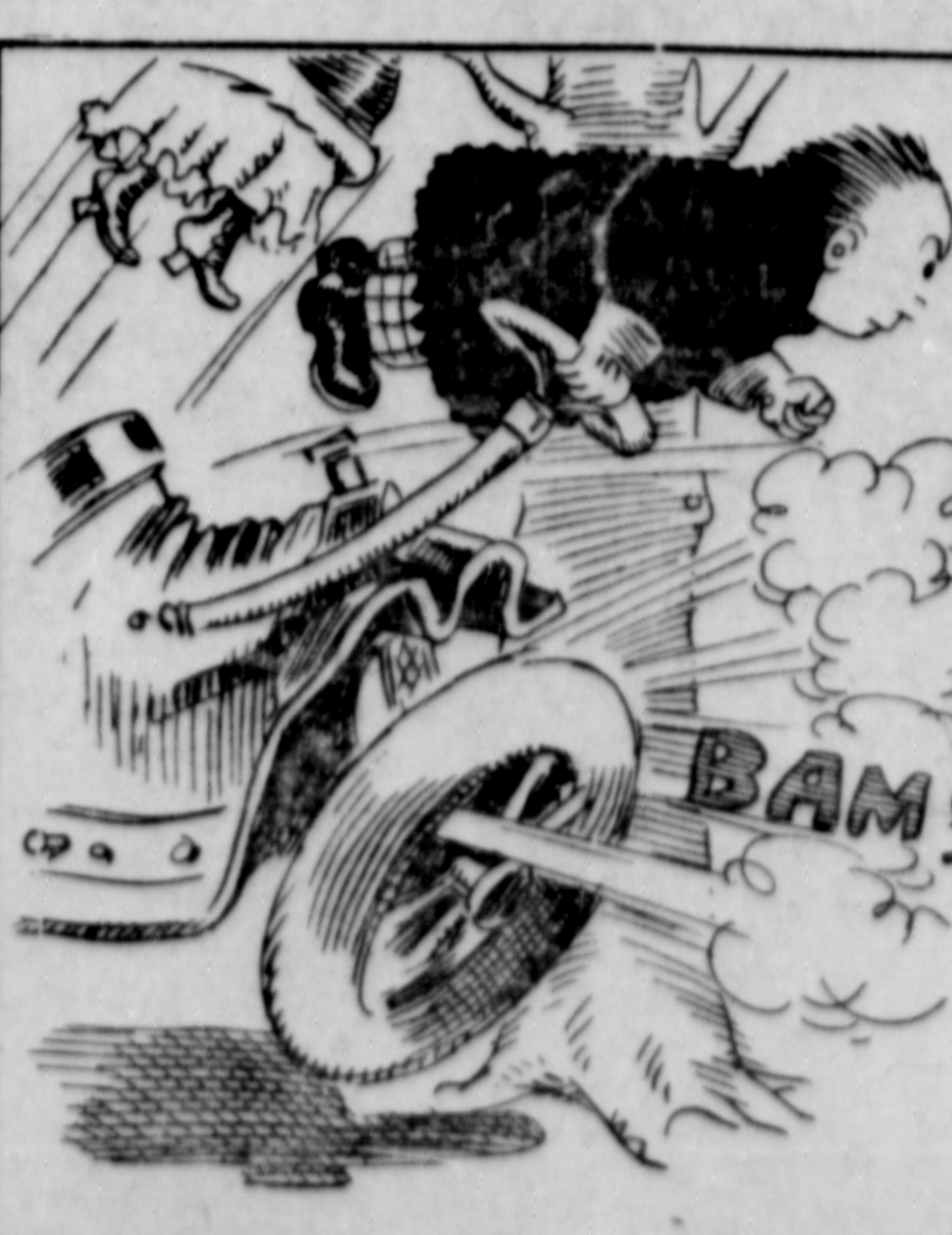
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