

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE

APPOINTED *re* RAILWAY DESPATCH OF 13TH JUNE, 1876.

MR. SPEAKER :

Your Committee submit a copy of the evidence given by the Hon. Mr. Trutch, which does not show that a copy of the despatch of the Dominion Government, dated 13th June, 1876, reached the Executive Council.

Your Committee recommend that the evidence in question be published with this report in the Journals of the House.

JOHN ASH,
Chairman.

Copy of the minutes of the evidence given by the Hon. Joseph William Trutch, C.M.G., before the Committee "On the suppression or non-production of Railway Despatch, 13th June, 1876":—

THE HON. MR. TRUTCH says that he is happy to have the opportunity of meeting the Committee, and can only regret that he is unable to throw any light on the subject of the inquiry, other than that contained in his letters to the Speaker, which are printed in the minutes of evidence taken in 1879.

The fact is, I do not remember mentioning or speaking about that despatch either to Mr. Elliott or any one else. I had no communication with the Dominion Government upon the matter, either by letter or telegram otherwise, than through my despatch to the Secretary of State. The expression "laid before my Executive Council," which occurs in my letter to the Dominion Government in connexion with this despatch, is an official phrase, and does not necessarily imply that I personally placed the document in the hands of my Ministers or any one of them.

After I had acknowledged the receipt of the despatch, and had placed a copy thereof in an envelope addressed to the Executive Council, I suppose that I threw the matter off my mind. It was only a fortnight before my term of office expired. I may have regarded it in this way:—that it was not a matter demanding immediate action, and that it would be better that it should be dealt with by my successor in office. I do not affirm that these were my ideas at the time, because I recollect nothing about it; but on thinking the matter over, I can suggest no other explanation of my not having spoken with my Ministers on the subject. I had no knowledge at that time, or since, that the copy of the despatch had never reached the hands of my Council.

I was in the habit of talking with Mr. Elliott on railway matters. I am sure now that I never mentioned this despatch, because he has stated that I did not; and I have no recollection of having done so. I know no reason why I should not have done so.

Question by Dr. Ash.—Were you not a strong advocate of the Fraser river route?
Ans.—Not an advocate, but I consistently held a decided professional opinion, which I expressed publicly at Ottawa in 1871, that the Fraser river route, being the natural outlet from the interior to the sea coast of British Columbia, was the most available line for the Canadian Pacific Railway. In regard to that opinion, I wish to state that with the exception of two lots at New Westminster which I purchased in 1859 for about \$800 and sold in 1877 for about \$1,000, and two lots at Hope, I have never possessed any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any real estate on the mainland of British Columbia. My toll charter right in the Alexandra bridge ceased in 1870.

(Signed) JOSEPH W. TRUTCH.

12th April, 1880.

4th May, 1880.

Members present:—Messrs. Abrams, Harris, Ash, and Bennett.

MR. ALEX. WILSON says:—

Some time in the month of July, 1876, I saw Mr. Elliott pass down Fort street. A few minutes afterwards I had occasion to go down town, when I saw Mr. Elliott and Mr. McLean in conversation at one of the counters. Upon my return, in less than a quarter of an hour, I met Mr. Elliott at the corner of Fort and Government streets. On passing Mr. McLean's door, Mr. McLean hailed me and then came out. I cannot give the exact words, but he used words to this effect:—"That the railway route was fixed; that Mr. Elliott told him that he had got word that the route was fixed by Chilcotin." Upon that information I told some one connected with the *Standard* newspaper to feel for the news,—that there was something in connection with railway in town. I also told the same thing to Mr. Pearse,—that the route had been defined,—and he told me afterwards that he had the same information, almost word for word, from one in authority.

(Signed) ALEX. WILSON.

ALEX. McLEAN examined:—

Question by Dr. Ash.—Do you know anything at all about this missing despatch?
Ans.—I never had any conversation with Mr. Elliott on the subject of the contents of this despatch. I have no recollection of ever speaking to Mr. Alex. Wilson on the subject.

Having heard Mr. Alex. Wilson's evidence read by the Secretary, I beg to state that I have no recollection of anything of the kind taking place, and I believe his statement to be untrue.

(Signed) A. McLEAN.

May 4th, 1880.