

WM. ROCKEFELLER AND HIS PRIVATE PARK

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March, 1902, he caused the old man's arrest for fishing in a branch of the St. Regis River, which the millionaire claims to own.

This is not all. The Standard Oil magnate had also brought suit against Lamora under the common law for £15 for trespass. He got six cents. This was followed by another suit, this time for exemplary damages, which was soon withdrawn. Rockefeller has been making legal action pretty expensive in time, money, and worry for the obstinate fisherman.

The campaign against Brandon now began to broaden. Signs warning off trespassers were put up on all the roads leading out from the town. Many of these are highroads, but the Rockefeller attorneys assume that they are private property. "Let the other fellows prove that they are highways," say the lawyers. Old trails were closed, and barred against the passage of the Brandonites. Residents of the little settlement, who had obtained employment in a lumber company controlled by William Rockefeller, were discharged at the behest of the Bay Pond estate watchers. The word went forth that no Brandon man could get a job in that country. Children going out from the hamlet to pick berries on the mountainsides were driven home by the watchers and threatened with harm if they repeated the offence. Undeniably the berries belonged to Rockefeller, but in view of the fact that they were never marketed, and that ninety-nine per cent of them were left to wither on the bushes, the inhibition is regarded by those most concerned as harsh, though legal enough.

But the Rockefeller employees have not always kept within the law, and herein, presumably, they have gone beyond their instructions. A Brandon man named Bereamb, while fishing in the St. Regis, had his pole shot in two by a watcher who is a crack marksman. At the same time he was struck by a rock, from the hand of the watcher's companion. Both assailants were arrested, but before the case came up for trial, Bereamb (without any procurement on the part of the Rockefeller influencees, it is but fair to say) had gone to the pothouse. Other charges of violence are made against the game-keepers, but most of them lack substantiation.

Naturally, methods such as these made William Rockefeller unpopular, but what followed was a sorer exasperation to the thinning population of Brandon.

Since 1887 the little place has had a post-office of its own. It was in the middle of the village, convenient for all, and the nearest available point, moreover, for several lumber camps in the vicinity. Late in April of last year William Rockefeller wrote a letter to Henry C. Payne, then Postmaster-General, about the post-office at Brandon. Persons who declare that they have seen this document quote from it this passage: "Heretofore you have granted us many favours. We have still one more to ask of you, that you remove the post-office from Brandon to Bay Pond."

Mr Payne is dead; suffice it to say of him that he was a man peculiarly amenable to such influences as Mr Rockefeller could bring to bear. Instead of referring the matter to the Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General, Mr Bristow (an official reputed to be disobedient in delicate matters of this sort), as is customary in the affairs of fourth-class post-offices, Mr Payne himself sent an inspector to investigate. Before the inspector's report came in, Mr Payne, by what urgency it is impossible to state, took matters into his own hands and ordered the Brandon post-office closed. The effects were removed to Bay Pond, a settlement exclusively made up of the Rockefeller menage, four miles distant in the heart of the estate. The personal request of a private citizen had sufficed to move a post-office from a point where it was needed to a point where it wasn't. Bay Pond already had a post-office of its own.

To the Brandon people this seemed

an injustice. Some of them even went so far as to say that the Government had been influenced by Mr Rockefeller's position and riches. They got up a petition for the return of their post-office. Seventy-four people signed it—a number, by the way, considerably in excess of the Bay Pond population. The petition went to Washington and was pigeon holed. Brandon came to understand that it could tramp to Bay Pond for its mail, or it could go without. It trumped. And it trumped over roads lined with signs announcing that this was William Rockefeller's private park, and warning trespassers away under penalty of the law. That is, the United States was maintaining a post office to which Mr Rockefeller might, if his claims were made good, deny access to any person distasteful to him. That he did not deny such access perhaps speaks well for his wisdom.

On the whole, the Rockefeller employees were not disobedient to the Brandon people in the matter of mail. The postmaster at Bay Pond even went beyond the requirements of his office, often sending mail down to Brandon by one or another of the railroad hands. But the rape of their post-office rankled in the minds of the Brandon folk. One day last fall Oliver Lamora sent his son to Bay Pond after a newspaper which he expected. The son returned empty-handed. Thereupon the old man shouldered his rifle and set out himself. At the post-office he found William Rockefeller and Plumbers, the watcher. Lamora declares with glee that Rockefeller immediately stepped behind his employee and maintained that strategic position throughout the proceedings. Not that there was any danger, says the old man, for he only brought the weapon to protect himself against Mr Rockefeller's wild deer. Lamora demanded his paper. The postmaster instituted a search, found it in a corner where it had been mislaid, and delivered it with an apology.

William Rockefeller does not seem to be an object of personal hatred; as was, for instance, his neighbour, Orlando P. Dexter, who met so tragic and mysterious an end in 1903. Dexter was a millionaire owner who had not only prosecuted relentlessly, but persecuted with all the powers of the law, those who attempted to maintain what they considered their rights against him. Openly announcing his intent to ruin certain resident owners, he set about his ends through process of law by which he did not live to benefit. They found him dead on the roadway which he had made private, thereby compelling a neighbouring lumberman to make a circuit so long that his timber became practically unmarketable; shot from ambush by a murderer who left no clue. William Rockefeller left his place the day after the murder and left in haste, it is said. Since then, so Brandon people tell me, several bullets have been shot into the Rockefeller buildings during the owner's absence. Even if this be true, and it is denied, it might well be accidental in a region where there is so much hunting with rifles which carry several miles. People there are in that neighbourhood who would be glad to have Rockefeller believe himself in danger of Dexter's fate. But the Standard Oil millionaire, unless he should employ methods as ruthless as Dexter's (which he has not yet done), is not likely to arouse the quality of vindictiveness which speeds the assassin's bullet. Anyway, his own people, who seem devoted to his interests, are a constant safeguard.

Professor G. C. Curtis, who is assistant geological professor in Harvard University, leaves Auckland this week for America in the Ventura. He recently paid a visit to Milford Sound and the glacial regions of the Southern Alps. He was a member of the scientific expedition that sailed from New York for Martinique within thirty hours of the Mount Pelee eruption. He camped for six weeks on the mountain, taking geological observations, and the result of his work was the most valuable contribution made by any member of the party. Professor Curtis speaks in the highest terms of Dr. Bell, the Government Geologist, with whom he studied at Harvard. A brother of Professor Curtis has succeeded to Dr. Bell's position in Canada. The professor made several excursions in the neighbourhood of Mount Cook, and painted some pictures. On more than one occasion he painted so long that his brush froze to the canvas.

Personal Paragraphs

Mr and Mrs Arthur Myers, of Auckland, have been visiting Rotorua.

Mrs McCallum (Dannevirke) has been visiting Mrs A. Guy, Palmerston North.

Mrs Bell and Mrs Tripe (Palmerston North) went to Wanganui for the races.

Mrs Innes (Palmerston North) paid a short visit to Wanganui last week.

Mrs and the Misses Boyle have returned to Christchurch from Wainate.

Miss L. West is back in Wellington after a stay at Castlepoint.

Mrs Rawnsley is back in Wellington after a month or so in Christchurch.

Mrs. Friend, of Palmerston North, is staying in Wanganui on a short visit.

Miss Coates is back in Wellington after a short stay at the Wairarapa.

Mrs Charles Gordon (Hastings) is visiting her mother, Mrs Michael Campbell, at Avonside, Christchurch.

Mrs Melville Jameson, Timaru, is paying a visit to Mrs Elworthy at her residence, Papanui-road, Christchurch.

Miss M. Burke, who has been staying in Gisborne for some months, has returned to Napier.

Miss Muriel Mears (Merivale) has gone to Timaru on a visit to Mrs Newman.

Mr and Mrs Embling (Wellington) are visiting their old friends at Christchurch.

Mr St. Clair (of Messrs. Hall and Co.) leaves Auckland this week for San Francisco on a trip round the world.

Mrs. and Miss Kenny (Auckland), who are living in Hawera for a few months, have taken Mr. Koch's house.

Dr. and Mrs. Skerman, of Marton, have been in Wanganui for a short holiday.

Mr. Russell Duncan has returned to Napier from his visit to the Southern Islands in the Hinemoa.

Miss Locking, Napier, has left for Sydney en route for London by the P. and O. S.S. India.

Mr. and Mrs. Orford, of Wanganui, are the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Birch, in Rangitikei.

Miss C. Graham (Dunedin) is in the Rangitikei district, paying a round of visits.

Mr and Mrs Firth, who have been spending the holidays at Nelson, are back in Wellington again.

Mr and Mrs Embling, who have been visiting friends in Canterbury, are back in Wellington again.

Mrs and Miss Sumerville are back in Wellington after a visit to Masterton.

Mr V. A. Sproul, of the Oceanic Steamship Company leaves Auckland this week on a visit to San Francisco.

Mr. Brodric, Government Surveyor, is busily engaged in the work of re-dividing the Flaxbourne Estate.

Mrs C. E. Waldegrave (Palmerston North) has gone to Hastings. She is visiting Mrs C. Bennett.

Mr and Mrs Tibbs, of Auckland, have been visiting Mr and Mrs Wells, of "Oakleigh," Cambridge.

Mrs Proude and Miss E. Taylor are the guests of Mrs Taylor, of "Bardowie," Cambridge.

Miss R-He Allen (Picton), who has been visiting her sister, Mrs Chaytor, in Richmond, Nelson, has returned home. Mrs Marriner, and her sister, Miss Rice, are still staying at "Salhurst," Cambridge.

Mr. T. Scott Smith, S.M., and Mrs. Smith (Picton) are visiting Christchurch.

Mr and Mrs E. R. Bloomfield returned from their visit to Australia by the Mararoa on Sunday.

Mr. A. P. Wilson, who has been on a visit to Sydney, returned on Sunday by the Mararoa.

Mr. T. C. Robson, of Christchurch, hon. secretary of the N.Z. Amateur Boxing Association, is visiting Auckland.

Mrs Judd, of Auckland, has been spending a few days in Cambridge with Archdeacon and Mrs Willis.

Mrs Dudley and her sister, Mrs Hepply, have returned to Auckland, after spending a month in Cambridge.

Miss Wright, of "Loloma," Cambridge, is in Auckland for a month's visit amongst friends.

Miss Byles, of Auckland, is at present visiting Mrs G. Ruessmann, of Cambridge.

Mr and Mrs Grant Sim have returned to Palmerston North from their wedding trip to Auckland and Rotorua.

Mr and Mrs N. Gurr (Dannevirke) were visitors to Palmerston North during last week.

Mrs Mackay, and her little daughter Dorothy have been the guests of Dr. and Mrs Roberts, of Cambridge, for ten days.

Dr. Wohlmann, Government Palaeologist, is returning from Hammer to Rotorua. He was in Wellington on Saturday.

It is understood in Onehunga that Father Mahony will succeed to the parish rendered vacant by the late Monsignor Paul's death.

Mr Mepham Ferguson, the well-known engineer, of Melbourne, arrived in Auckland on Sunday by the Mararoa, and is staying at the Grand Hotel.

Mrs Elworthy has returned to Christchurch from Gisborne, where she has been staying with her daughter, Mrs Williamson.

Mr and Mrs G. Holmes, Halswell, Canterbury, accompanied by two of their daughters, are on a visit to Rotorua.

Mr A. H. Burton G.M., and Mr M. Nicol, G.S., of the N.Z. Freemasons, who have been visiting Auckland, went back to Wellington last week.

Mr P. Sargood arrived here from the South by the Moana on Sunday, and leaves this week for California by the Ventura, on a pleasure excursion.

Mrs Pearce has returned to Masterton after a short stay in Wellington, where she was the guest of Mrs G. Johnston.

Mr and Mrs W. Kettle, of Grey-mouth, leave Auckland this week for America by the Ventura on a trip round the world.

Miss N. Heath (Wellington) has returned from Napier, where she has been visiting relatives during the holidays.

Mr. D. Wallace has been appointed a deputy Government Commissioner at Niue, and he leaves for the island in the Countess of Ranfurly on her next trip.

Mr and Mrs and the Misses Mandel (3), Wellington, left by the Gothic for a trip to England. They will probably be away about a year.

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