

PROGRESS.

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MR. HAY'S RETIREMENT.

HOW THE REGRETTED CIRCUMSTANCE WAS BROUGHT ABOUT.

Dr. Bridges' Duties Look Too Numerous for One Man to Attend Properly—The Press Still Excluded From the Meetings of the School Board.

School affairs have been exciting some attention this week and the school board have by two actions made themselves rather unpopular with the public. These are the depriving the city of the services of an able educationist in the person of Dr. Geo. U. Hay and their refusal to open their doors to the press and the public.

The city's loss will be some one else's gain in view of Dr. Hay's wide reputation and recognised ability as a natural scientist, teacher and principal he will no doubt command as good a position if not better than that of principal of Victoria school.

The subject of Dr. Hay's retirement has had considerable notice in the daily press and he has had considerable sympathy expressed for him and it found expression in a petition signed by influential citizens which was presented to the school board asking for better recognition of his services. It seemed however that the die had been cast when Dr. Hay wrote his letter to the press, taking a decided stand against the school board and refusing to accept the position offered him.

It is a regrettable circumstance and more so that there appears to be considerable rancour aroused over the affair. It appears that the school board had a delicate matter in hand. They had engaged Dr. Bridges for a period of years as head of the grammar school and when the Grammar and Victoria schools were united it was a question between Dr. Bridges and Dr. Hay. The former being an excellent administrator, teacher and classical student and possessing a university degree and grammar school license was appointed. Dr. Hay was offered the choice of the principalship of Victoria school with the high school grades absent or the associate principalship of the high school.

The former was of course a subordinate position so he refused it. The latter had the appearance of being as responsible a position as his previous one but it would appear that the title of associate principal was to be one of name only. Dr. Bridges was to administer the school and lay down the law and the gospel of its methods of discipline. Dr. Hay was to stay in his room and teach his subjects. He felt that he could not do this in justice to himself in view of his past record and so he resigned, and the school board promptly accepted his resignation and have lost the very best teacher, excepting Dr. Bridges, that the city had on its staff.

Dr. Hay and one or two others of the grammar school teachers of the province did not possess a grammar school license. In view however of his distinguished career as a botanist and as teacher of English literature and natural science the board of education some months ago passed a regulation by which he could obtain a special grammar school license. Thereupon Dr. Bridges and some others who hold the regular grammar school licenses protested to the board of education against this step and considered that Dr. Hay and the others had as much right to pass the severe requirements of the grammar school license examination as themselves.

This probably made a breach between the two educationists and both being of different minds in regard to the high school, Dr. Hay preferring the departmental system while Dr. Bridges opposed it, they decided that they could not advantageously be associated in the conduct of the school or rather Dr. Bridges probably decided that for he appears to have the school board at his back and so Dr. Hay had nothing to do but resign.

Now Dr. Bridges will have an elephant on his hands, so to speak. He will superintend the workings of all the city schools. He will be principal of the High school with its 500 pupils and he will teach the eleventh and twelfth grades for two or three hours daily. He has a heavy responsibility on his shoulders but he is a man of ability and stern purpose and perhaps he can carry it; any way, time will tell. Could some arrangement have been affected whereby that responsibility might have been shared it would certainly have been in the interest of the schools. But it seems that that was impossible and the papers and public might talk a year and

not mend matters. It was a deadlock if ever there was one. Dr. Hay wanted one of the two positions or none at all, the principalship or the superintendency. He did not want an associate principalship that would be one in name only. To show that this would have been so the school board has stated that there will now be no associate principal, and Dr. Hay's successor will just teach his or her grade. During Dr. Bridges' absence from the school therefore it will be for the time without a head.

It is too bad that there should have been this hitch in the machinery of this new school which probably has no peer among high schools in the Maritime provinces with Dr. Bridges teaching classics, and Dr. Hay teaching English and natural science and the two uniting their experience and knowledge in mapping out the general management of the school the scholarship would have been of a high order. Of course it will be as it is, for the staff is an excellent one and good work will be done.

The other matter that has been attracting attention is that of opening the school board meetings to the public. In the neighbouring city of Moncton and in most cities it will be found that the reporter is present at these meetings. The press of this city have now for some years been clamoring for admittance. At Monday's session of the board Mr. R. Maxwell made a motion of which he had given notice some months previously that reporters be admitted. This was lost on a vote of four to six, Messrs. Lockhart, Haley, Allen and the mover voting for and Messrs. Coll, Gorman, Nase, Dr. White and Mrs. Skinner and Mrs. Dyer voting against.

This question has been discussed several times by the board and no valid arguments have been adduced why the body should sit with closed doors. It has been stated that the reporters might misrepresent them or put them in a bad light before the public. Rather are they apt to appear in a bad light by clinging to secularity. Where their deliberations are made known only in part they are more apt to be misrepresented than if the whole was known. Then again they say that they would not feel so free about discussing the qualifications and the work of teachers if they admitted the press. In answer to this it might be said that either of these matters could be delegated to committees or else the reporters could be requested to remain silent about them, and it can be vouched for that they would willingly comply.

Anyhow the day has come when the public must know how the school funds are being expended and the schools administered. The city council for many years jealously guarded their committee rooms from the men of the quill but at length yielded to insistent demands. Now the aldermen want the school board meetings to be public and they expect their six appointees to see to it that the meetings are made public. On Monday night four of the six went back on the trust, but when new appointments are made they will likely ask the new appointees to stand for full publicity. The council operates the machinery that collects the taxes and a third of the taxation goes to the school board to be expended by them. The council then are thoroughly justified in asking their six representatives to follow their bidding and pronounce the sesame. They have the power for they form the majority of the board.

The voice of the people must be heard and it cannot be long before the board will have to take the public into its confidence.

Where is Mr. Burton?

The strange actions of Horace G. Burton, formerly Collier & Co's shrewd agent, who after passing unscathed through a very searching trial on the charge of embezzlement, went into partnership with Mr. E. C. March of the Singer Academy is causing considerable comment. Business was booming right along with all its usual briskness at the bicycle resort until Wednesday morning when Mr. Burton failed to show up at his post. Further investigation revealed the absence of the bicycles from the establishment but which were afterwards traced to Watson's stable on Duke street. Mr. Burton had left them there but did not return for them. The cook of the Stanley hotel says Burton requested to be called early as he was going to Halifax, but nothing much has been heard of the missing man since. Mr. March says at the time of writing,

Thursday, he expects his business partner back in a few days. At any rate Burton's actions are very strange indeed.

A NATURAL ERROR.

It Wasn't a "Residence" but was Almost as Imposing.

A lady recently returned from the United States tells a funny story at her own expense, and one that illustrates the lavish expenditure of some moneyed men on everything that tends towards display or luxury. The lady who happened to be spending a day in Newport last spring hired a carriage and with another member of her family was driven around the fashionable resort,—the summer home of so many millionaires. The various places of interest were visited and pointed out by the driver, who as a splendid marble pie came in view brought his horses to a walk and turning to the lady and her companion said with much pride "That is Oliver H. P. Belmont's residence." The St. John people, in common with most of the world had heard of Mr. Belmont and they duly admired the magnificent mansion where he departs himself in summer.

A little distance from the "cottage" was another stately building, almost as imposing and magnificent as the first; although of an entirely different design, its towers, windows, graceful arches and polished masonry were quite as impressive, viewed through the drooping branches of many trees.

"Whose quaint, lovely residence is that?" enquired the lady, of the driver, who strangely enough had not volunteered any information in regard to the place.

The Jehu turned with offended dignity, glanced witheringly at the questioner for a second or two and then with an air of scorn that might have crushed even a more assuming person remarked, "That is Mr. Belmont's stable."

The Pleasure of a Delayed Race.

There is some fun to be had from a boat race even if it does not come off, especially if it is supposed to take place at so pretty a spot as "The Willows" on the Kennebecasis. But old Boreas cares nothing for the arrangements of judges and referee and sent a spanking breeze along both Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons to delay the race between Messrs. McCormick and Johnston. Still the excursionists from the city on both afternoons had a few pleasant hours in the country, and, pending the decision of the leisurely but watchful referee Willis, wandered here and there about the fields and along the river bank. To not a few it was a first trip up the Kennebecasis and the beauty of the scenery appealed to them strongly. "The Willows" too was a surprise to them and they inspected the house with much interest. So a postponed boat race has its advantages after all, if it introduces a few more people to a delightful bit of their own good country.

Mr. Bogle is out of it.

A long while ago John Bogle a Market Square taster traded his almost new express with Patrick Galley a confrere in the hauling business. It appears that the McLaughlin Carriage Co. had a claim on the Galley vehicle in the shape of a lien note which fact Galley took care not to reveal to Bogle. Hence not long ago the McLaughlin people came down upon Bogle for the express wagon which he was forced to give up and when he endeavored to trace his old cart which he had traded he found that it had been seized by Mr. Jas. Kelly the carriage builder for repairs made upon it. So Bogle seems to be out of it all round.

A Fine List of Entries.

Secretary J. H. Frink of the agriculture society shows a great list of entries for the fall exhibition races, the most interesting event—free for all—failed to secure more than three entries. Ardligh is one of those and it may be that the speedy gelding is held in the same terror as Special Blend was when at his clip. Clayton is not in form this year and the last ones from Nova Scotia do not appear to wish to measure strength with the son of Rampart.

The Premier Coming.

The announcement that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will open the exhibition gives general pleasure throughout the city. Sir Wilfrid's triumphs abroad have been a great satisfaction, not only to his political supporters but to every Canadian who felt that in the Premier they had a representative worthy of his native land. St. John will accord Sir Wilfrid a hearty welcome.

MAKE A LIVING AT IT.

MEN WHO SYSTEMATICALLY STEAL FOR A LIVING.

They Evidently Think it is no Harm to Pick up Anything They Can Get From a Rich Corporation—Where Potatoes and Coal go—Other Halifax News.

HALIFAX, Sept. 2.—Stealing from the government has not been looked upon as a serious offence by some men who have held positions in the railroad service at this point. Many a person who would scorn to appropriate the property of a neighbour would not hesitate to enrich himself on government property when an opportunity presented. There have been, however, a few out and out thieves in the C. P. R. employ here, who would not only steal from the government, but from all classes and conditions of people whenever they saw a chance to do so. So one who has had a good chance to observe in Halifax, tells PROGRESS.

It has been said that in years gone by, when Truro was the terminus of the N. S., railroad system, that a few far-seeing officials, when building houses, would regulate the size of their window sashes to suit the government glass, and that government walnut and mahogany extend largely into the finishing of their parlors and dining rooms. It has also been said that a few men in the service became stooped in the back from the constant practice of shouldering home government lumber. It is told of one enterprising individual, that he stole sufficient paint to cover a couple of new houses, and had quite an overplus after the work was finished, which he disposed of at a low figure for cash.

After the extension of the road east and north a wider field was opened up for those who were inclined to operate. Some years ago a small syndicate was organized with headquarters in New Brunswick to carry on a trade in brass brushes; the metal was put up in barrels which were labelled oysters and shipped by rail to a distant station. The business had only got fairly started when, on one unlucky day, the head gave way in a barrel of the bogus oysters and the enterprise collapsed. There was a sudden winding up of the syndicate and a sudden immigration of its members into the borderland.

The members of the brass brush syndicate were only amateurs in the business, compared to a gang whose headquarters were at Richmond in this city and who carried on a successful business for a period extending over ten years. They commenced on a small scale, but like operators on Wall Street they grew reckless with their good luck and soon corners in government coal lumber and oil were the order of the day.

Cars of coal arriving at Richmond would disappear, and the official would be perplexed and puzzled to know what became of them. The train records would show their arrival on a certain day, and their departure empty a few days afterward, but the disposal of their contents was a question that could not be solved by those who had the matter in hand.

The building of the track to the cotton factory siding gave an impetus to the coal business, as it was neither too near nor too far away for unloading the coal. When hoppers would disappear, people would naturally come to the conclusion that they were dumped by mistake aboard of some steamer, but when gondolas began to follow suit some other conclusion had to be arrived at. On one occasion a gondola of coal arrived from Springhill for a well-known steamship firm. Before the consignees could get possession of the coal, the car was moved to the cotton factory branch and the contents hauled away to the houses of the operating gang. It could scarcely be said that the work was done on the sly, as some of the coal was offered for sale by a member of the "company."

At another time a cargo of hard coal was discharged at Richmond for the railway. Some of it was shipped in cars to stations along the line, but a portion of the cargo was stored under the coal trestle near the Richmond office. One gondola, containing probably twenty five tons, was not unloaded at the trestle, neither did it go out along the line, but it was taken possession of by the "company" and hauled to their respective houses.

One man who was not a member of the gang threatened to "equal" over the disposal of the hard coal. He gave one of the bosses to understand that if the government

had coal for gratuitous distribution, that the thing should be done on a more equitable basis, and that the poor employees should not be overlooked in the matter. The kick had the desired effect, and the kicker received as a peace offering a hopper containing between four and five tons, which was dumped at Young street and hauled away for winter use.

The stealing of casks of ale, and the trucking of them away in broad daylight is a matter of history. Packages of tea, sugar, flour, butter, canned lobster, and other goods would disappear from the freight shed and cars, as if they had taken to themselves wings and soared away.

To get possession of potatoes enough to last a family for the winter would only be the work of a few moments, and has been done time and again. These statements may seem strange, but they are facts.

On one occasion a Halifax merchant was putting up potatoes for shipment in the steamship shed. Several car loads of the potatoes in bulk were put in the siding and were filled into barrels ready for the coopers to put in shipping order. When the workmen retired for tea some eight or ten barrels were taken possession of, and concealed in a store room at the north end of the shed. After the steamer had sailed with the potato shipment, and everything was quiet, the stolen barrels were taken out of the storeroom and hauled away.

At another time a boat was loaded with scrap metal sheathing and iron belonging to the railway and sent down to a city junk store in charge of two boys. The metal sheathing was pulled off the old derricks that had stood for a number of years on the long railway wharf, and had been stored in the shed for some time. The metal was supplemented by a quantity of railway scrap, and sent to the junk store as above stated in charge of two boys. The boss of the job did not wish to be seen in the transaction, and therefore did not accompany the boat. The venture was not a success for the city detective got his eye on the suspicious craft and took possession of boat and cargo and made prisoners of the crew. The railway officials were promptly notified of what had taken place, but nothing was done to punish the guilty parties. The boys gave fictitious names when taken to the police station and though every circumstance pointed to the fact that a bold steal had taken place no attempt was made to have the affair investigated. The man who bossed the piracy was retained in the swain, and in order to make the public believe that there was nothing dishonest in the transaction one of the boys was taken into the railway employ as a messenger a few weeks after his experience at the police court. It is a scripture injunction to be a father to the fatherless, and as the boy was a son of a poor widow the kindness shown on this occasion should be commended, especially as he and his companion were unwittingly led into this junk business, and were the least guilty of all concerned in the transaction.

Probably the masterpiece of all these thieving operations was the case of the man who loaded a car with railway lumber and sent it over to Dartmouth. A considerable quantity of the material was ordered on regular requisitions, under the pretence that it was required when cattle shipments were taking place. As the lumber would be useless for building purposes without nails, several kegs of the latter were taken out of the railway store room on the wharf and shipped with the lumber. The officials at Dartmouth refused to deliver the lumber until they received a regular waybill for it. After a few days' delay the necessary sheet was received, which showed a charge of \$2 for moving car from Richmond to Dartmouth, the date given was April 2nd, 1886, and the number of the waybill 80.

The stealing was not done by poor men who worked for small pay, but by individuals who drew large pay and for a considerable time enjoyed the confidence of Station Agents and Superintendents. One of the gang was dismissed from the service several years ago, but not for anything in the stealing line. A second was dismissed for appropriating railway property and other acts of dishonesty. In justice to the memory of those individuals it can be truly said that they never pretended to be saints, they never took part in railway men's conventions, nor did they ever learn the habit of talking unctuously in prayer-meetings. If they had been men of that stamp they would probably still be in the service, and their friends might be pressing for a superannuation or a handsome retiring allowance for the great service they have bestowed upon the country.