

PROGRESS

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ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 1898.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

CREDITORS SURPRISED.

BY THE SUSPENSION OF A BOOT AND SHOE MERCHANT.

They Decline Thirty Cents on the Dollar but will Probably Accept—For the Liabilities are \$39,000 of Which \$7,000 is Protected—Incidents of the Affair.

The creditors of Walter Mitchell, who keeps a boot and shoe store on Charlotte street refused to accept thirty cents on the dollar which his solicitor offered them. Since then they have been offered forty cents and they will probably accept that, indeed, they have not done so already.

Mr. Mitchell came from Moncton some years ago to open up a business in St. John. He made a good start and his business has increased steadily since that time. His store has improved in appearance his stock has been greatly increased and his patronage has been so generous that everyone thought he was doing well.

The wholesale boot and shoe man evidently thought so, and say at this moment that they did, for they did not hesitate to supply Mitchell with all he wanted—in fact his credit was so good that he owed the trade \$32,000 at the end of 1897 and he might have owed them thousands more had he been inclined to buy.

Just as their surprise then when the announcement was made that Mr. Mitchell had suspended payment. It came like a thunder clap upon the local men though the wholesale people in Upper Canada say that they were not so much surprised.

In the brief statement of affairs Mr. Mitchell gave his creditors, he placed his liabilities at the surprising sum of \$39,000, of which \$32,000 was owing to the trade and \$7,000 to his brother and sister. This latter amount was secured by judgment against him. His assets he placed at \$19,000.

Upon the basis of this M. Mitchell, through his lawyer, Mr. R. G. Murray offered to compromise at 30 cents on the dollar. Mr. Murray took a trip west and saw the creditors in that section but they did not view his proposition with that favor that it was thought they would. Taking the stock at Mr. Mitchell's own valuation \$19,000 and deducting the \$7,000 secured to his brother and sister there would be a balance of \$12,000. A compromise of 30 cents upon his indebtedness to the shoe trade would amount to \$9,600 and leave \$2,400 for expenses in selling the stock.

That was no doubt the way it was figured out but the creditors refused to see it in that light and began to look into the business to see if something more could not be got out of it.

Representatives of several different firms came here and looked over the books of Mr. Mitchell. Among them were gentlemen from the Amherst Boot & Shoe company—the largest creditor—and Mr. Higgins of Moncton, another large creditor and Mr. McLeod representing an Upper Province house.

Opinions differ as to how books should be kept—some think that they should be kept in perfect order so that any accountant can understand them at a glance, and other business men think that if they are so they can understand them themselves that it is all right. Mr. Mitchell must have been of this latter class because the gentlemen who looked over his books were very much puzzled.

But they got all the information possible, and finally found out that Mr. Mitchell's sales during the last three months of 1897 were much less than they were for the corresponding months of 1896. In fact, they found that the difference amounted to \$6000. This was a tremendous falling off, especially in those months which are the very best in the year for the boot and shoe business. More than that, the business of Mr. Mitchell appeared to be as brisk as ever from the outside—people said he sold cheaper than other stores, and people will go where goods are cheap.

Mr. Higgins in looking over Mr. Mitchell's affairs, asked to see his bill book and Mr. Mitchell told him he did not keep such a book! No doubt this staggered Mr. Higgins, to think that any business man who had \$32,000 of paper out, should not keep a bill book, and he made some sharp remarks, whereupon, Mr. Mitchell became angry and high words passed between them.

It was a remarkable feature of Mr. Mitchell's business that he gave but little credit. He did practically a cash business.

Many of his creditors thought they would find considerable assets on his books but to their great surprise there was only \$1600 outstanding.

Mr. Mitchell was a great man for cheap sales. He was a keen buyer and quick to see a bargain. If a lot of goods was offered at 60 or 75 cents on the dollar Mr. Mitchell was fairly sure to snap them up and have a cheap sale. This is how he got the name of selling lower than other dealers and why so many people rushed there for that kind of goods.

The Amherst Boot & Shoe Company made an offer of 50 cents on the dollar for the stock but it was refused and when Mr. Mitchell and his friends found that 30 cents on the dollar would not be taken an offer of 40 cents was made. This means \$3,200 on the unprotected claims. It is understood that this offer was made through Mr. Mitchell's brother and that if it was not accepted the sheriff would go into the store under the judgments and take possession. It is also understood that the offer of 40 cents was cash.

GEO. KELLY'S ELOPEMENT.

He Persuades Miss Nellie Stephenson to go West With Him.

Geo. Kelly, fireman, has caused a nine days talk in the North End and in some parts of the South, for that matter, by his courtship of an English girl, Miss Nellie Stephenson, with whom he soon became on such intimate terms that both of them left the city on the same train Tuesday afternoon for some point in the West.

This might have been all right had they been able to interview a minister before they went but as Kelly was a married man that was impossible.

Miss Stephenson must have been either a very innocent young lady or a very guilty one. Her friends, or rather those with whom she was acquainted—for she does not seem to have many friends now—say that she did not know Kelly was a married man. That is not a story that will be believed by many. Even if it is granted that she was a quiet sort of a girl and did not take much interest in the affairs of people; still she would have enough of woman's curiosity to find out something of the man who was paying her so much attention and with such serious intent.

More than this there are those who say that she knew all along that Kelly was married, and used to go to picnics and excursions in his company.

According to the story of the people in the house where the Stephenson girl was, the couple planned to go to England on the Gallia and be married there, but they found that would make too big a hole in their savings and abandoned it. Perhaps the fact that Kelly was out of work for some time before their departure had something to do with it too, for according to the story of Mrs. Kelly he had for some time previous when at work kept back part of his weekly earnings on the plea that he had not been paid. But Miss Stephenson had been careful of her earnings and it is supposed this was the source of funds for the couple's flight.

Those who have seen the Stephenson girl are wondering what Kelly saw in her to admire, and those who know what Kelly looks like are puzzling their brains to find out, what the girl could see in him. But there is no accounting for taste, and so it has proved in this case.

Kelly has been married sixteen or seventeen years, and is a man of about 40 years of age. His wife does not seem to be much concerned over his action. She has not been going out much, and had not heard a great deal about his flirtation, and what she did hear it seems she did not believe or thought of no account. She has a daughter old enough to give her some assistance in the near future, but beyond that she has not much to depend upon save her own exertions.

AT A LOW EBB.

Athletic Sports in This City Are Not Encouraged in Any Way.

General athletics seem to be at a low ebb in St. John just now and have been in fact for the last few years. The amalgamation of the Bicycle Club and the Athletic Club the chief, in fact the only athletic clubs in the city, it was thought, would give an impetus to sports of the field and track but it has not done so. The Bicycle and Athletic club are now seriously considering the advisability of giving up the athletic grounds the coming season. It has proved a serious encumbrance to the club during the past year and if they had got

ten the grounds for nothing they would have still been out of pocket when accounts were balanced for the year. Of course they had very bad luck, rain interfering seriously with their afternoon meets and cold evenings in the fall diminishing the gate receipts at the electric light sports. It is plain that the public in this city have lost interest in sports, and the clubs have no assurance that they would do any better with the ground's next year. The rental is \$360 a year, which is considered to be rather high. The clubs are endeavoring to negotiate for a much cheaper rental and if they can secure this they may lease the ground for another year's experimenting. Whether the proprietors, the Gilbert estate and the agricultural society, will reduce the rental, or will prefer the very probable alternative of having the grounds lie idle, is yet to be determined. It will certainly not be creditable to the city if there are no athletic grounds in the city next year under the control of an organized athletic body, but the clubs can hardly be blamed if the public will not back them up and support them. The old promoters of sports have grown weary and no one seems to come forward to take their place. Cannot some young blood be found to step into the breach and start to boom sport? That is all that is required. If sufficient inducements were offered in the shape of really valuable prizes to induce the local athletes to emerge from their retirement and outside athletes from the lower and upper provinces and New England to come here, programmes could be prepared that would draw crowds, and sports would start to boom again. Who will be the Horatio to step forward?

MONCTON LATEST SENSATION.

A Young Clerk Arrested for Stealing From His Employer.

MONCTON, Jan. 19.—The following letters are self-explanatory, and now those who have been blaming Mr. Higgins of Moncton for hardness and cruelty, in dealing with the clerk accused of theft, and weeping over the sorrows of the persecuted Currie, are occupied in wondering what they are going to do about it. Certainly Currie made a magnificent bluff at innocence and succeeded in taking in all with whom he conversed on the subject. The case which came up in the police court yesterday morning was of course withdrawn. It seems to be another case of the good young man who erred, and incidentally deceived all his acquaintances. It is understood that Currie left town yesterday morning.

TO THE PUBLIC.

The letter below, which was presented to me in person Tuesday evening by this unfortunate young man, will be sufficient reply to a few parties who for the past week have been industriously circulating the statements about town that my action in causing his arrest was hasty and harsh, claiming I had not sufficient evidence, etc.

Before taking the action I did I was sure of the evidence obtainable, as all sensible people might have known, and I sincerely trust the clemency shown him after he came to me acknowledging his misdeeds and pleading for his family's sake that the matter be not pressed further, will give him an opportunity to realize the error of his ways and that he will henceforth lead a more honest life.

MONCTON, Jan. 19. L. H. HIGGINS.

MONCTON, N. B., Jan. 18, 1898.

L. H. Higgins, Esq., Dear Sir: I write you regarding the unfortunate position in which I am placed. There is no use in me denying the facts connected with this unfortunate affair. You have just and good cause for the course you have pursued in causing my arrest. For the last two years at least I have been victimized and broken the trust you have placed in me. I have sold goods to several persons in Moncton and elsewhere from your wholesale department, have taken the money myself and used it for my own purposes.

I have shipped your goods from the wholesale department to very considerable amounts to people outside the city of Moncton for which you received no consideration, and the goods have been applied to my own purposes. I have also during that period urged one other employee in your establishments to steal goods from you. I have paid him to take goods from your retail department for me. I humbly acknowledge my shortcoming. It is hard to have to admit that I stole from my employer, but such are the facts. I plead with you to overlook this unfortunate matter, not so much on my account as for those nearest and dearest to me, especially my mother.

(Sgd.) CLIFFORD M. CURRIE.

Canada, Province of New Brunswick, Westmorland, S. S.

I, Clifford M. Currie, of the City of Moncton, Westmorland County, Clerk, do hereby solemnly declare that the above statements are true and correct in every particular, and that the signature, "Clifford M. Currie," to the above statement is my true and genuine hand writing, and that I had a full knowledge of everything contained in the above statement when I signed it, and I make this solemn declaration believing the same to be true and under the Canada Evidence Act, 1893.

Solemnly declared before me at the City of Moncton, Westmorland County, this eighteenth day of January, A. D. 1898.

(Signed) CLIFFORD M. CURRIE. Before me, David Grant, a Commissioner, etc., Supreme Court.

WHEEL WITHIN WHEEL.

PLUMBER McMANUS GETS THE MONCTON STATION SNAP.

Some Facts and Rumors of the Case From the Time the new Station was Talked Of—The Anti-Ellis men are on top.—The old Plumbing Case Again.

The story of the I. C. R. plumbing contract is as long as a plumber's bill. It is a regular old fashioned three-volume novel and it appears to be entering upon the third volume now. This week the third plumber has taken over this seeming white elephant in the line of big contracts, and history will alone disclose how he will make out with his prize.

It is said that plumber's bills allot ten per cent for work done and ninety per cent for knowing how; when it comes to government contracts the percentage for work done is even smaller, for something must be charged for having a pull and the interviewing and manipulating incidental, so that altogether it comes quite high.

Nearly two years ago it will be remembered Messrs Rhodes, Curry & Co., of Amherst, got the contract under the tory regime for building the new I. C. R. depot at Moncton. The plumbing he gave to a Moncton sub-contractor, but owing to some difficulty the latter threw it up. Just about this time the liberal government came into power and the liberals concluded they would like to have something to say about the awarding of this plum of patronage. Tenders were therefore called for, from various liberal followers including James H. Doody and Peter Campbell of St. John. The latter had been in correspondence with Messrs Rhodes, Curry & Co., in the matter, and was daily expecting the specifications. But they did not come and the first thing he knew Mr. Doody had been awarded the contract. His tender, it was stated, was for \$11,000 or \$12,000 although the Moncton man had contracted for much the same work for \$7,000 \$8,000.

Mr. Campbell proceeded to enquire into the matter to find out how it was he did not receive the specifications. He learned, it is alleged, that Mr. Doody received the specifications with instructions to pass them over to Mr. Campbell. Mr. Doody passed them over to Mr. Campbell, but not to the Mr. Campbell. He handed them to Mr. Thomas Campbell, another plumber, who, it is said, put in a sky high figure, knowing that he did not stand much of a show as he labored under the disability of being a conservative.

Mr. Doody started his job and Mr. Peter Campbell commenced to pull strings to see if such methods of obtaining a contract should be countenanced. He corresponded with government officials and, it is said, placed the matter before the Minister of Railways. The result was that in October last, Mr. Doody discontinued operations. When interviewed he said that it was because he was waiting for the building to be more advanced before he went on with the heating. But there were others who thought that the cause was more deep seated than this and they were right.

Plumbing operations were suspended for some weeks and then a Montreal man came down and appraised the work that had been done by Doody, valuing it, so rumor says, at \$1300. Some of the piping had been laid and a lot of copper and other material, tools, etc., was on the ground. Mr. Doody says that he has got \$5000 out of it but this is questioned.

Then about the 24th of December new tenders were called for, to close on the 31st. of that month. It is said that all the way from eight to fourteen tenders went in including those of Doody, Peter Campbell and Frank McManus, of St. John. The specifications made allowance for the work done and materials supplied by Doody and called for the completion of the job by April 1st., however, four weeks after the contract was signed.

On Tuesday morning last Mr. Frank McManus received a telegram stating that his tender had been accepted. It is said that the sum is very near \$10,200 which is considerably under Doody's price. Mr. McManus went to Moncton the following day to sign the contract. It is said that the event is a victory for the Blair wing of the liberal party in which McManus is enrolled, over the Ellis wing which numbers Doody among its stalwarts. This, however, is an open question.

Mr. McManus returned from Moncton Thursday where he went to sign the con-

tract, and he expects to commence work on Monday. It is learned from him that there were about seventeen tenders in so that the competition for the job was pretty keen. Mr. McManus did the plumbing for Sir Wm. Van Horn's residence at St. Andrews and he is to be congratulated in having secured this much sought for piece of patronage.

WENT WITHOUT THEIR SACQUES.

Two of the Ladies Went on Their Journey Minus Sealskins.

Perhaps the most interesting episode of this week was the seal skin sacque incident when two St. John ladies, Mrs. G. Wetmore Merritt and Mrs. S. S. de Forest and two Nova Scotia ladies, Mrs. Henry Buld, of Halifax and Mrs. Wm. Currie of Windsor, were prevented from going into the United States because they wore seal skin sacques and were unable to give proper references as to the pedigree, nationality and stamping ground of the seals from which they were killed. The regulations required that not only the Consul at the place of exportation but also the Treasury agent must be satisfied as to the seal in the garments not having come from the district of the North Pacific where the killing of seals was prohibited by act of December last. As the nearest Treasury agent is in Boston and if he had to come here every day or so to inspect a seal skin sacque great delay would ensue. Consul Myers telegraphed to Washington for a modification of the instructions so that he might be able to pass the seals if he was satisfied that they were made up previous to the passing of the act. This was granted by a telegram received by him Thursday night and now ladies will be able to wear their seal skins if they can obtain a certificate from the consul. Friction will therefore be at an end, for it does not require remarkable perspicacity to see when a seal skin is new or old, and Consul Myers is the most obliging and courteous gentleman. This episode in the line of international amenities was referred to at Dr. Bourinot's lecture. Dr. Bourinot made note of the unwholesome act of the state of New York in expelling two or three Loyalist women from the state under pain of death. Dr. Stockton said that this had been equalled for if the United States had not expelled the women, they had at least expelled their seal skins, which are very dear to their hearts.

DR. BOURINOT'S LECTURE.

It was the Richest Literary Treat of the Past Year.

In a literary line the lecture by the distinguished writer Dr. J. S. Bourinot at Trinity school house on Thursday night was the event of the last twelve months. The house was crowded with a select and fashionable audience who came in response to invitation and they were put in excellent spirits for the learned lecturer told them that the Loyalists comprised the best people in New England and the creme de la creme of the Loyalists came down here. According to this the bluest of the blue blood of America must be located in the maritime provinces. The lecturer also said that the maritime provinces gave Upper Canada some of its best intellect. Dr. Bourinot is a Nova Scotian by birth but he did not state whether he included himself in the category. He had stated in the preface of his lecture that he was distinguished like all other Nova Scotians by innate modesty so probably that is why he remained silent as to himself. Mr. J. D. Hazen, however, supplied the deficiency for he told that Dr. Bourinot was the accepted authority on parliamentary procedure in both the Canadian and Imperial parliaments and he also drew the attention of the audience to the decoration of a companion of St. Michael and St. George which the lecturer wore on his ample bosom as a reward for his services.

Dr. Bourinot has all the capacity of voice and clearness of enunciation which over 20 years of service as clerk of the House of Commons is bound to give one. He is a stout gentleman with a florid face and beaming countenance. His lecture lasted two hours but it was a most interesting one, and he seemed to know the genealogy of every family of importance in Canada. He was heard with the closest attention, and people were sorry when he had finished.

Milliner Wanted.

Attention is called to the advertisement which will be found in PROGRESS for a milliner and sales lady. The opportunity is an excellent one and any communications addressed to "Milliner" care of this office will be promptly delivered.