

PROGRESS.

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PRICE FIVE CENTS

NO POOHBAHS FOUND.

An investigation without a charge! Not an ordinary investigation but one under oath is what a special committee of the Common Council has been indulging in this week.

It was all about the purchase of 2,000 feet of hose almost immediately after the Indiantown fire, at which a lot of hose was destroyed. The council met in special session a day or two afterward and the chairmen of the different boards and Director Wisely and Chief Kerr were directed to purchase hose and many other articles necessary to complete the equipment of the department. The hose was purchased without tender through two local merchants, Messrs McAvity and Barry at the same price as the city has been paying of late and nothing would have been thought wrong or no fuss made but for a letter written by Mr. W. H. Thorne who thought he should not have been overlooked when the purchase was made. Mr. Thorne's complaint was brought to the attention by the chairman of the safety board Alderman McGoldrick to whom his letter was addressed, and when a second communication was sent in to the council stating that his representative had been used discourteously and also stating that an excessive price had been paid for hose the safety board recommended the appointment of a committee to inquire into the matter.

This is in brief the history of the hose inquiry. It is the first of its sort that has been held in St. John for some time and there was much interest in the result. The rumor spread quickly that there was some "job" in the business and that someone was making a nice little sum in consideration of the order. It may be that Mr. Thorne's letters contained no such implication but his criticism of the price paid led up to such an inference.

It is no wonder then that the gentlemen on the committee wanted an investigation and when the mayor called his committee consisting of Aldermen Allen, Waring, [Seaton, Maxwell and Millidge to order the latter only was absent.

The recorder was present too and it was thought that he would conduct the investigation but in a large measure the mayor took that work from his hands. As chairman he asked the questions and if they were not quite as direct and pertinent as they might have been at times the fact might well be excused on account of his inexperience and his slight acquaintance with the hose subject.

After the committee had decided that a stenographer was not necessary the first witness, Mr. W. H. Thorne, was called. It may have been somewhat of a surprise to those present to find that Mr. Thorne had said all that he intended to say in the two letters he had written the aldermen and sent to the newspapers.

He had no personal knowledge of the matter himself and had not seen or talked to a member of the committee respecting the order for hose. He had not even seen the hose that had been purchased but had relied entirely upon what he had been told.

His representative, a Mr. Patterson, had called upon the chairman, and here he was about to tell what he had been told when the recorder suggested that it would be just as well to get Mr. Patterson's direct evidence. So Mr. Patterson was sent for and Mr. Thorne continued. He had quoted some prices to the city to show what hose could be purchased for in the States but he did not deal with any of the manufacturers whose prices he had given. When asked if there had been any undue influence used to get the order he replied that he could not say. He had stated the case in his letters fairly and squarely and his complaint was that as a citizen and a taxpayer he should have been asked to give prices and submit samples. As it was he considered that he had been treated unfairly, while he knew nothing of any inducement to any member of the committee he answered a question of Ald. Maxwell's that in his opinion \$1.05 per foot was an excessive price. The same price by the way was paid to his firm for the last hose purchased by the city.

According to the alderman from Prince it was simply a question of price. Had too much been paid for the hose? Mr. Thorne then went on to show that 40 per cent

would have to be added to the price of the hose in Boston to pay duty, freight and insurance charges but even then hose that cost 50 and 55 cents a foot in Boston could be sold much cheaper than \$1.05 per foot. From 10 to 15 per cent should be added for the dealers profit and that would make the price between 80 and 90 cents. The No 1 hose of that American Fire Hose company of Chelsea cost 55 cents and when he stated that they made no better quality there was a smile on the face of Mr. Barry, the agent of the company here. Though Mr. Thorne had said that he knew nothing about hose he ventured the opinion that his Canadian hose was on a par with the best American jacket.

Just at this moment the chairman of the Board of Works, Alderman Christie, who was one of the committee asked Mr. Thorne how his representative approached the committee.

Mr. Thorne replied that Mr. Patterson saw Ald. McGoldrick and Chief Kerr.

Chief Kerr: Excuse me, Mr. Thorne, excuse me he did not see me.

The mayor—Wait, Chief Kerr you will have a chance to tell what you know.

Mr. Thorne: Well that was what I was informed.

The Recorder: I don't think we should go into this hearsay evidence.

Ald. Christie: I want to clear myself of any wrong doing or suspicion of it. I do not think there has been any one but I want to state that I do not think it part of an alderman's duty to go around to the merchants seeking prices (&c). I have been here twelve years and have never done it yet and what is more I never will.

About this time two joints of hose made their appearance in the room. One of them looked fresh and new the other dingy from age and use. In answer to questions about the Canadian hose he had supplied the city Mr. Thorne said that it was Eureka hose the rubber lining of which was made in Canada but the covering came from the States and was free of duty at that. When asked to look at the joints of hose he again protested that he knew nothing about hose and Chief Kerr took the trouble to tell him which was Eureka and which American Jacket.

Mr. W. A. Patterson was Mr. Thorne's representative who was sent out on the hose business. His evidence did not show him to be a gentleman who stuck to a probable customer like a leech. Perhaps he thought it was only necessary to find out that the committee was to meet. His evidence showed that was about all he did except presenting a list of prices to the chairman of the treasury, Ald. Robinson, who simply glanced at them and told him the proper way was to send them in to the common clerk or to the committee. This Mr. Patterson did not do but returned them to the office of the firm. In brief his evidence showed that he had called upon Ald. McGoldrick and had been treated courteously by that gentleman. The alderman brought this out distinctly because he said Mr. Thorne had charged him with treating his representative discourteously.

When he asked him about the committee the alderman told him that it would probably meet at the city hall about 11 o'clock Monday morning. He did not show the alderman any prices or samples or ask for the order. When he saw Chief Kerr Saturday morning it was not in his office but the chief was driving up the south wharf and in reply to his question told him that the chairman had not called the committee together as yet. These facts he reported to the firm and on Monday he tried to find the committee but could not so. When Mr. Ogle arrived in the train at noon he turned the matter over to him as the representative of the rubber company at Toronto.

To Ald. Christie, Mr. Patterson said he was not told what hose was to be bought and he was not treated discourteously by any one. All rubber goods had advanced about 10 per cent since last year. He told Ald. Allan that his price list was in the office of the firm and that Ald. Robinson was the only one to whom he had shown prices. Here Mr. Thorne interrupted and made quite a speech reciting his own evidence and telling the committee what Mr. Patterson intended to say. He contended that he did not have a chance to submit

prices and that the committee might have asked him to do so. The Mayor started out with a very strict idea of the nature of a court but he did not stop Mr. Thorne's speech which was in fact a full presentation of his case against the committee.

Mr. Barry was the first witness called by the committee and he told a brief plain story. The committee asked him if he could supply the best American Jacket Hose made by the American Fire Hose company of Chelsea at \$1.05 per foot. He agreed to do so and the hose sent to St. John he was in a position to swear positively was specially made. The couplings used in this city are of a different pattern from those used in the States and consequently had to be made from a coupling sent from here. The hose was special and much better than the kind known as No. 1.

Ald. Maxwell tried to point out that specifications were necessary to manufacture a special hose but Mr. Barry had never heard that they were necessary in the hose business. It was entirely wrong that such hose could be supplied for 48 cents. He read a letter from the Boston Woven hose company to the effect that they were getting 80 cents this year for hose that they sold last season at 70 cents owing to the advance in rubber goods. The 55 cent grade was cheap.

It was 9.30 on Saturday when the committee waited upon him and he got the order on Tuesday. The Mayor asked him if he had offered any inducement to any of the committee to secure the order and in spite of the laugh raised by the question Mr. Barry managed to answer it with a positive denial.

Recorder Skinner in a joking way suggested to his worship that the converse of his question might be asked. "Did any of the three gentlemen ask you for anything?"

The mayor put this question also and Mr. Barry replied "No, I would not have taken the order if they had."

The question was asked if the hose shown in the room could be purchased in Boston for 55 cents a foot and Mr. Barry said it could not.

Ald. Robinson—We are here to find that out.

According to Mr. John McAvity's evidence two members of the committee, Chief Kerr and Director Wisely, approached him to find out what he could do in American Jacket hose. They fixed the price at \$1.05 and placed an order for 1000 feet of the best Jacket hose made by the American Fire hose Company of Chelsea. In his opinion the city got the best value in hose they had for years. Speaking of Eureka hose he said he had offered to supply the city with hose as good as Eureka for 69½ cents per foot but his offer was not accepted. There was a guarantee of six years with the offer.

Mr. James Estey gave some evidence but it was much of a general character, respecting the value of hose. His ideas of the best hose were generous. He showed that he had given the subject considerable attention but he knew nothing of the present inquiry.

Ald. Christie pointed out in a terse speech the impossibility of Mr. Estey or an expert telling the value of hose from samples because the price depended entirely upon the amount of adulteration in the rubber.

When Ald. McGoldrick was called to the stand and sworn he asked the common clerk to read the resolution of the council under which the committee was appointed and acted. This was a happy thought because the nature of the power given the committee had almost been overlooked in the confusion of the evidence. The alderman said that directly after the council adjourned he saw the director of the department and Chief Kerr and said he would meet them the next morning and talk the matter over. He did so and they saw Mr. Barry and discussed the question of the purchase of hose. The Chief wanted American Fire Jacket. The committee named the price the city would give, \$1.05 per foot, the same as had been paid to Mr. Thorne and he did not think that Mr. Barry would be able to sell the hose at that figure but he agreed to do so. They did not order from him then and when he returned to Prince William street he tried to see Ald. Robinson and Dr. Christie, but failed to find them. However he saw the latter on Sunday and talked the matter over with him suggesting that as Mr.

(CONTINUED ON FOURTH PAGE.)

Who Wrote that Order.

That basket of tea hasn't been returned to the police station yet and probably never will be.

It is supposed to have belonged originally to Mr. Leonard Nase and was taken the day of the fire from his store in a chest but all tea looks alike and Mr. Nase found it impossible to swear that it was his. The presumption is that it was because a small can of paint, about the size of a mustard can, bearing the name of Nase was found among the tea. But the tea with other articles, came from the Estey place and eventually went into the police court. It was entirely in the hands of the police magistrate. When the police found it the tea was in a pillow slip which belonged to the party who had it. Some of it was in a jar. The whole of it was however dumped into a basket which was filled to overflowing. The tea however did not leave the jurisdiction of the police court: the other articles did because they were identified and they went into the Supreme court where Judge McLeod disposed of them in the usual manner by giving a verbal order to Detective Ring.

But the tea in the police station belonged to Estey since it was not proven that he came by it illegally and when the police magistrate began to think about the disposition of the goods in his charge he asked about it.

The chief was away at Spruce Lake on a fishing trip at the time and Capt. Hastings replied that the tea was there but there was a big hole in it. Somebody mentioned the shortage is at out fifteen pounds. The tea was found in the chief's private office and then Ring took charge of it and acting

STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE.
An Actor's Death Notice and How It Came to be Published.

I have seen a good many strange things in my life, and have been accused of doing and saying what I had never the least intention; but I was surprised at being informed I had written an obituary of a gentleman who was "just as well and hearty as ever he was."

Mr. William H. Danvers, who is one of the Kennedy players now performing in the opera house, accosted me on Waterloo street, last Tuesday morning and in a "Jacob McCloskey" (Ostoroon) tone of voice, said:

"Mr. Price Webber, I believe?"
I replied, "yes."
"Well sir, you published an obituary of me, in a St. John paper some years ago, and I now demand satisfaction."

There was blood in William's eyes and I sought to soothe his agitation by telling him that there was a mistake, and I hoped it would be a long time before there would be any necessity of publishing his demise, for he was an honored and creditable member of the dramatic profession.

William's stern gaze gave way, and seeing this I took heart and said:

"Some years ago when the St. John Progress started, I was asked by Mr. Carter, the Editor to kindly contribute a few reminiscences of Mr. J. W. Lauerger and his popular Lyceum. When the great fire of 1877 destroyed a large portion of St. John, it took all the newspaper offices, and there was not even a copy of a play bill for me to refer to. All I could do was to trust to my memory. I furnished Progress with notices of several plays and their casts of characters, and Mr. Danvers, being then an efficient and well-liked member of Mr. Lauerger's company, necessarily came in for prominent notice."

When I had got thus far William's face lit up with a serene smile, as he recognized I was telling the truth.

I then went on to relate that I had written in a friendly spirit, and brought myself to Mr. Danvers, remembrance by references to his having played—Geordie McGregor, in the play of Jessie Brown; Hardress Cregan in the Colleen Bawn; Dionysius, in Damon and Pythias; Jacob McCloskey in the Ostoroon; Rashleigh Osbaldiston, in Rob Roy; and also his great effort as Councillor Corydon Foxglove, in our Irish Cousin.

As I mentioned the last character, Mr. Danvers burst out in a hearty laugh, and said:

"No more; no more! The acme of realistic acting was reached that night. Do you remember what happened?"
"Do you refer to the fact of somebody

under the instructions of the magistrate locked it up elsewhere. When the chief returned he heard the news and he was present in the court room where the magistrate made his order. He hastened to Judge McLeod and asked for an order to distribute the tea. The judge was under the impression that he had given an order to Ring and so he had for all the goods in his court and he did not think for an instant that any other goods than those sought distribution. The chief said he wanted it in writing and the judge directed him to go to the clerk of the court to get it made out in proper form.

PROGRESS is in a position to state that the chief did not go to Clerk Willett of the Supreme court and also to state that the clerk did not issue such an order for the Judge to sign.

But the fact remains that the order was presented to Judge McLeod and that he signed it without reading it. He has said since that it learned him a lesson and it is understood that there were mutual explanations between him and Magistrate Ritchie who no doubt is convinced that had Judge McLeod been aware of all the facts that he would not have thought of issuing such an order.

Armed with this authority however the chief went to Detective Ring and demanded the basket of tea. It was given him, and it has disappeared sent to the North End it is said.

Perhaps it may not be heard of again but it is likely to be a very costly article for somebody.

being asleep on the paint bridge and falling down on the stage just at the end of the second act?" I asked.

"That is what I referred to," said Mr. Danvers, "and it was one of the greatest realistic, unlooked for effects ever seen on the stage."

There are a great many of our theatre goers who will remember Mr. Danvers with pleasure, as he was always acceptable in every character he played and he is just the same now, and no matter what he is called upon to enact, never slights his business.

After I had made my peace with William, and convinced him that he had been misinformed, he proceeded to speak of many who were old favorites in Mr. Lauerger's company, including Frank Roche, J. B. Fuller, N. T. Davenport, L. P. Roys, George Clair, Shirley France, William Stallan, Thomas H. Burns, Harry Bascombe, W. H. Collings, Mose Fiske, W. F. Owen, Mrs. Lanergan, Mary Davenport, Lizzie Fiske, Lucille Western, Rachel Johnson, Lucy Rushton, Madeline Hardy, Rachel Noah, and many others.

I trust Mr. Danvers will live to see many more years and hope his "shadow may never grow less."

H. PRICE WEBBER.

Trinity's New Rector.

Trinity has a rector at last in Rev. Mr. Richardson who was elected by a majority of the votes despite the report of the committee to look after the affair and who strongly favored R. v. Mr. Farthing. Both men were broad churchmen but Rev. Mr. Farthing was more strongly inclined to ritualism than was the other gentleman. However the storm has subsided and at least an outward semblance of peace prevails once more. One of the incidents of the much talked of election was related at the Union Club breakfast table the other morning by a prominent city official. He had presented his son with a pew with the distinct understanding that his vote was to be given Rev. Mr. Farthing. "but" said the gentleman with a grim smile "the young scoundrel went deliberately and voted for the other man."

It is to be hoped however that all the differences and bitter feeling which the affair has caused will be forgotten and that a warm welcome will be extended to the new rector.

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