

## THE DAILY MAIL

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 1919

## THE McQUEEN REPORT

The report of Commissioner James McQueen, who conducted the enquiry into the notorious patriotic potato transaction, is now in the hands of the Legislature and the public will await with interest the action which that body will take with respect to it.

The commission entrusted to Mr. McQueen was an important one, and a perusal of the report must convince any fair-minded man that he performed his duties in a thorough, conscientious and impartial manner.

The sworn evidence taken at the inquiry and the commissioner's report based upon the same, disclose one of the most disgraceful and scandalous transactions ever pulled off under government auspices in any country. The late Boss Tweed, of New York, in his palmy days never attempted anything of a like nature, and the corrupt politicians of Manitoba and of British Columbia, driven from office a few years ago by an outraged electorate, could have been given lessons in political crookedness by the public men who undertook to demonstrate New Brunswick's "loyalty and attachment to the mother land" by a gift of potatoes.

As the people of the province are familiar with the whole miserable transaction, it is scarcely necessary to go into details at any great length. It might be recalled, however, that it was soon after the outbreak of the great war that the New Brunswick government decided to make a gift of 100,000 bushels of potatoes to the mother land. Potatoes were a heavy crop in that year, and the farmers had difficulty in disposing of them even at the low price of \$1 per barrel. The government estimated that \$75,000 would be ample to cover all expenses in connection with the purchase and shipment of the gift, and that amount was raised by a Lieutenant Governor's warrant. Rev. J. B. Daggett was then Secretary for Agriculture and to him was entrusted the duty of purchasing the potatoes under the direction of his chief, Hon. J. A. Murray.

Now, Mr. Daggett very naturally turned to his old friend, Mr. B. Frank Smith, one of the potato kings of Carleton county, for counsel and advice. An arrangement was made by which Mr. Smith was to supply the bulk of the potatoes and he was given a letter of credit by the Department of Agriculture, enabling him to finance the transaction. As the commissioner says in his report, practically the whole resources of the province were placed at the disposal of Mr. Smith. The result was that while only 40,000 barrels of potatoes were required, 68,603 were actually purchased, and of this total Mr. Smith supplied some 43,600 barrels. The greediness of Mr. Smith and other Tory patriots who were thinking of profits only, left the Department of Agriculture with 16,700 barrels of surplus potatoes on its hands.

The first appropriation of \$75,000 having become exhausted, another \$75,000 was appropriated by a second warrant of the Lieutenant Governor, making a total of \$150,000. As the commissioner points out, it was all expended and \$3,505 in addition. Besides the gift to the mother land, a shipment was made to the "starving Belgians" and the balance was forwarded to Cuba, where they were hawked about and finally disposed of at a heavy loss.

While there was a lamentable lack of business capacity shown in the purchase and shipment of the potatoes, and gross deception was practiced in a flagrant attempt made to cover up the loss incurred on Cuban shipment, had the government of the day taken the people into its confidence and manfully faced the situation, all might have been well, but they chose the opposite course. The late Premier Clarke, according to the evidence of Mr. Daggett, was afraid to acknowledge the loss for fear the public would think the money was stolen. He decreed that "the party" should make it good, and a fake account was accordingly prepared show-

WIVES AND MOTHERS  
NEED NOT HAVE  
SORE BACKACHES

Constantly on their feet, attending to the wants of a large and exacting family, women often break down with nervous exhaustion.

In the stores, factories, and on a farm are weak, ailing women, dragged down with torturing backache and bearing down pains.

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Because of their mild soothing and healing effect, Dr. Hamilton's Pills are safe, and are recommended for girls and women of all ages. 25c per box at all dealers. Refuse any substitute for Dr. Hamilton's Pills of Mandrake and Butternut.

ing the amount which should have been received for the potatoes which were sent to Cuba. A note was given by A. C. Smith & Co. for \$32,861, the amount of the shortage, discounted by the government, and the proceeds entered as cash on the books of the province. When the note came due money to retire it was borrowed from Mr. F. W. Sumner of Moncton, then president of the St. John and Quebec Railway Co. A corrupt agreement was then entered into with Mr. W. B. Tennant of St. John, by which he was to make good the loss providing a concern in which he was interested was given the contract for the lower section of the Valley Railway. The agreement was carried out, Tennant's concern got the contract and Tennant turned over \$61,500 of his "advance profits" to Mr. George B. Jones, M. P. P., and out of this fund the Sumner loan was repaid.

The commissioner in his report finds that the agreement with Tennant was illegal and improper and "censurable from every standpoint." He finds that Hon. Mr. Murray borrowed \$1,500 from A. C. Smith & Co., a firm having a contract with the province, and considers that he acted in violation of the criminal code. He finds that Mr. B. F. Smith, besides being responsible for most of the woes which came to the late government on account of the potato transaction, owes the province \$2,375 for potatoes which were never received, and \$71.85 in interest. He also finds that certain statements made by George B. Jones, M. P. P., on oath at the enquiry, did not correspond with evidence he gave before Commissioner Stevens, which is a polite way of saying that Mr. Jones did not tell the truth.

The commissioner in concluding his report puts in a word for the late Premier Clarke, which is pretty sure to meet with approval of that gentleman's many friends of all shades of politics. He scores certain witnesses for their studied attempt to place the blame for the loss on the shoulders of the deceased, and expresses opinion that had Mr. Clarke been alive his name would have figured less prominently during the enquiry. The report of Commissioner McQueen is now before the Legislature, and the people will await with interest the action of that body with respect to it. If the crooked politicians who figured in this disgraceful transaction do not resign their seats in the Legislature the decent men of both parties should say to them in tones that cannot be misunderstood, "Get you gone and give way to honorable men."

Mr. James T. Sharpe of St. John is in the city today.

DEBATE ON  
THE ADDRESS  
IN THE HOUSE

(Continued from Page Two)

HON. Mr. ROBINSON said that the sanatorium had a nominal surplus of eighteen hundred dollars on March 1st which could be accounted for by the fact that supplies had been taken over by the new Federal Department. The number of civilian patients had decreased to a marked extent there being about fifteen under treatment. The question of free beds was a large one. The cost of the institution had been excessive and he as a member of the commission in charge had frequently been dissatisfied and had expressed objection to some of the bills. In the matter of the location of the sanatorium he was not qualified to judge but physicians had stated that the site was ideal.

MR. MAGEE It is an ideal spot to die in.

HON. Mr. ROBINSON—People try to find beautiful spots in which to die. Continuing the speaker said the cost of maintenance was now light but with free beds would increase although not to the point formerly reached. He believed that the investigating committee might have brought in a different report from what it had. It was true that the stables had been found in a bad condition, but the institution had not. The present expenses of the institution were heavy and the future was in doubt and all would like to be enlightened as to what should be done at the end of five years when the agreement with the Dominion would expire.

MR. BURCHILL asked if the Federal authorities had made any changes and improvements. Personally he believed the hon. member for St. John (Tilley) was quite justified in his criticism.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) said the committee which conducted the investigation had based its opinion upon what it had seen. Mr. Tilley had criticised because he wished to benefit the poorer classes. The commission had come in for most severe criticism and as far as the investigation was concerned he would say that it would only have been a matter of common courtesy to have notified the commissioners when the investigation was to have been held. It was only on the day of the visit that he was advised concerning the matter. The investigating committee arrived there with no Superintendent in charge, Dr. Townsend having left, and no person in authority to give information. The committee had gone to the stables and he presumed interviewed the hostler, to the kitchen and interviewed the cook, and so on. Had the commissioners been present they could have pointed out the difficulties under which they had worked. In spite of what was said not one dollar had been wrongly spent and many persons have been benefited by the operations of the sanatorium. The members of the commission had given their services and their time without price and deserved credit for what they had done. There were such men as the late A. R. McClellan ex-Lieutenant Governor, F. W. Sumner and Hon. Mr. Robinson of Moncton, Dr. McAvaney of Saint John, C. J. Osman, Hillsboro. It was strange that men of that calibre could not attain to the heights that their critics wished. In his opinion the location of the sanatorium was ideal. It was true much money had been spent on the institution but it should be remembered that much good had been done.

MR. TILLEY said the hon. gentleman on his left (Murray) had unfairly criticised the investigating committee. He had said no notification of the com-

Continued on page six.

## RESIGNATIONS ACCEPTED.

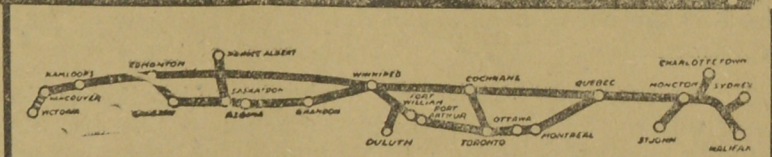
Montreal, March 19.—The Lachine school board has notified the 24 teachers who sent in their resignations on Feb. 24 that their resignations were accepted, thereby marking another of the outstanding episodes in the campaign of the teachers for a minimum salary of \$800 and a yearly increase of \$50. The achine board has only four teachers left.

## Bowling Match Last Evening

The staff of R. Chestnut & Son defeated a team from the Vocational School of the N. B. Military Hospital last evening by a margin of twenty-one pins.

Mr. G. A. Thompson of Ottawa is in the city today.  
 Mr. C. F. Bissell of Windsor, N. S., is in the city.

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**F. W. ROBERTSON,** General Passenger Agent  
**A. T. WELDON,** Asst. Freight Traffic Manager  
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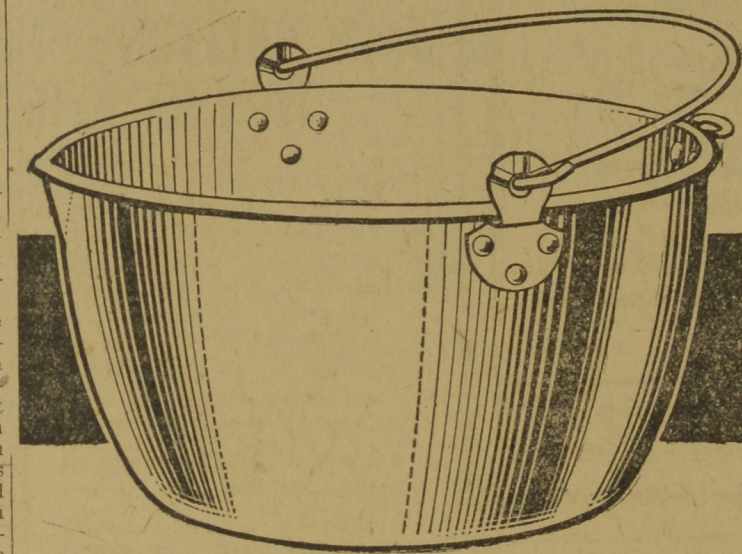
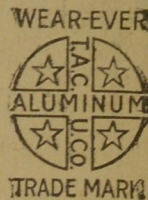
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For Only \$2.19

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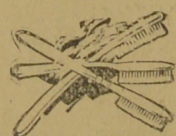
2 pyc, reliable regulating medicine. Sold in large doses of strength—No. 1, \$1. No. 2, \$2. No. 3, \$5 per box. Sold by all druggists, or sent prepaid on receipt of price. Free pamphlet. Address: THE COOK MEDICINE CO., TORONTO, ONT. (Formerly Windsor.)

## Held Social Evening

A party of young people held a very enjoyable social evening at the Y. M. C. A. Hall, York Street, last evening. A program of games and songs was run through after which refreshments were served, the party breaking up in the early hours. Mr. and Mrs. George McEwen and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Raymond chaperoned the affair.

## FOOD SALE

The Ladies' Aid of the Methodist Church will hold a sale of food, home-made candy and aprons on SATURDAY, MARCH 22nd, in the building on Queen street two doors below the Queen Hotel. Everybody come.



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 Says the Doctor "Clean Mouths."  
 The dentist says, "Clean teeth."

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