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One Pound Can  
20 cents

Sugar  
Fine Granulated Sugar  
9 lbs. \$1.00  
\$10.50 per 100 lbs.

Molasses  
Fancy Barbadoes \$1.05 gal.

# Yerran's

## SEVERAL IMPORTANT BILLS BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE

(Continued from page three.)

the case of large banking institutions, so anxious were they to safeguard the funds that they did not allow the combination of a safe to remain in the hands of one man.

HON. MR. MURRAY said that all cheques issued by the province were numbered consecutively and a record kept of each. Heretofore the Deputy Provincial Treasurer, when going away, had signed cheques in blank to the number of several hundreds. He wanted to know if that was any better safeguard than was provided by a lithograph. After all, it simply came down to the Comptroller General, upon whom responsibility rested.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) maintained that in the interests of the province the cheques should have two signatures.

HON. MR. MURRAY said if that were done it meant the employment of an official whose whole duty would be to sign cheques. He had been in the office during last November and had been informed that up to the 20th of that month 9,746 cheques had been issued. That was no easy task to perform in twenty days and it would take up a good part of the accountant's time. Hon. members opposite had complained that the departments were over-manned and now they were finding fault because more help was not employed.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) said the opposition did not find fault with the Government for employing the necessary staff to carry on the work. If it was necessary for the accountant to sign cheques there should be one employed to do it. He did not think it was good business to pay out large sums of money without more protection to the interests of the Province.

HON. MR. MURRAY said that it would be necessary to employ a man specially for the work of signing cheques but he did not consider that it was necessary.

MR. BAXTER said that if 9,000 cheques were issued during twenty days in November that would mean about one cheque per minute. He did not think the Comptroller General could sign cheques at that rate and properly investigate the accounts.

HON. MR. MURRAY said the Comptroller General did not object to the change; in fact it was on his suggestion that it was being made.

MR. BAXTER said the Comptroller General was a good official but one who would be apt to fall into line with any good suggestion that might be offered. That appeared to be his principal weakness. He did not think he could sign sixty cheques a minute and properly examine the accounts.

HON. MR. MURRAY said that on one occasion, he (Murray) had signed 1276 bonds in 210 minutes. He said the Comptroller General made an investigation before signing the cheques.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that it was only necessary for the Comptroller General to see to it that accounts were authorized either by a vote of the Legislature, or by the Government. He was not called upon to examine into details and to see that all prices were right. In the Public Works Department accounts were certified to by the engineers who were practical men, and could tell whether they were right or wrong. When they certified an account it was only necessary for the Comptroller General to sign the cheque.

MR. BAXTER said that if such were the case the Comptroller General was little better than an automatic machine and they might just as well use a rubber stamp. He held that the Comptroller General should investigate all accounts so that he would know whether or not officials under him were doing their duty.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that at Ottawa the Auditor General did not go into minute details of accounts but saw to it that the expenditures were duly authorized. He held that the Comptroller General could not be expected to go over all the accounts in detail. He did not care who the Comptroller General might be, he could not examine road accounts and tell if they were correct. He had to repose confidence in the responsible Minister or somebody connected with the Department.

MR. SMITH (Carleton) said that he did not think the Hon. Minister went over the accounts.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that last year he went over 90 per cent of the accounts in his department. No account went through that was not properly checked up before it reached the Comptroller General. The road engineer passed upon the wages and prices of material. He believed that the spending departments should have an Auditor right in the office to check up the accounts. If that were done it would facilitate the issuing of cheques and there would not be the delay that was now experienced. He believed that men employed on the roads should receive their cheques promptly. Under the present system every cheque had to be mailed separately. There was a lot of delay and it seemed to him to work an injustice on employees of the Department.

MR. SMITH (Carleton) wanted to know if the Comptroller General did not have an assistant who checked up the accounts.

HON. MR. VENIOT said he did not know about that but the hon. member for St. John County had contended that the work should be done by the Comptroller General. He (Veniott) claimed that if the Comptroller General had to minutely check every account, there would be too much delay in issuing the cheques.

MR. POTTS thought that most people were glad to get a cheque for services performed without a period of 15 days. The Hon. Provincial Secretary Treasurer was responsible for monies paid out and he held that

cheques should be signed by him.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) wanted to know whether the system which it was proposed to adopt was based on that of other Provinces.

HON. MR. MURRAY replied that it was practically the same.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that the Dominion Government used the lithograph in signing cheques.

MR. BAXTER said he agreed with the Minister of Public Works, that there should be an Auditor in the Departments to check over accounts, but he thought that official should be subordinate to the Comptroller General. In St. John where a million dollars a year was handled the Comptroller actually checked all of the accounts and there was no delay in issuing cheques. Of course there was not as many cheques issued but a large amount of work was involved. Officials in the several departments did not have the last word to say as to whether or not an account was correct. He admitted that the problem was a serious one and had confronted the old Government as well as the present administration.

The section was adopted.

The section of the Bill which does away with the publication of a statement of the accounts of the Province in the Royal Gazette within sixty days of the close of the fiscal year was next taken up.

HON. MR. MURRAY said it was proposed to abolish that statement as it had always been more or less confusing. When delivering his Budget speech, he had pointed out that it was only a cash statement and should not be compared with the revenue and disbursement statements appearing in the Comptroller General's report. On going over the accounts he had found that statements published after Oct. 31st in the years 1912, 1913, and 1918 did not agree with statements which afterwards appeared in the Auditor General's report. A cash statement did not reveal the year's business and only led to confusion. It had to be published within sixty days of the close of the fiscal year but the books were kept open for thirty days and many accounts were not actually received until January or February. It was impossible therefore, to make up a correct statement before the close of the calendar year as was required by the present law. The Government did not desire to conceal any transaction from the public but wanted to give the people only exact information.

MR. MURRAY (Kings) said that after the publication of the financial statement in the Royal Gazette last December, the party press had boasted a surplus of \$30,000, whereas, it had TWO FIFTH PAGE 1(t)j ..... since been shown there was an actual deficit of \$134,000. The old Government had been criticised for keeping the accounts open but the present administration had been compelled to do the same thing. He believed people should be given all information concerning the financial position of the province as soon as possible after the close of the fiscal year. To change that system would, in his opinion, be a backward step and one which the people would not approve. Under the new system there was less excuse for keeping the books open than had been the case under the former Government as accounts could now be charged back to the year to which they belonged. Matters might come up which would change the credit balance a few thousand dollars but that would happen in any business and would be readily understood. He did not think it would be wise to make the change contemplated by the section under discussion.

### IN MEMORIAM.

In loving memory of Isabelle Burpee, who departed this life April 3rd, 1918.  
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With God eternally shut in.  
HUSBAND.

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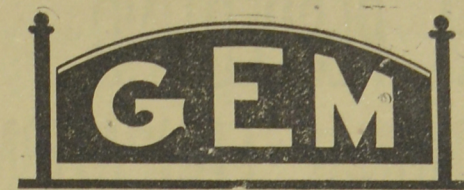
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