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WHERE THE ROAD MONEY GOES

A matter of some interest occupied the attention of the Stanley Highway Board at its meeting, on Tuesday last, which incidentally brought out some evidence that the money supposed to be spent on the roads is not in fact so expended by a very large amount, but finds its way into the pockets of some of the horde of officials which the Hazen Road Law brought into existence.

Among the returns sent in by the commissioners for the various districts are the following (we quote from The Gleaner's report of the meeting):

District A—Commissioner Jas. Thorburn:

Cash expended\$273.75
Commission charged 74.07
For superintending road work 30.00
This return not sworn to.

District B—Commissioner A. Moir:

Cash expended\$307.06
Commission charged 29.80
Road work by commissioner 60.00
This return sworn to.

District C—Commissioner A. Bennett:

Cash expended\$243.17
Commission charged 82.10
Road work at \$2 per day 35.00
This return sworn to.

District G—Commissioner A. Fraser. No returns found, but vouchers showing the expenditure of \$40 and no commission charged.

It appears from these returns that the requirements of the Act are not being attended to very strictly, for in one case the return is not sworn to, and in another no proper return was made. Under Section 4 of the Act, the Road Commissioners are to receive for their services remuneration not exceeding ten per cent. of the money that has been expended by them on the roads. Under the regulations of the Stanley Highway Board the Commissioners for that Parish are entitled to seven per cent. of the amount expended by them and no more. A glance at the returns above given will show that the Commissioners charged in those instances pretty much what they chose, to say nothing of the "extras" they appropriated. In District A, Commissioner Thorburn spent \$273.75 and he charged for commission and road work \$104.07 very nearly half the total outlay in his district. Commissioner Moir pocketed \$89.80, with an expenditure of \$307.06, while, worse than either, Commissioner Bennett annexed \$117.10 for an expenditure of \$243.17. Instead of getting commission "not exceeding ten per cent.," these gentlemen seem to have benefitted to the extent of between forty and fifty per cent. of the expenditure. No wonder the roads are bad and the complaint is made that there is not enough money to spend on them.

It does not appear what it was in respect of that the amounts included in the returns by the several Commissioners for road work were charged for. The Highway Act specifically states that no Commissioner shall have any pecuniary interest in any work done by the Highway Board or Commissioner, and payable out of the road moneys, under a penalty of \$80, but this does not apply to the Commissioners themselves of their teams performing statute labor. The work of superintending the repair if the roads does not devolve upon the Commissioner at all, except when there is no surveyor for the sub-district, and in any case the remuneration for the work must be fixed by the Council.

Under the circumstances it is no wonder some of the members of the Stanley Board should want a little more explanation from the Commissioners as to their returns. One of the chief allegations that the members of the present Provincial Government and their stump orators during the provincial campaign in 1908, made against the old Road Law

was that much of the money allotted for road work went into the pockets of officials, and they promised if put into power, to enact such a law as would make this condition of affairs impossible for the future. Judging by the sample returns from the Parish of Stanley, they have succeeded but very poorly, in this direction, where officials seem to be able to pocket 50 per cent. of the money and what can be done in one Parish, can be done in another.

As the meeting of the Stanley Board the other evening adjourned without acquiring the information wanted, people will wait with some interest for future developments.

THE WISH THE FATHER TO THE THOUGHT

One of the amusing aftermaths of the Manitoba elections is the attempt on the part of sundry opposition organs to get Federal comfort out of the Local situation. These ingenious scribblers claim that the Liberal campaign against Mr. Roblin was engineered from Ottawa, and hence the victory of the Manitoban Premier is a black-eye for the Laurier administration. If the campaign was engineered from Federal headquarters, it must have been done with an unobtrusive invisibility, and an ability to cover tracks rarely found in political procedure. There has not been a single Cabinet Minister on the stump in Manitoba; there have been no pilgrimages to Ottawa on the part of local Liberals; there has been no visible connection between Parliament Hill and the Liberal headquarters in Winnipeg. Consequently it is hard to understand just how the Federal Government's prestige has been injured by Mr. Roblin's victory. It was very noticeable that the same logical organs neglected to speak of the Liberal local victories in Alberta and Saskatchewan as victories for Laurier. Why we cannot understand, since it is probable that Sir Wilfrid took as much interest in these two provinces as in Manitoba.

We fear that it is a case of the wish being father to the thought. It will be remembered also that the Tory victory in New Brunswick was heralded by the opposition sheets as a defeat for Laurier. But a little later, when the federal elections gave the province to the Liberals, eleven to two, the boast fell very flat indeed. Even accepting their contention in the case of Manitoba, the Liberals made some gains in membership and reduced many majorities; hence the Borden cause, as represented by Mr. Roblin, has been weakened instead of strengthened in that province. Let it be remembered that there must be a vast and great gain in all the provinces in order to give Mr. Borden any hope of office, for the maintaining of the status quo means another Borden defeat. Mr. Roblin has not even held his own in the late elections. If any one can extract any hope for Bordenism from such a situation, they are capable of "extracting sunbeams from cucumbers," and they are welcome to any crumb of comfort thus obtained.

WHERE AND WHAT IS HEAVEN?

(Telegraph)

"Where is Heaven?" asks a headline in the Fredericton Mail. We give it up. It can't be up in the sky. It is too cold there. Nor down in the centre of the earth. It is too hot there. Nor in one of the stars. They are suns, like our own, and not habitable. If the Mail editor doesn't find it within him, we fear that he will never have his question answered.—Chatham World.

The Sage of the Miramichi would like to give the Fredericton Mail man some assurance as to the nature of location of Heaven, but, having revolved the old question again, he is almost disposed to give it up. Yet there is in his offering to the troubled Fredericton editor possible evidence tending to support a theory to which he might well give further attention. It will be noted, upon comparison and examination, that that which the Chatham World now says to its neighbor, was said, though somewhat more musically, by Oma the Tentmaker, long ago. It has been suggested that Fitzgerald, the wonderful translator of the Persian, may have been a reincarnation of Khayyam, and, if we compare what the Commodore now says with what the Tentmaker said in his day why should we not say that Oma or Fitzgerald lives again on the banks of the Miramichi? For Oma would have said to the puzzled Fredericton man:

Some for the Glories of this World;
and some
Sight for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,

Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

Heaven cannot be up in the sky, says the Commodore, nor down in the centre of the earth. So said the Tentmaker, rare old pessimist that he was. Quo' he:
Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sat,
And many a Knot unraveled by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which might not see;
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

Not content with thus disposing of the matter, he disposed of it again, still musically, the repetition being common to editors even in these days, though one does not always find, more's the pity, the rhythm and the wedding of beauty and facility of expression. The more one examines it, the more one is convinced that after all there must be something in this idea of reincarnation, for though the Commodore has not yet developed the full vigor of his inheritance one cannot but note the striking similarity of his thought and that of the Persian. Let us turn again to the evidence. Where is Heaven?

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven with all his Signs reveal'd.
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,

And answer'd "I myself am Heav'n and Hell."
Heav'n but the vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire

Cast on the Darkness into which Our selves,
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire!

And then, with that touch of defiance which shocks the orthodox as the Sage of the Miramichi sometimes delights to shock them, old Omar said:

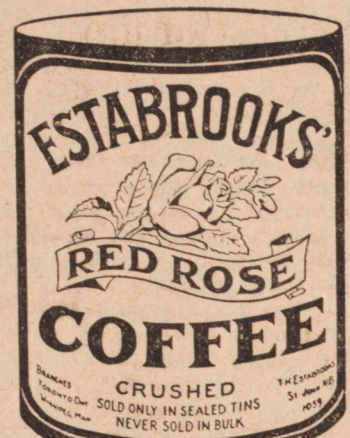
"Why" said another, "Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots he marr'd in making—Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well!"

Of course some humdrum fellow will tell us that there is nothing at all in this theory that the soul of Omar now inhabits the sanctum of the Chatham World, and will plague us with the suggestion that the Commodore merely read the Rubaiyat and unconsciously gave expression to some of the thoughts therein when he discovered his Fredericton brother float

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ing helplessly in the upper ether of doubt and speculation. There are, of course, as there will ever be, wooden folk who must measure their evidence as if it were a cord of wood; but there are others, of a finer temper, to whom the evidence we have cited will be absolutely convincing.

(For the benefit of our contemporaries we may say the "Fredericton Man" is neither "troubled or "puzzled." It is a pity that, the item referred to, which has given rise to this interesting "contributions" was merely a paid "local" inserted by a religious organization. We were unaware of its presence in our columns until after publication. —Ed.)

AN UNEXPECTED RETORT

(Saturday Night)

Colonel Baxter, a leading lawyer of St. John, N. B., was once conducting a case for a Jew against a lawyer noted as a browbeater, of great dignity, and very fat:

When it came to his turn to cross-examine Baxter's client, he arose with great weight and immediately began bullying tactics. The Hebrew, however, was not to be intimidated, and answered every question in as thunderous a tone as that of his questioner.

Such conduct on the part of a mere witness was not to be endured, and, with a look of offended dignity meant to be terrifying, the lawyer said: "You need not eat me, my good man."

Baxter was on his feet instantly. "My learned friend need not fear," he said with a reassuring smile. "My client is a Jew and never eats pork."

OUR PERMANENT STREETS MUST BE KEPT CLEAN

An Observing Correspondent Offers Timely Observations on an Important Subject--The Mud and Dust Nuisance Must Be Got Rid Of.

To the Editor of the Mail:

Sir.—The work of converting the upper end of Queen Street into a modern permanently paved thoroughfare is progressing in a highly satisfactory manner. The merits of the much discussed rival pavements are, so far as our civic experience is concerned, still a matter of conjecture. The responsibility for a wise choice rests upon the special committee of the City Council and the city engineer, and if the newly adopted method gives as satisfactory a result as that which was used last year, there will be no protests registered.

Regarding the care of the pavements it would scarcely be safe to duplicate that statement. The treatment of the amount of permanent street which has come under the supervision of the Roads Committee of the City Council is a sad disillusionment.

The necessarily greater expenditure for the construction of streets of this description was urged upon the city with all the stock arguments for good pavements. Nothing could be better than these arguments. We were to be relieved of the continual nuisance of mud and dust on this, our main business street. Yet throughout the entire spring, and thus far into the summer, our last condition has been worse than the first; for Queen Street has been greasy with the most loathsome form of thin sticky mud in wet weather and one vast whirling dust

heap when it is dry.

Pavements, irrespective of kind, must be kept clean to achieve the purpose for which they are laid. If mud and dust carried by vehicles and horses from other parts of the city is to be left indefinitely upon the newly paved streets, our civic investment is a poor one. If the excretion of horses is to be allowed to accumulate for days with no attempt at removal, we were better off in the days when the gutters served as a repository for this offal. If in those days the wind whirled blinding dust about one's person or into his place of business, he was at least, not so conscious of its vile character.

One dollar out of every ten of the gross taxes collected in this city goes for the building and maintenance of our streets, outside the cost of all permanent paving which is covered by debentures. This makes an annual expenditure of about \$7,000. Since our once excellent streets were reduced to chaos by the sewerage installation four years ago, the work of repairing and rebuilding has been very heavy and trying. But as we slowly regain our well macadamized roads, (and it is indeed with painful deliberation in some parts of the city), there should be sufficient funds to provide for the continuous and proper sweeping of the paved portion of the city streets.

Yours respectfully,

OBSERVER.

July 6, 1910

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