

The Daily Mail

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COST OF SCHOOL BOOKS

A great deal has been said since the session opened regarding the cost of school books to the province. The contention of the opposition in the House is that, while the people pay less for their school books than formerly, they indirectly make up this difference. The government, on the other hand, while admitting that they have paid out \$1,757.52 for expenses of handling the books, say the net loss for two years' transactions is only \$530. Just how the provincial secretary has figured this out is not known as he has been particularly careful not to enter into details. In a return brought down last year the provincial secretary gave the cost and selling price of the books handled by the government. The list was short at this time, and did not include many of the books since taken over by the government. A little careful figuring shows that the difference between the cost to the province and the selling price to vendors seldom exceeds 10 per cent. and in several instances the government has not added the full 10 per cent. Inasmuch as the government pays the freight or expressage on the books from Fredericton to the vendor and allows him a concession of 10 per cent. for handling, there is a certain loss at the start—just how much could only be calculated after complete knowledge of the number of each book traded in.

Mr. Flemming's statement that the loss to the government is only \$530, is not accepted as absolutely correct by anyone who has given any attention to this business. Mr. Flemming had much praise to give the auditor general for the improvement made in publishing the accounts, and he also lauded the system of book-keeping inaugurated by the government, telling how much superior it was to the old way. This new method of keeping books is a favorable theme of the provincial secretary when he wants to talk away from the issue, but it has not proved very effective in the school book account. If the system is so good it is most remarkable that the auditor general should give the cost of school books and scribbles purchased in 1908 and 1909 at \$23,896.20, while Mr. Flemming, in the return he laid before the House, states that cost at \$28,582.51. The return is wrong and the auditor general is right that such errors are made tends to cast doubt on any statement of fact emanating from the government benches. It also goes to show that there must have been a reason, and a very strong one at that, for not giving the school book account on the same detail as the other accounts appearing in the auditor general's report.

As a matter of fact, if Mr. Flemming's statements in the return, are to be relied on, there has been no real system of handling the school books. He says no stock of the books on hand was taken at the close of the fiscal year 1908. If any stock was taken at the end of 1909, it was of a rather queer character as the return shows that the value of the books on hand was hardly the difference between the amount paid out for school books and the amount received by the vendors. Of course, the stock on hand may have been carefully tabulated and a balance sheet showing the amount outstanding from vendors made up, but on the other hand the whole amount may have been lumped and the result given by the provincial secretary obtained.

From the information the people have in their possession now it is quite plain that the school book business has cost the province in cash \$19,321.12 more than it has received back up to February 15 this year. What is worst of all, there is no knowledge available of the value of the books on hand or how many of the accounts due from vendors will ever be paid. From every standpoint the school book trading business which the provincial secretary has engaged in has proved expensive for the province. Every year the condition of the account grows worse and will continue to grow worse because the province must

bear the whole expense of handling and transporting the books.

THE FACTORY INSPECTOR

Mr. Copp, during his speech on the budget, discussed the removal of Mr. McMullin from the office of factory inspector by legislation, and then referred to the partizanship of his successor, Mr. Kenney. To show the length to which partizanship would carry, this gentleman boasted that he would prevent The Mail from appearing on the date announced unless certain conditions were complied with.

We understand that Mr. Kenney had been informed by parties in this city, who always know more about other people's business than they do their own, that the steam boiler in The Mail office was defective and it was probably suggested that by exercising a little vigilance, he might be able to make trouble for the publishers and delay the first issue of the paper. The fact that Mr. Kenney's informants had never seen The Mail's boiler apparently made no difference to the factory inspector.

When the item to provide the expenses of the factory inspector was before the House yesterday, Hon. Mr. Maxwell read a letter from the factory inspector stating that his visit to The Mail office was made in the line of his duty and denying that he said he would prevent the paper coming out as announced.

The Mail has no knowledge where Mr. Copp got his information regarding the visit of Mr. Kenney to this office on February 28th but the information he gave the House was in line with information which reached this office some time previous to the date of Mr. Kenney's visit. At that time The Mail was warned that Mr. Kenney was informed that the steam boiler had been reported to Mr. Kenney as unsafe, and that he had informed a gentleman high in authority that he would visit the office and if the circumstances were as stated, he would prevent the appearance of the paper on the day stated. That the information which reached The Mail had some foundation in fact was proved by the visit of the inspector on the very day he said he would come. Besides, on entering the office he at once made for the boiler and asked if there was any certificate. He was informed that there was and then he went over the establishment, afterwards examining the certificate.

As Mr. Copp said all this may have been mere coincidence, but the correctness of the information in the main particulars leads to the belief that it was correct in the others.

That Mr. Kenney may rest easy in the future, he may as well know that The Mail will always endeavor to comply with all the laws of the country, the factory act included. No objection is found by The Mail with Mr. Kenney for doing his full duty, but if he should find it necessary to introduce the partizanship with which he has been charged into the performance of that duty, he will find an active and fearless critic in The Mail.

MR. MORRISSY'S SPEECH

Mr. Morriissy did not add to his reputation by the speech he made in the House yesterday. As the head of the principal spending department of the government, Mr. Morriissy can hardly hope to escape criticism, and on the expenditure for roads and bridges as appearing in the public accounts of last year the strongest criticism is justifiable. The gentlemen who sit opposite the government while pointing out the unusually large expenditures gave Mr. Morriissy no reason for the tirade of abuse and billingsgate he launched at them in cold blood. It is no wonder that the speech of the chief commissioner called out reprisals from those whom he attacked. It may not please Mr. Morriissy to allude to that plank in the Hazen platform promulgated at the Union Club banquet three months before the last general election in which Mr. Hazen pledged himself to do all public works by contract after tenders had been called for. Nobody knew better that Mr. Hazen himself that it was impossible to carry out this promise. Because the old government had done part of the bridge work of the province by contract and part by days' work, gave the then opposition an opportunity to imply that the money expended for days' work was spent for other purposes than bridge repairing. The accounts for bridge expenditures are now before the public ac-

counts committee and they have asked that one structural superintendent be brought before them to explain his expenditures; this may have annoyed Mr. Morriissy. But whatever the cause the uncouth language of the chief commissioner did not improve his case. The country is entitled to all the details of expenditure, but this was practically refused by the failure of the government to properly answer the enquiries made. Mr. Morriissy has not given this information. If he had done so he would have prevented a scene such as has not occurred in the House for some time.

SUCCESSION DUTIES CHARGED WRONGLY

Ottawa, March 11.—The supreme court today gave judgment in the case of Lovitt against the province of New Brunswick. The judgment was against the province of New Brunswick with costs, and was that New Brunswick could not, under the succession duties act, collect duties on moneys on deposit in a bank within the province and belonging to an estate of a non-resident of the province.

It was an appeal by the executors of the late George H. Lovitt from a judgment of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick ordering them to pay the receiver general of New Brunswick \$3,251 as succession duties on the portion of the estate that consisted of money deposited in the Bank of British North America at St John.

At the time of his death the late Mr. Lovitt was domiciled at Yarmouth, N. S., and the points at issue are whether or not the New Brunswick statute could validly impose a tax or duty on the money in question (being the property of a non-resident) or against the executors or beneficiaries under the will of a person not domiciled in the province.

The case for the province of New Brunswick was argued by Attorney-General Hazen.

A BLUENOSE OPINION

The Daily Mail is the new Liberal newspaper in Fredericton, taking the place of the Herald, so long ably edited by Collector of Customs Loran McNutt, formerly of Masttown, Col. Co. The Mail presents a fine appearance and will be great help in the "Celestial City" to ex-Premier Robinson in his attacks at the Hazen administration.—Truro News.

OLD-FASHIONED TEA MEETING

The ladies of the Methodist Church will hold a Supper in the Vestry on

Wednesday Eve., Mar. 16th.

All the good things of the Season provided, including Turkeys, etc.

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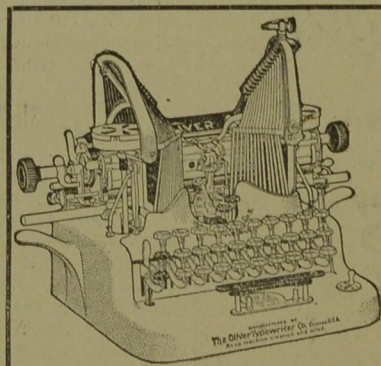
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