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THE WEATHER.
Maritime — Strong winds and gales from west and northwest, becoming much colder, with light local snowfalls. Friday, fair and decidedly colder.

GOVERNMENT EXTRAVAGANCE EXPOSED BY A. B. COPP

New Opposition Leader Dissects Financial Statement Issued by the Flemming Government--Believes that the Real Deficit is Close to \$300,000--Revenue the Largest in the History of the Province, but was Insufficient to Pay Running Expenses

(St. John Telegraph.)
A deficit of more than \$56,000 is shown in the provincial finances for the fiscal year ending Oct. 31 of this year, according to the report of the auditor general. These figures are large, the largest in the recent history of the province, but they do not begin to tell the story. A closer examination of the report reveals the fact that the actual deficit is in the vicinity of \$300,000 and, in addition to this, there is an increase in the bonded indebtedness of the province of \$315,000.

MR. COPP'S STATEMENT.
A. B. Copp, M.P.P., the newly chosen leader of the New Brunswick opposition, who arrived in the city yesterday, pointed out the actual situation in an interview granted to a Telegraph reporter.

"The very least that I can say of the report," said Mr. Copp, "is that in spite of the worse that we had feared the actual figures are not only surprising, but alarming."
"The government admits a deficit of \$56,496.80 on ordinary receipts and expenditures. Besides this we must take into account the first item of the report, which shows a balance of \$96,652.71, brought over from the previous year. This amount was added to their expenditures, bringing the actual deficit up to \$153,149.51. In addition to this an expenditure of \$102,763.36 on the New Brunswick Coal & Railway Company is charged up to the capital account. It is impossible that such an amount could have been spent on permanent equipment and a large part of this amount should have been charged to current expenditures, which would have increased the deficit by that much more."

"Another important matter to be borne in mind is the fact that the accounts do not include all the expenditures for the year. In accordance with its custom, the government has held over a large number of bills which should have been paid out of this year's revenue, and, judging by the experience of other years, this would add something like \$100,000 to deficit. An illustration of this is shown by the charge of \$448.74 on account of the expenses of the investigation into the Central Railway, which was held in 1908. Bills for this investigation have been paid every year since, and we have no as-

urance that there are not yet more to come.

THE MORE SURPRISING.

"This tremendous deficit has been achieved in spite of the fact that the revenue of the province has increased largely. The territorial revenue is, from memory, about \$30,000 larger; the new tax on motor vehicles brought in over \$4,000, and the taxes on incorporated companies and other sources of revenue have also increased. It must also be taken into consideration that the income of the province has been increased by the amount of \$130,000 in the form of the addition to the Dominion subsidy."

"An effort is made to excuse the deficit on the grounds that it was caused by the heavy expenditures on public works. This expenditure might not be open to criticism if all the money had gone to improve the roads and bridges but, judging from this government's record in other years, a large proportion of it went to line the pockets of officials and others. It is also commonly known that much of the money was spent at the time of the federal elections for the purpose of aiding the Conservative candidates, a repetition of the tactics adopted by the new government in 1908."

STARTLING EXPENDITURES.

"Although the expenditures have grown so rapidly, what department can show the benefits of the increase in the amount of money spent? None that I can see. It is to be regretted that the department of agriculture did not share more largely in larger disbursements. While the amount spent in this department is somewhat larger it is not nearly so large as the increase in the revenue of the province would warrant."
"Altogether the showing made by the government is far from creditable. Its greatest achievement has been to roll up a deficit of such tremendous proportions as to completely dwarf any deficit of any previous government."

A. B. COPP, M. P. P., New Leader of Local Opposition

Talented Young Member for Westmoreland was Unanimously Chosen Yesterday to Succeed Hon. C. W. Robinson who has Resigned--Representative Gathering of Liberals Held at St. John--Hon. Dr. Pugsley, Hon. H. R. Emmerson and F. B. Carvell, M. P., Pay Well Deserved Tributes to the New Leader--Provincial Convention to be Called

St. John, N. B., December 28.—In response to a request from Hon. William Pugsley there was an enthusiastic gathering of prominent Liberals from all over the province yesterday afternoon and evening in Keith's assembly rooms. Liberal members of the federal house and candidates who were unsuccessful, with Liberal senators, members of the local opposition and candidates, and a representative committee from the St. John Liberal executive, were included in the invitation to discuss Liberal plans and prospects.



HON. C. W. ROBINSON
Retiring Leader of the Opposition

The resignation of Hon. C. W. Robinson from the leadership of the local opposition, the selection of the first lieutenant, A. B. Copp, M. P. P., to succeed him, and the announcement of a convention of Liberals and all those opposed to the present local government, in the near future, were the features of the conference which was most successful and harmonious.

THOSE PRESENT
Those present included: Hon. Wm. Pugsley, Hon. H. R. Emmerson, F. B. Carvell, M. P.; W. S. Loggie, M. P.; Colonel H. H. McLean, M. P.; O. Turgeon, M. P.; W. F. Todd, August Leger, Hon. C. W. Robinson, A. B. Copp, M. P. P.; Hon. C. H. La-



HON. H. R. EMMERSON, M. P.

Billois, Hon. F. J. Sweeney, C. M. Legere, M. P. P.; A. T. Bentley, M. P. P.; James Lowell, James Burgess, M. P. P.; Senator Domville, Senator G. G. King, Senator McSweeney, D. Purdy, A. O. Skinner, W. E. Foster, John Keefe, F. J. G. Knowlton, Jas. L. McAvity, C. J. Osman, S. S. Ryan, Henry Gilbert, Geo. Byron, N. Marks Mills, W. J. Mahoney, E. W. McCready, E. S. Carter and Messrs. Jamieson and Amland.

Hon. William Pugsley called the meeting to order and gave a hearty welcome to all. James Lowell was elected chairman and E. S. Carter secretary.

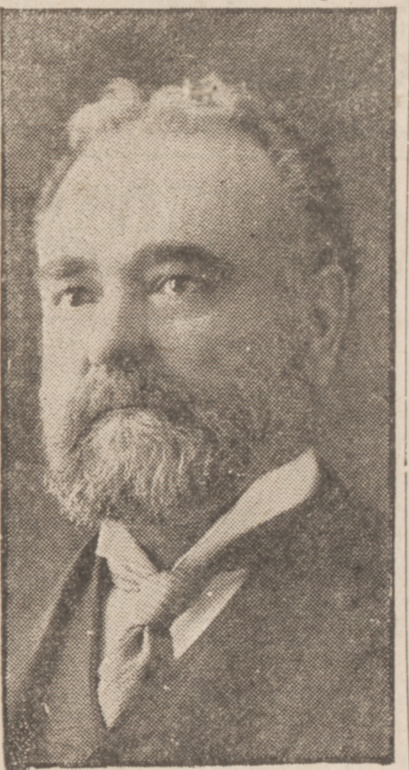
Mr. Lowell in outlining the business

of the meeting expressed the hope that the resignation of Hon. Mr. Robinson, which had been in the hands of the members for some time, might be withdrawn and he spoke in flattering terms of Mr. Robinson's fitness for the position.

At the outset of his remarks, Mr. Robinson made it clear that it was impossible for him to reconsider his decision to retire. He spoke of the hearty and harmonious support that had always been given him by the opposition and regretted that circumstances did not permit of his continuing to be their leader. At the same time he would do all in his power to assist the party and his successor, whom he hoped would receive the same consideration as had ever been extended to him.

COPP TENDERED LEADERSHIP

After formal acceptance of Mr. Robinson's resignation Hon. Mr. LaBillois moved, seconded by J. P. Byrne, M. P. P., that A. B. Copp, M. P. P., be tendered the leadership of the Opposition. In doing so Mr. LaBillois spoke in most flattering terms of Mr. Robinson and Mr. Copp expressing regret at the resignation of the former and great confidence in the ability and energy of his proposed successor.



HON. DR. PUGSLEY, M. P.

Mr. Byrne was equally happy in his remarks in seconding the motion that Mr. Copp should be chosen as the new leader.

HON. MR. PUGSLEY'S TRIBUTE

Hon. William Pugsley, speaking to the resolution said that he had had an opportunity of knowing Mr. Copp for some time. He had been in the legislature with him and knew that he possessed those qualities that would make him a successful leader. He was gratified at his nomination, and if chosen he would co-operate with him and lend him all the assistance possible. In the last federal campaign no speaker was in greater demand and that was one of the best tests of a man's worth. His ability knowledge of public affairs and popularity made him a fitting successor to Mr. Robinson.

Mr. F. B. Carvell, M. P., said he was heartily in accord with the remarks of Dr. Pugsley. Mr. Copp was the man naturally looked to to succeed to the leadership. No speeches made in Carleton County in the last campaign were better received than those made by Mr. Copp. With him as leader he had no fear of the result.

Hon. Mr. Emmerson said he took a particular pride in Mr. Copp's succession inasmuch as he was, as it were, his political godfather, having introduced him to the electors of Westmoreland. Moreover he was the natural successor in the event of Rob-

inson's retirement and by common consent was the man for the position.

C. J. Osman also spoke in a flattering way of Mr. Copp's ability, and the motion was passed by a standing vote, and three cheers for the new leader.

MR. COPP'S ACCEPTANCE

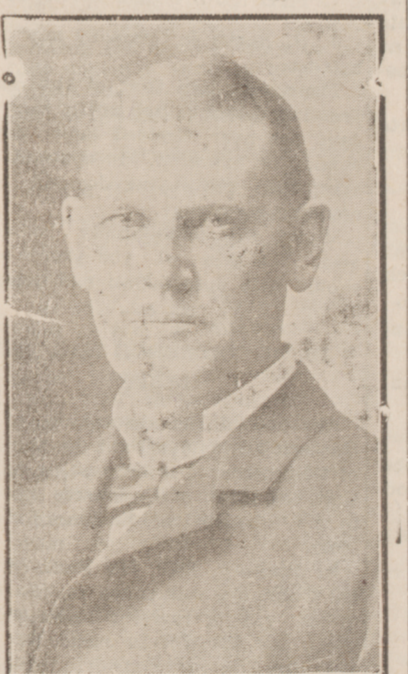
In thanking the conference for the honor done him and accepting the position, Mr. Copp spoke briefly but with all his usual eloquence and force in its way the leadership of the op-



A. B. COPP, M. P. P.
The New Leader of the Provincial Opposition

position was quite as important a position as that of the leader of the government, for an opposition was just as necessary as a government for the guarding the affairs of the country. He expressed the keenest regret at Mr. Robinson's retirement, and would have been content to remain upon the firing line and given any other choice his hearty assistance. Since he had been chosen, he thanked them heartily for the great honor and would do all in his power to deserve it.

A resolution was moved by Hon. Mr. Emmerson, seconded by Mr. Copp and unanimously carried, expressing the keenest appreciation of the services of Hon. Mr. Robinson as leader



MR. F. B. CARVELL, M. P.

of the party while premier and in opposition and regret at his retirement.

CONVENTION SOON

It was also resolved that a convention of the Liberal party and those opposed to the local government be called in the near future at a date to be named by the new leader Mr. Copp.

During the day letters of regret from Senator Gilmor, Hon. O. J. LeBlanc and Isaac W. Carpenter were read and J. F. Tweeddale, M. P. P.,

SENSATION AT QUEBEC

Bribery Alleged in Connection with a Contract for a Water Main

Manufacturers Agent Representing a Scottish Firm Said to Have Paid an Engineer \$10,000

(Canadian Press.)

Quebec, Que., Dec. 28.—A sensation was sprung by Mayor Drouin at a meeting of the Civic Waterworks Committee last evening, to decide upon the awarding of the contract for the new water main in this city. Sixteen tenders were received on the 20th inst., from Scottish and Canadian firms, and the cost of the contract was calculated to be over half a million dollars. At that meeting, all the tenders opened were referred to the three city engineers, who were to report last night, but on the day the tenders were opened three Quebecers, Messrs. Nap Dussault, M. Loneragan and J. L. Lechance, informed the mayor that a combine had been formed to raise the price of cast iron from \$28 to \$38 and that Mr. L. H. Gaudry, manufacturers agent of this city, representing Robert McLaren, Ltd., of Glasgow, had told them that he had bribed Mr. Forester, one of the engineers, for \$10,000. His Worship insisted upon the three men giving affidavits, which they did and they were produced at the meeting last evening and naturally caused a sensation, as they contained the alleged facts. However, His Worship also produced sworn declarations from Mr. Gaudry denying that he ever made any offer or promise to Mr. Forester and from Mr. Forester denying the truth of the allegations contained in the affidavits, and declaring that Mr. Gaudry never made any promise or offer whatever to him. In a letter, also addressed to the Mayor, Mr. Forester asks that the whole matter be investigated, and it was decided to hold an investigation immediately before Recorder Derry.

FRANKFORT, ONT., NEARLY WIPED OUT BY FLAMES

Fire Started in the Hotel Block and Made Rapid Headway--Calls for Assistance Brought no Response

(Canadian Press.)

Trenton, Ont., Dec. 28.—The village of Frankfort, about eight miles northeast of Trenton was almost wiped out by fire, which broke out last evening. The fire started in the Streetman Hotel block, on the main street. In a few minutes this was destroyed and the flames spread to the Bremen Hotel adjoining. The fire then crossed to the south side of the street, the residential section and five houses were wiped out. Catching the northpart of the business section, Ross Blacksmith's shop and harness store went first, and before long all the south side of the main street, from the Streetman block to the Bell Telephone office was destroyed. Calls were sent to Trenton Belleville and Picton for assistance, but none was forthcoming. Trenton was unable to respond because it has only one engine. Belleville and Picton had to refuse aid because they have no late train service. The people of Frankfort helped by farmers and workmen from the Glen Paper Mills, organized a bucket brigade, and did what they could to prevent the flames from spreading. Late at night other assistance was obtained from Stirling and Glen Miller. Very furniture and few personal belongings were saved from the flames.

through his colleague, Mr. Burgess explained how impossible it was for him to attend because of an important engagement.

A REPUBLIC OR MONARCHY

National Conference to Deal with Question of Chinese Government

Scheme Originated with Premier Yuan Shi Kai and the Throne has Approved it

(Canadian Press.)

London, Dec. 28.—A telegram from Tien Tsin to the Exchange Telegram Company says that the imperial family has decided to leave Peking. The decision will be announced at three o'clock this afternoon.
Peking, Dec. 28.—The throne has agreed to Premier Yuan Shi Kai's suggestion to refer the question of the future government of China to a national conference, and to abide by its decision whatever it may be.
Peking, Dec. 28.—The dowager empress, Premier Yuan Shi Kai and the Manchu princes of the imperial clan, debated throughout the entire morning the scheme for calling together the convention of delegates from all parts of the empire to decide on the form of government which shall prevail in future in China.

Pince Ching, former premier and minister of foreign affairs, stoutly urged the acceptance of the proposal. Prince Yu Tang member of the Grand Council and Prince Tsai Tao former minister of war and brother to the present prince regent, on the other hand strenuously opposed the scheme. Those among the Manchu princes present who were in favor of the acceptance of the proposition finally prevailed and the decision was reached to leave the settlement of the future form of government in the hands of the delegates, selected by the nation. Their cabinet has been instructed to draw up the regulations which shall govern the national convention and to inform the delegates to the peace conference at Shanghai that the crown is willing to abide by the decision of a representative convention

(Continued on page five)

VETERAN MASON EXPIRED AT LODGE BANQUET

Celebration of St. John's Day at Montreal Had Tragic Ending--Allen Austin Stricken, Dying in a Few Minutes

(Canadian Press.)

Montreal, Dec. 28.—Masonic festivities in Montreal to honor St. John's night, were brought to a sudden and tragic close last night when one of the city's oldest masons, Allen Austin, seized with illness in the midst of Royal Victoria's lodge's banquet, died a few minutes later. Within a few minutes of the tragedy, the three lodges meeting at the masonic temple, had silently ended their festivities. The banquet tables were left without occupants, programs were abandoned, and instead of the usual crowd of visitors at the masonic temple, there was a scene of sorrow. Visiting delegates who had come in festive moods were appraised of the loss the order had sustained and left in funeral silence. The master of Victoria Lodge telephoned to the other lodge. Within a short time of the tragedy there was nothing left at the masonic hall but empty banquet tables and whispering guests and visitors.

Never within the history of masonic work in Montreal has the celebration of St. John's night met so tragic a conclusion. The deceased, a past master of Victoria Lodge, had long been a sufferer from heart trouble. It is thought his enthusiastic participation of the ceremonies earlier in the evening, aggravated the weakness. He was past provincial prior of the Grand Perceptor of Canada, and was also the past preceptor of Richard Coeur de Lion Preceptory of Knights Templars. He had also been potentate of Karnak Temple until within a short time of his death.

COLLEGE ATHLETES MEETING AT HALIFAX

(Special to The Mail.)
Halifax, Dec. 28.—Representatives of the U.N.B., Mount Allison, Kings, Acadia, St. Francis Xavier and St. Dunstan's Colleges are here today arranging for an interprovincial athletic meet to be held next year.

A GOOD POSITION FOR MR. H. L. BRITAIN

(Special to The Mail.)
Boston, Dec. 25.—Horace L. Britain, formerly of Fredericton, has declined the position of superintendent of schools for Hyde Park. He will go to Wisconsin, where he has accepted a position at a salary of \$3,000 per year.

VALLEY SURVEY

The survey party which will work west from this city on the St. John Valley Railway location survey is being organized and work will probably begin tomorrow. In addition to those mentioned in The Mail yesterday, Mr. J. McIsaac of Antigonish, N. S., will be a member of the party. He will be topographer.

PROVINCIAL GUIDES MEETING AT ST. JOHN

(Special to The Mail.)
St. John, Dec. 28.—The Provincial Guides' Association is in session here today and will hold an informal dinner this evening. It has been decided to make the rate for guiding individual sportsmen \$10 per day, to include services of guide and cook, and where there is more than one in the party \$8 per man. This rate will be made compulsory. A representative of the Fish, Forest and Game Association will attend this afternoon and propose amalgamation.

VICTIMS OF BERLIN DISASTER NUMBER 41

Berlin, Dec. 28.—Five more inmates of the municipal shelter for the homeless died during the night, bringing the total dead from poisoning through eating decayed smoked herring on the night of December 26, up to 41. There was a steady procession of ambulances from the shelter to the hospital during the night. Many more men suffering from the same symptoms have been picked up in the streets in the vicinity of the shelter.