

once. For this purpose he has two typewriting (Remington) machines, and while he is printing a page on one machine his assistant is arranging the paper on the other. In this way he prints off the despatches as fast as they can be received. By one o'clock in the morning he handed me a list of election returns from most of the counties in Nova Scotia, which varied but little from the final results.

Nova Scotians are in demand in Boston, and the best printers and telegraph operators are from the Province by the sea.

One of the most interesting places that I visited was the new post office and United States Treasury building. The assistant post-master, a most obliging gentleman, showed us through the building. The United States Court Room was the first chamber inspected, and although it is fitted up regardless of expense it is a dark, ill ventilated room, and is pronounced a decided failure. The sub-treasury department, in the vaults of which are stored millions of gold, is a very large room, perfectly ventilated, and is fire-proof. The walls and floors are finished in marble, and the absence of wood-work is very noticeable. As the carriers were soon going out, the post master hurried us into the gallery that runs entirely around the distributing room in the post office. We looked down upon what at first appeared a scene of wild confusion, but which we soon found was the personification of good order. The carriers were all busy sorting their letters. Suddenly a gong sounded, and in a very few minutes they had all filed out. Passing along the gallery we stopped above the cancelling department, where the now cancelling machines were being tested. They do not belong to the government, but are being worked by contract and have proved a great success. The old system of cancelling by hand will soon be done away with, and I suppose the post office clerks will not object. In one end of the gallery was a table piled high with letters and parcels to places in Canada. They had all been posted during the Christmas holidays, and contained Christmas presents. As they might all contain dutiable articles they would not be received by the Dominion postal authorities, and were consequently held in Boston until the senders should call and inquire about them. Hundreds of parcels had been returned to their owners, but hundreds still awaited claimants. It seems to me that such letters might be forwarded to the appraisers of the different towns to which they were directed, and the addressees notified to call and open them in the presence of the customs' officials. As I looked at the piles of refused letters I could not help thinking of the bitter disappointment the non-arrival of these precious missives must have caused in hundreds of families. The only particularly new feature that I noticed in the post office was the rapid delivery system for city letters. In the gallery were a number of boys who belong to the department. They are paid according to the amount of work that they do, and several of them on being questioned by the post master, said that they earned on an average thirty dollars a month, not bad pay for boys under thirteen years of age. By putting a ten cent stamp on a letter, in addition to the usual postage, and dropping it into the post office, it is at once handed to these special messengers and carried direct to its destination.

ADIOS AMIGO.

PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW.

A large number of local and private bills were introduced in the House, and several passed their several readings, and were sent to the Legislative Council for concurrence.

Mr. McCoy introduced resolutions that the Government should support and maintain the main post roads in such counties, and portions of counties, as have not had railways built in them under Government subsidies, and that no deductions therefor shall be made from their ordinary road grants in consequence of the Government maintaining such roads. These resolutions have not been dealt with by the House at our present writing.

The Hon. Prov. Sec'y., by command, laid on the table of the House the financial statement for the year ending December 31st, 1886. It shows a deficit on the year's operations of \$23,000. He also, by command, submitted the annual report of the superintendent of education of the common, academical, normal and model schools of Nova Scotia, for the year ending 31st October, 1886. This report is an interesting one in many respects, but especially as showing that essential progress is making. The total number of pupils on the school registers during the past year, was 105,410—nearly one-fourth of the population of the province—who had attended school for some portion of the year. The number shows an increase over the previous year of 2,122, and the attendance a ratio of one in 4.1. This ratio of attendance of the population was almost equal to that exhibited by the Province of Ontario. Our ratio of attendance exceeded that of New Brunswick, where the figures were one out every 4.7. A marked improvement is shown in the regularity of attendance. The Government expenditure on education during the past year amounted to \$209,833.59. The total expenditure on education, including Government grant, county fund and sectional taxation for the year, amounted to \$641,450.88, at \$1.45 per head of our population. That was all the aid given for education, not merely by the Government, but including county funds and sectional taxes.

The Atty. Gen. introduced a bill relating to the administration of criminal justice in the Supreme Court. The object of the bill is to put an end to the loose and slipshod manner in which the prosecution of criminals has been carried on in the Courts, and provide for a regular system under the direct management and control of the Attorney General's office. Hitherto usually, whoever happened to be the senior Q. C. present on any circuit was appointed at the opening day of Court, and it not unfrequently happened that he was not a competent person. Monday was set down for its consideration, but at the request of the Opposition, it was allowed to lie over till Tuesday, when, after a short but animated discussion it was passed. The vote in favor of it was 22, and against it, 10.

In reply to enquiries, the Hon. Prov. Secy. said that there had been no correspondence between the Provincial and Dominion Governments on the question as to which should pay the expenses of criminal prosecutions, for the construction of a railway in Cape Breton under the Act of last session. Also, no application had been made by an individual, nor by any company, but that if any such application should be made, the Government would give it most favorable consideration. He also said that the question of the abolition of the Legislative Council had engaged the attention of the Government, and was still under consideration, but that nothing had been determined upon beyond obtaining a pledge from new members that they would not obstruct the passage of, but would vote for such a measure whenever it should be thought proper to bring it up.

On motion of Mr. McKinnon, the House resolved to appoint a special committee to enquire into the working of the Municipal Incorporation system, which is said to operate very unsatisfactorily in some counties. Some members were in favor of repealing the entire Act, but so drastic a course did not commend itself to the majority, who thought that, though many and serious defects exist in the law as it now stands, still it is based upon the correct principle of Local self Government, and is capable of amendment, so that its practical working will be as nearly satisfactory as any human law can be.

COMMERCIAL.

The weather during the past week has been more favorable, and the country roads are rapidly drying up. Although at the moment, trade may have a quiet look, a fair distribution, under the circumstances, has been effected, and it seems certain that, with the advance of the year, a satisfactory impulse will be shown to have been given to all branches of business. This is the view taken by most merchants, who look with confidence upon the future. Of late, owing to unfavorable weather, payments have been slow, and business in the country has been somewhat restricted in consequence. Still, though what would have been an excellent winter's trade has been somewhat hampered, there is good reason to believe in an active movement when spring gets fairly started.

The development of the truth respecting the Maritime Bank of St. John continues to be more and more unsatisfactory. The bank had a paid-up capital of \$3,000,000, and a reported reserve of \$60,000, whilst its public discounts were close upon a million of dollars. For several years past it has paid a dividend of 6 per cent per annum, but it is a serious question whether it had been earned. The announcement that bill-holders and depositors will be paid in full is discredited by persons who claim to have an intimate acquaintance with its affairs. It is evident that a very large proportion of the notes of the bank are held by the middle and poorer classes, owing to the fact that many corporations, commission and lumber operators did their business through this bank, and all, or nearly all, their labor was paid for in its bills. There cannot be a shadow of a doubt that the present trouble has been brought about by management that was incompetent if not worse. What can be said of a management that has allowed the affairs of the bank to drift into their present hopeless condition with two or three firms owing it about \$700,000, for which there is virtually no security, and those firms in the main all comprising the same set of people? To put the matter simply, the fact is, that the funds of the shareholders and of the depositors have been risked on a few enterprises such as Messrs. R. A. & J. Stewart and Guy, Bevan & Co. In any other civilized country a strict legal examination into such a disaster would be held, and stern justice meted out to the President, Directors, and all others to whose misconduct the disaster could be traced. This was the case in the matter of the Bank of Glasgow, and in many other similar instances. Perhaps, in the case under consideration, a mild enquiry may be made, but no one hopes that penitentiary walls and bars seriously threaten the wrong-doers, whoever they may be. With the extremely small degree of information that the management has vouchsafed the public, it is difficult to judge who are the culpable parties, and where the blame ought to lie. No one has the slightest wish to blame any person who is guiltless; but the mere fact that the individuals whose interests and whose impulses (if they are blameless) would lead them to "make a clean breast of it," and take the public into their confidence, do not do this, causes a deep feeling of suspicion, and makes the affair look to the public blacker than perhaps it really should.

The wretched mismanagement of the Intercolonial Railway, and its making a discriminating tariff in freight-rates against flour coming to this port for shipment to Newfoundland, as compared with those charged by it on flour bound to Great Britain, Bermuda, and other British possessions, is bearing its legitimate fruit. We read in the last issue of the *Montreal Trade Bulletin* that "a fair volume of business has recently been done in Canadian flour for shipment to Newfoundland via Boston, several vessels having been chartered at that port for St. John's, Newfoundland." We most earnestly protest against the course of the railway authorities in thus deliberately undoing the labors of our merchants, and baulking the aspirations of our people to have and to prove Halifax the winter port of Canada. In the early part of the season flour shipments were freely made via the I. C. R. and Halifax from western points en route for St. John's, and the trade promised to develop into a large and permanent business, in the handling of which our people would have found profitable work. Suddenly, however, the freight tariff was so changed as to discriminate to the extent of 15 cents against Halifax as a port of shipment as compared with Boston, and this valuable and promising business promptly transferred itself to the foreign port. At the same time the movement of incoming goods—notably sugar—was so slow and uncertain, owing to insufficient rolling stock on or inefficient management of the Intercolonial, that importers for the Montreal