

## FRANKS.

Among the smaller evils connected with our system of Provincial politics, is the almost systematic abuse of that privilege which permits members of the Legislature to save their pockets by virtue of their signatures. Of the spirit in which the franking system was formerly adopted in the mother country there can be no two opinions. Honorable members were, during the Session, compelled to attend to an enormous mass of correspondence from their several constituencies, and, the postal rates being then very high, it seemed but fair that members should have no obstacle, however trifling, thrown between them and those whom they represented. But the number of franks allowed to individual members was so limited that the privilege was not left open to any abuse worthy the name; a member, having transacted his ordinary political correspondence, had but a very few franks left wherewith to oblige his private friends. A frank was considered a favor, and was not regarded as a mere matter of form, either by honorable members or their friends. There can, we think, be little doubt that in this Province the franking privilege was accorded honorable members in precisely the same spirit, and was never intended to save (during the session) whole families from ever paying a cent into the General Post Office. The Post Office receipts suffer nothing, inasmuch as the money value of the franks is duly noted by the Post Office officials and recovered from the Provincial Government at the expense of the general public. We should like, merely for the sake of curiosity, to know the actual amount of public money expended upon the redemption of parliamentary franks on letters, parcels, &c., within the last three or four years. Unless we greatly err, a large proportion of it has been given away to those having no claim whatever upon the public purse. It is doubtless very convenient that a member of the Legislature may, by merely signing his name, confer a small favor upon his friends and casual acquaintances, and at the same time be enabled to save their pockets without lightening his own. But this, we maintain, is altogether contrary to the spirit wherein the privilege was first conceded. It was never intended that Mr. A. should, in virtue of his being an M.P.P., be justified in taxing the general public in order that Mesdames B. C. and D. might correspond with, and send parcels to their friends and acquaintances all over the world. The mere fact of Mr. X. being returned for a county in nowise justifies Mrs. Z's exemption from postal rates for every Parliamentary session held during the remainder of her natural life. We have no desire to see honorable members deprived of rational parliamentary privileges, but we cannot hold our peace when we see a privilege daily and hourly abused. We know of dozens, not merely of individuals, but of families, who correspond extensively every session without ever paying a cent into the coffers of the Post Office. There is no attempt at concealment in the matter—nothing is more common than to hear Mater-familias volunteer the information that,—“Thanks to Mr. P. we pay no postage, and really it is a great convenience to us.” We say, “Mater-familias,” because, as a rule, women have in small matters of this nature far fewer scruples than men. Women rarely trouble their heads concerning indirect taxation, the rights of the people, &c., &c., and it is indeed highly important that they should not do so. When a lady “presents her compliments to Mr. Dash, M.P.P., and forwards him ten packages of envelopes for signature,” she does so without in the least imagining that she is imposing an indirect tax upon hundreds who have not the good fortune to be on intimate terms with an M.P.P. Yet such is virtually the case. The lady's letters, parcels, &c., weigh just as heavy as those despatched and paid for by her less fortunate neighbours, but the lady pays nothing, while her neighbours are compelled to pay for her and themselves too. This is hardly fair, and we would remind the members of our Legislature, no less than those

whom they systematically *oblige*, that the term “honorable,” is supposed to convey a certain meaning to the minds of the masses. When we speak of “the honorable member,” for such and such a place, we wish it to be clearly understood that we believe the said member to be a man whose position as a representative of the people is a guarantee for his fair and honorable dealing upon all questions involving the interests of the general public. It were the merest folly to mine this question of franks; the privilege is abused to an extent incompatible with the strict laws either of honour or justice. We think those who sign their names are less to blame than those who systematically solicit signatures. It is hard to refuse a trifling boon when to grant it may seem a charity. There might arise certain cases in which an honorable member would scarce be justified in withholding his autograph, but on the other hand, no member of the Legislature is morally justified in franking letters, month after month, and session after session, for those having no claim whatever upon the Provincial revenue. We hardly know what to say concerning those who take advantage of their intimacy with honorable members to perpetrate an indirect fraud (for it is nothing less) upon the community. It is not easy to comprehend the *mcanness* which prompts people in moderately easy circumstances to shift the burthen of five, or ten, or twelve and a half cents, from their own shoulders to those of their neighbours;—the idea is too novel to us to be rightly understood, and we sincerely trust we may never understand it in all its petty bearings. In dismissing from our minds this uncongenial topic, we shall endeavour to point out what seems to us the *spirit* of the franking system. It was instituted to afford members of the Legislature every facility for discussing political topics with their constituents; to allow members to forward blue books, parliamentary documents, &c., to those whose study of the same might prove beneficial to the interests of the general community, or of any particular constituency; and lastly—to enhance, in a small way, the dignity attaching to a member's position as one of the people's representatives. But the privilege was *not* meant to save whole families from paying postage for months together, and we are glad to know that some, at least, of the members occasionally refuse their signatures.

## MURDOCH'S HISTORY OF NOVA SCOTIA.

HALIFAX: A. &amp; W. MACKINLAY.

(Concluding notice.)

For most of the information regarding Acadie from 1608 to 1613, Mr. MURDOCH is indebted to the Jesuits, the first volume of whose “Relation” was published at Quebec in 1858. At the close of 1607, we find Canada and Acadie without a European inhabitant, but in the next year M. Champlain (de Monts' lieutenant) being sent on a voyage of discovery up the St. Lawrence began the settlement of Quebec. Meanwhile Henry the Fourth determined to attempt the conversion of the Indians in Acadie by means of the Jesuits, and on the 24th June, 1610—“about 24 or 25 of the Indians were baptized at Port Royal, by a priest called “Messire Jos   Fleche, surnamed the Patriarch, all the Indians “of the neighbourhood being there assembled.” M. Poutrincourt, (who had, it will be remembered, obtained a grant of Port Royal) sent his son, M. Biencourt, back to France “to carry the “news of the baptism of the Indians, and to bring out succors for “the colony, which was insufficiently provided to face the ensuing “winter,” and an arrangement was made by which the Port Royal settlement should be supplied with all necessities for a period of five years, as also with funds for the barter trade with the Indians. The news of the conversions among the Indians seems to have powerfully affected the ladies of the French Court, especially Madame la Marquise de Guercheville and the Queen,—Marie de Medicis, neither of whom spared any exertion to forward the success of the Jesuit mission. The Queen, “directed 500 crowns to “be paid to the Jesuit missionaries—the Marchioness de Vermeuil “presented them with suitable dresses and utensils for performing