

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 1912.

PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURES.

Two or three days ago during the proceedings of the House, Mr. LaBillicois expressed an unusually strong opinion for him regarding the attitude taken by Chief Commissioner Morrissey in replying to a question asked by Mr. Copp regarding expenditures for bridge repairs. The object of this question was so apparent that no one was deceived by it, but the wording was more comprehensive than Mr. Copp had thought and could not be answered in any other way than that proposed by Mr. Morrissey, which was to read all the details of the expenditures called for. Had Mr. Morrissey taken any other course than he did he would immediately have been charged for refusing to furnish information, a charge that is forever on the tongues of Opposition members—and a charge, however applicable to Mr. LaBillicois himself while Commissioner of Public Works, does not apply to the present Administration.

Mr. LaBillicois became Chief Commissioner of Public Works in 1900 and held the office until the change of Government in 1908. During his term a system of secrecy prevailed in the Department and the information furnished regarding its transactions was of the most meagre character and often very unreliable. It was a period of suspense accounts and over-expenditure. Not only were the entire appropriations voted by the Legislature exhausted sometimes a year in advance of the vote but additions were made to the permanent debt amounting in the whole to \$604,945.66, every dollar of which should have been met out of the current revenue. Such management is a reflection on the head of a department and does not give him any particular license to criticize his successor.

In order to analyze Mr. LaBillicois' management of the Public Works Department it is necessary to divide his term of office into two periods. The first from 1900 to 1902 inclusive, and the second from 1903 to 1907 inclusive. When Mr. LaBillicois assumed the office there was an overdraft dating from 1896 amounting to \$91,309.31 and the over-expenditure for 1900 was \$10,918.02. In 1901 the Government received from the Dominion \$275,692.18 in settlement of the Eastern Extension Claim, and a portion of this money was used to pay off the Public Works ever-expenditure. Not a very large sum, however, as the balance against the Department October 31st, 1901, was \$88,895.38. It was necessary therefore to raise an additional sum to lift the Department out of debt. A rather unique method was taken to accomplish this.

In the fall of 1901 and winter of 1902 there had been some destruction of bridges by freshets. This was taken advantage of by the Government to raise two loans, one of \$150,000 to repair damages caused by the freshet, and another of \$100,000 for permanent bridges. These loans were "for the purpose of meeting the cost of permanent bridges which the Chief Commissioner of Public Works may deem it necessary or wise to construct within the Province, and for making other improvements on public highways by work of a permanent character, and also the further amount of \$150,000 for the purpose of meeting the extraordinary expense incurred or to be incurred by the Board of Works by reason of recent unusual freshets."

Section three of the act contained this unusual provision: "No portion of the proceeds of the said debentures first authorized in Section one shall be used to pay for the construction of any bridge or bridges except to take the place of bridges which have hitherto existed unless by special authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Council." In other words the Executive Government of the Province was given authority to expend this quarter of a million dollars in any way they pleased, so long as it was applied to the Public Works of the Province, and that it just what they did. The money was used to wipe out the over-expenditure and for the work on permanent bridges. According to their own statements the damage done by freshets was responsible for an expenditure of only \$131,375.54 or \$18,624.46 less than the bond issue. The amount expended on permanent bridges under this act was set down at \$31,491.69 or \$18,508.31 less than the amount charged up in the permanent debt.

The total expenditures of the Public Works Department for the year 1900 to 1902 inclusive, were \$872,997.30, and after adding \$250,000 to the permanent debt besides getting about \$20,000 from the Eastern Extension Claim money the Department had \$11,738.28 to its credit.

Now for the second period. Following is the statement of the receipts and expenditures for Public Works for the years 1903 to 1907 inclusive:

Year.	Receipts.	Expenditures.
1903	\$183,909.41	\$184,298.04
1904	198,026.27	205,526.84
1905	201,083.58	218,611.42
1906	197,484.43	218,576.26
1907	212,793.85	212,793.85

It will be seen from this statement that the expenditure for 1907 exactly balances the receipts for that year. The statement is not correct, for in the Auditor General's report for the same year the over-expenditure of the Public Works Department as given in the balance sheet was \$78,993.81. The only possible explanation for omitting this large over-expenditure from the report on Public Works is possibly due to the fact that a few months before the Legislature had consented to an issue of bonds amounting to \$197,065 to pay off the over-expenditures of 1906 and the Department hoped by omitting any reference to the new over-expenditure it would possibly escape the attention of investigating members of the House.

During Mr. LaBillicois' term of office the additions to the permanent debt on account of Public Works over-expenditures were:

For freshets	\$150,000.00
For permanent bridges	100,000.00
To meet over-expenditure	197,065.97
Over-expenditures funded in 1908 ..	157,879.69
	\$604,945.66

During the eight years of his administration the total expenditures of the Public Works Department were \$283,593.92.

Since the change of Government the expenditures of the Department have been as follows:

1908	\$216,779.66
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1908	\$10,087.81
1910	328,443.26
1911	416,265.31

These expenditures make a total in four years of \$1,271,585.06, an annual average of \$317,896.26 or \$34,302.34 more than was expended by the old Government. These large expenditures have been made without adding a single cent to the permanent debt of the Province, whereas the old Government added over \$600,000 during the last few years they were in power, and when they went out of power left the bridges of the country in a deplorable condition. This goes to show that a large part of the money charged to the construction and repair of bridges by the late Administration was squandered for political purposes. The bridges of New Brunswick are in better repair today than they have been for many years, and although a large sum will be annually required to maintain them in this condition, the expenditures can be considerably curtailed in the next few years.

THE NEW BRIDGE AT THE FALLS.

It is a matter of congratulation to the people of St. John and the parishes of Lancaster and Musquash that a working agreement has been reached between the Government of the Province and the St. John Railway Company respecting the new bridge which is to be erected at the Falls within a very short time. The old suspension bridge, which was one of the earliest structures of its kind on the continent, has about outlived its usefulness. It was built when the population and business of the Parish of Lancaster were very much smaller than at the present time. Within recent years the traffic has been so greatly increased that rumors concerning the safety of the bridge have been in circulation. Recent examinations by experts go to show that while the bridge is as safe as it ever was for the traffic it was built to carry, it does not meet the requirements of the present day, particularly with respect to street car transportation.

To erect a bridge to meet present day requirements and also make it available for the street railway is an expensive proposition. It was discussed by the old Government prior to 1908 but no definite action was taken. One of the first things the present Administration was called upon to do was to expend a considerable amount in re-flooring the bridge, which had become unsafe for traffic, and between then and now a further large sum has been expended in renewing the timbers which support the floors, so that today the bridge is really in better condition than for some years past and will serve all purposes until the new structure is completed.

At the session of the Legislature in 1911 the Government was authorized to enter negotiations with the St. John Railway Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the purpose of securing a bridge that would accommodate the steam railway, the street railway, and serve for highway purposes as well. Immediately after the close of the session these negotiations were proceeded with and a few weeks later the Government was informed that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company would continue to use the cantilever bridge for their purposes. The Street Railway on the other hand expressed a desire to be considered in the construction of the new bridge. Plans and specification were therefore prepared for two bridges, one of which would be strong enough to carry the street railway traffic. The other was for a highway bridge alone. These plans have been ready for some time, during which negotiations between the Government and the street railway have been going on until yesterday when the railway corporation decided to accept the terms proposed by the Provincial Government for the use of the bridge.

The bridge as planned is modelled after a smaller structure erected a few years ago over the Niagara River just below the Falls. It is entirely different from the suspension bridge or the cantilever bridge and is supported by a steel arch resting on heavy masonry at the base of the cliff just above high water. The centre of the arch is a sufficient distance from the water level to admit of the passage of any vessel that could pass under either of the existing bridges. Now that it has been decided to build the heavier bridge, tenders will be immediately called for and work commenced at an early date. The Government has been very prompt in dealing with this very important question which involves an expenditure greater than that of any bridge yet constructed by the Provincial Government. The fact that the street cars are to cross the bridge will be welcome news to all whose business or pleasure calls them to the western side of the harbor.

Current Comment

(Vancouver Colonist.)

In Naples recently the families of the soldiers who are at the front in Tripoli were asked to march before a moving-picture machine, bowing and smiling. The films were to be sent to the army and be shown at night to the men, who would thus see their friends at home greeting them from the sheet. We do not see why this idea cannot be carried a little further. Let armies move before the picture machine, and let each side send its films to the Hague Tribunal, where umpires can determine which of them would win under the circumstances shown. This would be cheaper, infinitely less costly, and in the end just as satisfactory as the results reached by sending out a lot of perfect strangers to shoot at each other.

(Educational Review.)

Professor Leacock of McGill University says children are sent to school too young. The child's earlier years, he thinks, should be spent in drinking in the beauties he could find in the things and doings about him. The brightest student of twenty years was the one who had been kept from study till he was ten or eleven, and not the one who had learned to read when he was three. All of which may be true, Professor Leacock, but much depends upon the child's home surroundings and whether he breathes the free, pure air of the country or the contaminated air of city slums.

(Calgary Herald.)

With the friends of Theodore Roosevelt claiming 532 votes assured, and those of Mr. Taft claiming 496 assured, and a total necessary vote for selection by the Republican convention being 539, it looks as though a pleasant time would be had when the delegates meet in Chicago.

(Ottawa Journal.)

Henri Bourassa would give three votes to the father of a family. This would nearly put three times more power into the hands of aggressive or subtle wives, than they already enjoy.

(Vancouver Province.)

Bullets are substituted for ballots in Mexican elections, but up in this peaceful and contented country there is a possibility of an election without firing a blank cartridge or marking a ballot.

(Calgary Herald.)

The Hon. Frank Oliver is very much distressed about the car shortage in the West. He ought to be, he brought it about.

(Stratford Herald.)

With hay at \$20 per ton, let the bulk of the common herd be thankful that a horse isn't included in their family circle.

WORK DONE BY COMMITTEES

Legislative Committees Are Now in Full Swing — E. J. Payson Secretary of Public Accounts.

Fredericton, Mar. 14.—The municipalities committee met this morning. Mr. Munro in the chair, and G. M. Farnsworth, secretary, and a number of bills to amend the Lancaster sewerage act, an act to fix the valuation of T. S. Simms and Co., Ltd., as to rates and taxes, and an act to fix the valuation of the Wilson Box Co., all St. John bills.

The public accounts committee met this morning and organized, re-electing Mr. Payson chairman, and appointing E. J. Payson, secretary. All the members of the committee were in attendance with the exception of Mr. Woods. The report of the auditor general was taken up for consideration and all the items were passed up to and including the agricultural department, except stumpage, returns from school book vendors and Provincial Hospital maintenance revenues were held over for inquiry, when the officials of the departments concerned could be present at the committee meeting.

Mr. Babbitt, deputy receiver general was called in connection with the subsidies from the Dominion government, and he explained that the increased subsidy available because of the increased population as shown by the census of 1911, would amount to about \$24,000 per year. A proportion of the increased subsidy which was due on the first of July last, was not received by the province until after the close of the fiscal year.

On motion of Mr. Robinson, it was recommended that the Crown land department gather and furnish information showing how much pulpwood is manufactured into pulp in the province each year and how much pulpwood is exported from the province each year from Crown lands in both instances. The committee will meet tomorrow at 10 o'clock when the auditor general and the secretary of the board of works have been requested to attend.

The contingencies committee met this morning. Mr. Woods was elected chairman, but in his absence, Mr. Young acted as chairman pro tem. The usual items were passed by the committee.

ELASSON DREAMING MURDERER'S NAME

Port Huron, Mar. 12.—When arraigned before a police magistrate here this afternoon, George Elason, of Port Huron, Ont., charged with murder, refused to plead. A plea of not guilty was therefore entered for him, and he was remanded for examination on Mar. 12.

The mother and sisters of the accused man were in court, and several times the proceedings were interrupted when Mrs. Elason became hysterical. The authorities believe the prisoner is weakening and will soon make a full confession of his part in the death of Thos. Major. Today Elason told the guards at the jail that he had "dreamed" the first three letters of the name of the man who was with him the night Major died, and he asked for paper and pencil, explaining that he expected to "dream" the full name within a few hours.

CANADA'S FIRE DANGERS.

W. B. Meikle, general manager, Western Assurance Company, asserts that the finest system of water supply, the complete installation of hydrants in the streets and the most up-to-date fire brigade will never give the public relief from the constant menace of conflagrations. Before such relief can be secured, he continues, "better building laws must be enforced by legislation in all the cities, towns and even villages throughout the Dominion. Recently the city authorities in London, Ont., demanded a reduction in insurance rates owing to improvements in water supply, but within a fortnight after the insurance companies had given a reduction that city had the most serious conflagration in its history. A fire broke out in a leading retail emporium and extended over seven retail stores, causing an insurance loss of about \$500,000. It was found that the party walls between the buildings were of such indifferent construction and so thin that the falling of the burning roofs led to parts giving away and the flames spreading."

"Must we wait for some dreadful holocaust to force the authorities and the public to recognize the fact that conditions in many parts of our large cities are just as bad as they were found to be after the terrible shirtwaist factory fire in New York in March last? It cannot be stated that any Governor General, any Premier, or any Dominion or Provincial—or any leading statesman has evinced any particular interest in awakening public bodies and the people to their obligations in making their towns safer against the great danger of destruction of property and human lives by fire, and to reduce the enormous waste of \$30,000,000 of property annually."

"Famous Men and Women."

"Famous Men and Women" was the subject at the meeting of the High School Alumnae at the home of Mrs. Wm. Murdoch last evening. During the evening papers were read on Dr. Grenfell, Kipling and others, but curious to relate, although the subject was famous men and women, not one of the papers read by the graduates of the local institute of learning had anything to say about a woman. This omission may be due to the fact that it is leap year. The following young ladies read papers: Miss Jessie Lawson, Miss Ward, Miss O'Connell, Miss Dean, Miss Lawson, Miss Walker and Miss Murdoch. After the different papers had been read and commented on refreshments were served and Miss Lawson played a piano solo in a very acceptable manner.

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MY BOY.
My boy, you cease to come at night
To climb upon my knee;
Your childhood days have taken flight
And soon you will be leaving me;
I may not greet you with a kiss
Last I your manhood should offend.
But oh, my boy, remember this:
That I remain your staunchest friend.

Your work is waiting for your hand,
The world will call to you ere long.
To serve or to command,
To show if you are weak or strong;
Upon the rung your foot is set:
God give you courage to ascend;
But well or ill, do not forget
That I remain your steadfast friend.

My boy, your playtime soon shall be
A pleasant memory no more;
But in your need come back to me
Nor pause to knock upon my door.
The world will strive to break your will,
Your trust in sorrow oft will end.
But, come what may, remember still
I remain your faithful friend.
—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

Most Anything

The One Woman.
No man could to her presence come
Or look upon her face
But suddenly he knew he stood
Within a Holy Place.

No man could hear her speak a word
Or listen to her sing
But suddenly his soul would hear
The rustle of a wing.

No man could see the glory shine
In her immortal eyes,
But suddenly his soul looked up
To see God in the skies.

Bernard Shaw says divorce should be made easier. Why not make marriage harder.

Some day folks will peek at you and say: "He looks natural." Don't let that remark be a knock.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.—Emerson.

Some people now think one earthquake wasn't enough to reform San Francisco.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR GIRLS.
First—Thou shalt not think thyself the fairest one alive.
Nor tell thy friends, when thirty Thou art only twenty-five.

Second—Thou shalt not flirt with men Nor win their hearts in play;
The spinner of tomorrow Is the maiden of today.

Third—Go light on talcum.
For before they're sweet sixteen Some girls chalk up their features 'Till they look like Marcelline.

Fourth—If thou should'st some day find That hair's not coming in
Thou shalt not sport the pigtails Of the Chinese mandarin.

Fifth—If indigestion's blight Upon thy life should come,
Partake of liquid pepsin,
For thou shalt not chew gum.

Sixth—Thou shalt not try to squeeze Thy foot into a shoe
That ought to be a number four But is a number two.

Seventh—On trashy novels Thou should'st never love to gloat
But spend thy time on politics If thou would'st some day vote.

Eighth—Thou shalt not gossip.
Nor give ear to every tale,
The female of the speeches Would be better off in jail.

Ninth—Don't act the clinging vine When the visitors come in,
And next day lead a bargain rush To buy a paltry pin.

Tenth—Assist thy mother And don't be inclined to roam;
The angel of the lover Is the angel of the home.

STAGGERS THE PROF.



Professor—Oxygen, gentlemen, is essential to all animal existence. There could be no life without it. Strange to say, it was not discovered until a century ago, when—
Student (interrupting)—What did they do before it was discovered, sir?

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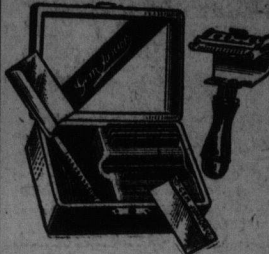
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