

succeeded just prior to the visit of Mr. Brydges, in getting the accounts so far advanced as to be in a position to adjust for a fair start on the 1st July last, when I expected the requisite statements and returns would be available to enable me to secure the necessary checks on the different departments of the service.

Until the accounts were written up there was no alternative but to continue the ordering of stores upon the requisition of the heads of departments, comparatively speaking "in the dark."

I had necessarily to rely very much upon Mr. Sadler, the general storekeeper, whom personally I believe to be reliable.

I am satisfied that he did the best he could under the circumstances, but as he had himself everything to learn, and was undoubtedly hampered by some men who were inefficient and incapable, but of whom it was difficult to get clear, and as he was deficient in force of character, he labored under many disadvantages.

There can be no doubt that an efficient general storekeeper would have enabled us to avoid many of the difficulties into which we have been led.

Such an officer must in fact be the backbone of any railway system, and unless he is from every standpoint efficient, it is exceedingly difficult for any manager to succeed, however anxious and careful he may be, as he must be put in possession of the requisite information before irregularities can be checked.

In the commencement of his report, Mr. Brydges says: "The General Superintendent has full charge of everything connected with the railway. *His orders and directions are supreme*, and all departments and all officers have to take his instructions, and "apply to him for orders upon all points."

If it be true that I have "*supreme*" authority, then I at once admit that I am altogether responsible and to blame for the irregularities and deficient supervision, found on the occasion of the visit of Mr. Brydges, but if, as is well known, I have been obliged to accept persons who were nominated or appointed only for political considerations, and with whom I was expected to do the best I could, however incompetent, without the authority to dismiss them, then it is quite obvious that *no such responsibility can attach to me, except as a matter of theory.*

Bah
It may be asked, Why did you not complain? To this I reply, that as official communication might prove a source of embarrassment, an officer is generally expected to make reports only when called for, and inasmuch, as information upon any such subject has not been asked, I did not deem it to be my duty to give it.

In 1869, when, in the performance of my duty, I undertook by direction of the then Minister of Public Works, to revise the management of the Nova Scotia Railway