

and had to pay men to cut new poles as the ones delivered to the Government were too small to carry single lines without being braced.

And for these poles the Government paid full price.

I wish this House to clearly understand that I am not going to make any charge against any of the Postal officials as I don't know whether the information is correct or not. Yet I am inclined to think it is and consider it would be in the interest of the Country if the Government appointed a Commission of Enquiry to look into the matter. The information which I hold in my hand is certainly of such a character that it requires close attention. We also wish that the officials be removed while the investigation is going on.

The whole system is demoralized. Both in the Head Office and in the outside offices conditions exist which is a disgrace to the public service. Drunkenness of responsible officials has been notorious and the subordinates have followed the example of their superiors. What can be expected from a department whose superintendent has such a record for intemperance as that of the Post-Office? What can be expected from a department when the Government will suspend and dismiss its chief officials for drunkenness while in the discharge of their duties and then re-instate them? What can be expected from a Telegraph Department when its chief officials will show the example of besotted drunkenness such as is shown to have been done in the Postal Department in this city? What can we expect from the department when its responsible officials will lie helplessly drunk in the operating room before the whole staff for four hours at a time while in an adjoining room the superintendent is ruminating behind drawn curtains and locked doors? If the Honorable Colonial Secretary want dates and names I am ready to hand them to him. What can be expected from a public department when such things are permitted and the men guilty of such disgraceful conduct are still retained in the service and responsible for its management?

Large sections of the lines have been down for days and weeks at a time and no real effort made to restore them. Only a few months ago a section of thirteen poles of the Main Line was down East of Come-By-Chance and the Superintendent and his officials at St. John's made no effort to repair it while the transmission of business was seriously hampered. I would refer the Hon. Colonial Secretary to the Government Engineer for verification of this and to the operator who was then at Come-By-Chance.

It is well known that the repairs of the system are allowed to leave their work and go fox trapping and log cutting.

Only recently a repairer stationed at Holyrood when called upon to attend to line trouble could not be got. He was in the log woods.

Another occasion the same repairer was called upon to take charge of a gang of repair men when the whole system was tied up by a break and he missed the train from St. John's because he was drunk and he was allowed to sleep off his boose in the basement of the Post Office and proceeded on his way to the line work next day instead of being sent about his business and a sober and capable man put in charge of the work.

It is notorious that the repairer attached to the city office is generally incapable of doing his work when sent to look after the lines and yet the Government close their eyes to these abuses and the public are called upon to suffer the consequences of such maladministration because of the incapacity and untrustworthiness of responsible officials.

And allow me to inform the Government that the few instances I have mentioned by no

means exhausts the catalogue of offences and scandals which we have knowledge of in the Postal Telegraph Department.

The record of the Postal officials while engaged at telegraph work in the outports is most discreditable. They have been guilty of the most reprehensible conduct and gross neglect of duty and reckless extravagance. Ample evidence of this is obtainable. Repairers have had to boldly take some of these men off the repair work in a state of intoxication.

When the Superintendent and repairer Tobin were transferring the office at Clarendville they put in three times as long a time at the work as was necessary and while engaged at that work a prominent resident of Clarendville publicly reproved the Superintendent for his example for being under the influence of liquor most of the time and gave no attention whatever to the work under his supervision.

At Britannia Cove he was assisted from a boat engaged at cable work, being incapable through liquor to look after the work.

At Lewisport himself and Mr. Veitch gave an exhibition of boxing that was the talk of the settlement for months. No matter what supplies were left behind the supply of liquor has been always provided when these men are out of the city on Postal Telegraph work.

The record of Bonne Bay and Woods' Island cable laying is one discreditable to the public service. The Western Star made a reference to it at the time but was prohibited, so it is stated, from further comments.

Operator Read was taken from his office at Curling to accompany Mr. Scott just to keep him company while enjoying himself at Bonne Bay and I am informed by a man who saw what was going on that there was no justification for Read to be taken there and that Read himself said one of the men engaged that he did not know what he was there for. Any way read did no work in connection with Bonne Bay cable but Superintendent Scott, paid him \$77.00 extra for doing nothing.

The day the Bonne Bay cable was laid Superintendent Scott was not in fit condition of mind or body to intelligently supervise the work and it was done by another person.

At one of the Northern telegraph offices Messrs. Veitch and Stott left a part of their liquor supply behind them, consisting of a part of a jar of rum which was forgotten when they were leaving the place.

Days have been spent at work which could be done in a few hours and unnecessary journeys have been made over the country by Mr. Veitch and Mr. Stott, generally with repairer John Doyle to do the work for them. And as long as they were making a clear dollar a day over and above their actual expenses they were in no great hurry to finish the jobs. For weeks at a time both the Superintendent and his clerk in charge have been absent from the Head Office on work which could and should be done by one of them with the assistance of the local repairers. They have time and again neglected their public duties to the department for the sake of the rake off they would get by being out of the city on postal work.

And not let me give a few instances of these rake offs are engineered.

We will take the Colonial Secretary's answer re Stott's personal expenses as laid on the table last year. It was placed at \$2.36 per day. According to his vouchers (which by the way are never checked by the auditors, if report be correct) he charged the Government over Two Dollars per day for board and lodging when out of the city, besides all other expenses, and train fares, notwithstanding that he has been given a pass over railroad because of his official position in the Postal Department.

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British and Belgian Troops at Ghent—Crack Canadian Troops on Way to the Front—Scenes at the Canadian Camp—Belgian Troops at Antwerp—England Rushes Help to the Wounded.

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A great detective story in two parts.

MISS TOMBOY AND FRECKLES.

A Vitagraph comedy with Lillian Walker.

THE RANGER'S ROMANCE.

A very thrilling Western drama.

AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL.

A strong social drama by the S. and A. players.

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M. J. Delmonico sings "Don't Blame it all on Broadway" and "Play in the Game of Love." Illustrated.

The usual Extra Pictures at the Big Saturday Matinee. Send the Children, the Crescent will take good care of them.

At Curling the hotel rate, giving the highest, was \$1.50 per day. Stott's and Veitch's charges were \$2.00 per day in their bills to the Government. Bonne Bay the same. Exploits hotel rate \$1.00 per day. Messrs. Veitch and Stott put in vouchers for \$2.00 per day and got paid for it.

In answer to a question we are told that some of Mr. Veitch's expenses were on account of John Doyle. Out of his Exploits bill of \$61.65 he paid the sum of \$1.70 for John Doyle. Mr. Stott also explains his exorbitant expenses by saying paid for John Doyle. But John Doyle says they did not pay for him, besides there is an amount for John Doyle's expenses, paid to John Doyle for the same job.

Just another instance: Mr. Veitch puts in a bill for expenses at line work between Avondale and Holyrood. He gets paid three dollars for cab from Avondale to Holyrood. Other people never pay more than two dollars for the same route, and distance.

He gets paid at the rate of \$2.00 per day for board at Avondale. The highest charge there, we are informed, is \$1.00 per day.

These are merely taken at random to illustrate general conditions under the present management of the postal and the reckless waste of the public funds under the present Government, and the virtual embezzlement of the monies voted for the public service which is being condoned by the Government of this Colony.

The Colonial Secretary has failed to lay on the table answers to questions regarding the Department over which he presides which I am of opinion would disclose a state of affairs which he cannot justify, and show to this House that the postal officials are obtaining money under false pre-

ences by means of false vouchers.

The same recklessness that characterizes the responsible officials in the matters dealt with permeates the whole system in other Departments of the Postal.

I am informed on good authority (indeed it is public property as every operator in the Postal here are talking about it) that a favorite of Superintendent Stott's in the Head Office has been given over time during last year to the extent of \$400.00 and that this was done by the manipulation of the service for that purpose, and it is said that this favored official received extra pay while he did not put in his regular time. Surely if these conditions exist there is a very urgent need of a thorough investigation in that Department.

From the information obtainable an enquiry into the Supply Department will be an astounding revelation, and the scandals associated with the provisioning and supply of gangs on repair and construction work will surprise even the Hon. gentlemen opposite. Notwithstanding the big cost of provisioning construction gangs it is said that the labouring men were starved and some of them had to quit work and return to their homes. This was particularly so in Nicholas Wall's gang.

And what has become of the enormous quantities of tools which has been charged to the Postal. Is it as report has it that all the friends and relations of those who have had charge of the supply has been kept well supplied.

It is publicly stated that officials in the Head Office have sold telegraph instruments, and that several outfits of relays and sounders have been thus disposed of. One instance of many that is said to have taken place is one of the chief operators sold an operator

an outfit from the Postal stock for learning for the sum of \$5.20.

And it is also stated that the chief operators occasionally engage operators to take their special duties. The chief draws his full day's pay extra which is twice the rate of the operator and puts half in his own pocket giving the operator the other half.

I mention these matters to show the neat methods that are in vogue in the Postal for "making extra pay."

Yesterday the Government came in here and asked this House to support Resolutions for increased taxation amounting to One Quarter of a Million Dollars. This increased taxation will fall heavily on the fishermen and labourer of this Colony. You have added a tax of 10 per cent. on motor engines. This is extending the helping hand to the fishermen of this Country with a vengeance. Instead of this increased taxation you could have in one stroke of the pen saved \$40,000.00 alone in the Postal Service.

I hope, Sir, and sincerely so, that the Minister of Finance and Customs will yet see his way clear to take off the duty imposed during the present session on motor engines and kero oil and gasoline because with the conditions now prevailing this extra burden of taxation is not giving the fishermen of this Colony a square deal.

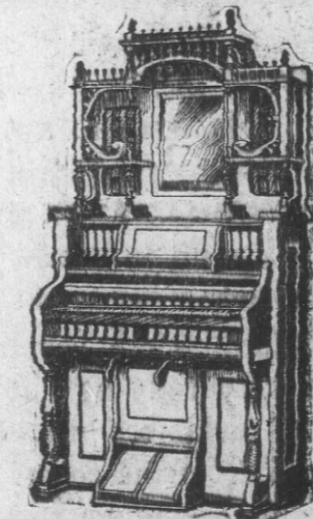
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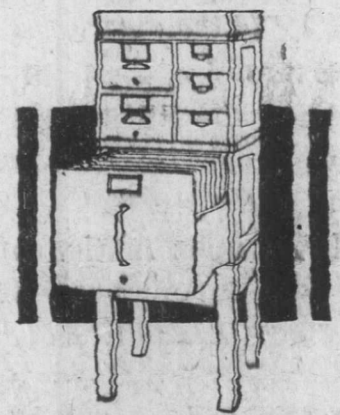
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