The Weekly Mail.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 1876.

TWO COSTLY EXPERIMENTS.

The Agricultural College at Guelph and the Military College at Kingston are two costly experiments. The idea was that being an agricultural people we should encourage the study of scientific agriculture, and that being a military people in a certain sense, our young men should have the benefit of a scientific and practical military curriculum. The time is past for discussing the *pros* and *cons* of the two cases. The institutions have been founded and the idea carried out; and it only remains for us to count the cost. And that the country is paying dear for its two whistles there is no manner of doubt.

The Agricultural College, with the farm and plant, cost of removal from Mimico, loss on sale of Mimico farm, &c., cost in the first instance close on $90,000. Up to the end of 1874 there had been an additional expenditure of $25,000 on Capital Account. In 1875, $12,000 was spent on Capital Account, and the report estimates that $25,000 will have to be spent this year under the same head. So that at the close of 1876 the institution will stand indebted to the Province of Ontario for Capital Account expenditure in the sum of $160,000, or, at 6 per cent., $9,600 a year for all time. The Maintenance Account last year was $18,000, and it is estimated that a similar sum will be required under the same head this year. If, then, which is unlikely, the Capital Account never exceeds a representative interest charge of $9,000 a year, and if the Maintenance Account never exceeds $18,000 a year, which is also unlikely, (for under both heads the expense of all Government institutions increases from year to year from some occult cause, but in a very patent ratio), this institution will cost us hard on $30,000 a year at the very lowest estimate. The capacity of the institution is about 100 pupils, or say, one for every one of five years. This leaves the cost to the Province of each pupil at $700 a year, and of each graduate of five years at $3,750. And this at once suggests the important question—is the whistle worth the money? As we have said, it is almost too late in the day to discuss that question publicly, for the mischief or the good, as the case may be, has been done. But there is nothing in the world to prevent the taxpayer from turning the matter over in his own mind. The *sound* with a hobby will probably agree with the Principal of the institution (neither being impartial judges) that the institution is of immense benefit to the country. On the other hand, the farmer who argues that in the order which sent forth the first tiller of the soil "in the sweat of his face to eat his bread," reference to scientific agriculture was purposely omitted, will denounce the institution as a cow-gaw, and the annual expenditure on it as money that might be more advantageously used as a cheap loan to enable poor settlers to keep their chins above the swamps. The farmer, the ordinary farmer it may indeed well appear that the ability to answer examination papers like the following will not materially assist a young farmer to drive a hay-mow or "run" a cheese press:—"Write brief notes on exomoses, endosmose, cycloids, peduncle, pedicle, stomata," etc. At all events, all will agree that $30,000 is a large sum to pay every year for teaching forty youths how to put that array of gnarled cabals into the vernacular of the barn and farmyard.

The Military College with its building appurtenances and appliances had cost the Dominion $90,000 to the 30th June last, when the building was finished; $59,000 was voted to cover the current expenses up to the 30th June next, and $26,000 is asked for for the same purpose up to 30th June, 1877. This looks very much like an annual outlay of $25,000 a year. At the present time there are eight pupils in the institution. The class in this country who can afford to give themselves up for years to learning the art of war is a most limited one. The General command significantly says, "the 'Old Boys' who have left the College are as yet too remote to calculate upon for the substantial improvement of the Dominion militia."

The answer that these two experiments, although of little profit as now, will be of vast benefit to the country hereafter, is not altogether satisfactory. There is such a thing as doing too much for posterity, and we are certainly laying out a goodly sum for teaching our grandsons how to use, too, reaping-hooks and weld weapons of war.

MANIPULATING A CONTRACT.

In the early part of the session Dr. Tupper asked the Government if a steam tender for carrying the mails and passengers from the ocean steamers to Father Point obtained from Mr. Cantin, of Montreal, had been contracted for by public tender. The Minister of Public Works replied that it had not, but that circulars had been sent round to several of the leading shipbuilders, and that that of Mr. Cantin was the lowest. Not satisfied with this statement, Dr. Tupper moved for a return of all the papers in the case. They have just been laid before Parliament and fully bear out what before was but a suspicion, that a considerable extent of favoritism was shown to Mr. Cantin, whose intimate relations with the Minister at all events are well known. Mr. Bowell was instructed by the Government to make enquiries as to the best way in which the desired tender could be obtained. He reported that Sir Hugh Allan had offered to provide a boat and perform the service for $60,000 a year; and that the St. Lawrence Tow Boat Company asked what Mr. Bryson estimated would be equal to $56,000 a year. Mr. Bryson, following that, was better than the boat should belong to and be worked by the Department, "got Mr. Cantin, the shipbuilder of Montreal, to make a plan of such a boat as would be necessary, and to tender for its construction." He did so, in conjunction with Mr. Gilbert, who was to make the engines. Mr. Cantin agreed to furnish a boat "eighty feet long, eighteen feet beam, and nine feet hold, covered in, with a cabin sufficient to accommodate all the passengers that may want to land, and ample room for the mails and baggage. The price of this boat complete, with anchors and chains, and fitted up for the accommodation of the crew, would be between $16,000 and $17,000." And Mr. Bryson estimated that the annual cost of working, including interest on cost of construction, would be $5,200 for the eight months. He recommended, therefore, that this course should be taken by the Government, to which they assented, and authorized him to obtain offers from "the most reliable shipbuilders." Thus Mr. Bryson at once proceeded to do. Mr. William Coleman, of Quebec, declined to tender on the ground that his yard was already full. Messrs. Cantin and Gilbert, of Montreal, united in an offer for the boat for $16,350. Messrs. W. P. Bartley & Co., of the same place, sent in a tender for $21,900. Their tender, however, was for a vessel a hundred feet long, while Messrs. Cantin and Gilbert's was for one eighty feet long. The circular asked for tenders for a vessel "to be not less than eighty feet, and not more than a hundred feet long, about eighteen feet beam, and nine feet hold." The tenders were sent in on 24th January, and the contract was awarded to Messrs. Cantin and Gilbert. Whether it should have been so awarded, let the following letter from Bartley & Co., written a week later than the day on which the tenders were sent in, and before the award was made, attest:—

"Ottawa, January 31st, 1876.

"*A. Hopkins, Esq.*

"Dear Sir,—Having learned that our tender for a steamer for the service of only eighty feet long and one engine, as the writer explained to you on Saturday afternoon, and, as you stated, after a conversation with you on Wednesday, 19th, the morning I received a letter asking my firm to tender, that I should tender for a vessel of one hundred feet long, and as the word in your letter said for *cylinders* of 22 in. diameter, and 20 in. stroke, we tendered for a vessel of 100 feet by 18 feet beam and 9 feet hold. If the vessel is to attain anything of a decent speed and to give comfortable accommodation, 100 feet is really a very small boat for such service, but what we regret is that we had not the good fortune to tender for precisely the same class of engine and boat as our competitors, so that you would see at a glance who was the cheapest.

"We now propose to furnish a vessel 80 feet long, 18 feet beam, and 9 feet hold, and all other respects in accordance with your specifications, for the sum of $15,975. With the vessel same as our tender, 100 feet long, with engine, cylinder 22 x 20 inches stroke, either of the plan of boiler B or A, as per drawing, of ample capacity to supply steam to the efficient working of said engine, with boiler on plan B, the price would be $17,475; if built off plan A, the price would be $17,900—as the plan is much more expensive than plan B, although the latter is equally strong and reliable as plan A. As we think it was so far different from the other tender, we trust you will do us the favor to consider this tender on its merits, although it had been received in due time.

We will give the same security as named in our tender.—Messrs. Mulholland and Baker.

"Your very obedient servants,

"W. P. BARTLEY & Co.

"Note.—By giving the order to us, you will have but little cash to pay out, as we owe the Government a considerable sum for rent of hydraulic lots, which we are anxious to pay, and for which you can deduct from price of steamer.

"W. P. BARTLEY."

Not a single word need be added to this letter to show the farcical character of the applications made to the builders in question. So wide a margin as to the dimensions of the boat rendered it quite impossible that a fair basis of comparison between the several tenders could afterwards be made. And, indeed, Messrs. Bartley & Co. assert that their tender was based upon a verbal understanding with the Government's agent as to the size of the boat, while the tender of Messrs. Cantin & Gilbert as to another size was accepted. These facts clearly enough establish that there was nothing like fairness in the tendering; and we are quite sure, all the attendant circumstances being known, that we do not go too far when we say that the giving of the job to Messrs. Cantin & Gilbert was but the carrying out of a foregone conclusion. It is a very good pretence of fairness while eschewing the system of public contract, tenders are manipulated by a "Reform" Government in favour of its particular pets and especial favourites.

THE STEEL RAILS DEBATE.

It would appear to be some consolation to the people of British Columbia that 5,000 tons of steel rails were dispatched to the Pacific slope *after* the defeat of the Nanaimo and Esquimalt railway in the Senate by the friends of the Government enabled the Administration to drop that undertaking. If they cannot have a railway they can at least have rails; even though, as Dr. Tupper pointed out in the debate, rails will perish faster stacked, by reason of oxidation, than if laid and in everyday use. We presume we must attribute to this circumstance the fact that the entire delegation from the Pacific Province voted on Friday for the steel rails purchase, which Mr. Bowell's motion most properly declared to have been unwise and to have occasioned great loss to the country. There was more than, perhaps, in the Manitoba members voting the same way. Whatever progress is being made on the railway, their people at all events get the big end of the stick. And of this, let us say, in order to avoid misapprehension, we do not complain. The central position of Manitoba, and the primal necessity of utilizing the Saskatchewan Valley for purposes of colonization and settlement, make it imperative that whatever delay may take place elsewhere, there should be as little as possible in bringing the west Prairie Region of the Dominion into easy communication with its settled portions. Nevertheless, as many of the votes we have here stated, it could be no easy thing to declare the reverse of the propositions contained in the amendment, and that there is any reason why members from Manitoba can urge it most strongly, and next to them the members from British Columbia, who will be able, on the wharves of Victoria and Esquimalt, to admire the beauties of thousands of tons of steel rails which are by no possibility be used for some years from the date of their purchase.

A striking feature of the debate was the equivocation and inaccuracy of the Premier—traits of his character which became prominently conspicuous last session for the first time. He met Mr. Bowell's opening remarks in reference to the delay in bringing down the papers on this subject, which had been asked for nearly five weeks before, with the assertion that he had laid some of the papers on the table at the opening of the session, and that he had told the member for Cumberland that it would be impossible for him to have any more papers. In this the Premier, during the temporary absence of Dr. Tupper from the House, was simply contrary to fact in the capacious fact-manufactory of his own brain to meet an emergency. Not a tittle of information has been vouchsafed the House on this question, except as to the quantities of rails purchased and the prices paid for them. Dr. Tupper's motion was for a score of details bearing directly upon the controversy provoked on this problem subject. When, after some delay, Dr. Tupper reached it on a night when the House agreed to pass all notices which did not provoke debate, Mr. MacKenzie uttered not a word beyond a *brusque* "carried," designed to indicate the little dread he had of all the information asked for being given to the House. Apparently ignorant of the particular nature of his equivocation on Friday, he on Saturday, when goaded by Mr. Donald Macdonald, said he was not even aware that the papers had been asked for until the fact was mentioned in the previous day's debate. The one equivocation on the point was bad enough; the second, coming so soon on the first, is simply shameful and without excuse. But it was not in this respect only that the Premier's inaccuracy of statement was painfully manifest. It is simply shocking to those who know better, and who cannot but be conscious that he knows better too, to find the Premier deliberately deceiving the House and the country as to the extent of publicity given to the advertisement for steel rails. We shall be glad if he will give us the name of one paper besides the Montreal *Herald* in which the original advertisement appeared; and we are able to state as a fact that even the second advertisement, for which his friends now seek to give him credit, (as well give a footpad credit for disappearing in the presence of superior strength), did not appear in the Toronto *Globe* and the Ottawa *Times*. Whether it appeared in any of the other papers which he named in the House we cannot say, for we have not the means of testing his statement to that extent, but it is quite certain that his deception was on a grand scale.

So far as it is possible, without the official papers, to get at the facts of this case they are in the possession of the reader. The debate certainly does not weaken the force of the case against the Government, while the incidental circumstances to which we have alluded must strengthen it. Had Mr. MacKenzie possessed sufficient magnanimity of character to have said to the House that he had committed an error of judgment in purchasing so large a quantity of rails years before they were required, he would have taken the sting largely out of the charge made against him. But in declaring it to have been a wise transaction, justified by the then circumstances, and by those which have since arisen, and that he had nothing to regret in the matter, he leaves himself open to the severest animadversion. There is no necessity for our going into the facts here. So far as they were known, we have ourselves presented them to the reader more than once, and they were brought out largely in the speeches of Messrs. Bowell and Tupper, which we published on Saturday. The leading facts are incontrovertible. Mr. MacKenzie invited tenders for steel rails—first at five days' notice in a single paper, and subsequently at a largely extended time—for what proves to have been about 50,000 tons, involving a direct cost of over two millions and a half of dollars, when he had only a few miles of road ready. It is now a year and a half since the advertisement first appeared, and the first rail has not yet been laid. Five thousand tons have been sent to British Columbia, where there is nothing doing, or likely to be done for a year to come, except prescuting the surveys; eleven thousand tons are to be put into the Intercolonial railway, so as to make the transaction bear a somewhat better appearance than if they were still kept on the Pacific railway account, for which they were purchased. But a couple of thousand tons are in the Red river country, and more are to be sent to the same place; and some eighteen thousand tons are not yet delivered, though paid for a year ago. Then, it will be remembered, these purchases were made at a time when the market was steadily falling. Mr. MacKenzie endeavoured to draw some comfort out of a comparison of his purchases with those for the Intercolonial railway, but he did not make much by this motion, for it was shown that the latter were made when the market had taken a rise, and that a large sum of money had been saved by the wisdom displayed in the investment. Besides, the Intercolonial rails were only paid for as they were required, on delivery. No man can take all the circumstances into account, and honestly declare that the Premier's was a good commercial transaction. To make such an assertion is either to display an ignorance of the facts or a most conflicting political disposition.

Apart from the commercial, there is the constitutional view of the subject. Mr. MacKenzie holds himself absolved from blame in this respect because he withheld payment for the rails contracted for until after the vote in Supply had been taken. This is avoiding the question. The essential element of the unconstitutional course which he took was his entering into binding contracts without the authority or consent of Parliament. But we shall not pursue this subject now; for, from the remark made in the House on Saturday by Sir John Macdonald, we look for a further discussion of this question before the close of the session. The papers being promised for Monday next another opportunity will be taken of dealing with the matter. And we feel confident that in Sir John Macdonald's hands ample prominence will be given to the flagrant violation of the constitutional practice and law of which the Premier has been guilty. That Mr. MacKenzie may escape with his political life is very doubtful; but we do not doubt that he will have ample proof of the capacity of his following to swallow anything he may put before it. But, as Dr. Tupper said on Friday night, we can appeal from it to the people, and we have no doubt as to what the response from the electors will be whenever the opportunity is afforded them to cast their ballots.

"THAT GREAT FLEET, INVINCIBLE."

Our navy is composed as follows:

Napoleon III. (screw).	Druid (paddle).
Lady Head (screw).	Sir James Douglas (screw).
Glendon (screw).	Newfield (screw).

In addition to the above, two small river police steamers, the Dolphin and Adele, steam about Quebec harbour carrying the harbour-master. La Canadienne, which kept the Gulf in order for twenty years, became a sheer hulk and went down while on her way to Halifax in 1874, and the old Richelieu has been passed over to the Montreal Harbour Commissioners. Of the six vessels named above, the Napoleon is described in the Marine and Fisheries Report for last year as a powerful steamer, but it has been very little of a fighting craft, as it is to be reduced to the calling of a "spare" boat to keep at Quebec for occasional service, or for any emergency. The Druid is employed in light-house and buoy service. The Lady Head attends to the fog-whistles and lighthouses on the Acadian coasts and in the waters of the Bay of Fundy. The Sir James Douglas is in attendance on the British Columbia lights. The Glendon was bought by the Department in June, 1875, and is being fitted up for the fishery service. The Newfield is the most powerful vessel of the fleet. She was bought by the Department in August, 1875, and is employed in carrying coals to the steam fog-whistles and the coal depots, and oil and other supplies to the lighthouses. It is doubtful if there is any of the 296 feet, breadth 29, depth 18, and her tonnage is 785 tons gross, and 509 tons register.

The annual cost to the country of this coal and lamp-wick armada could not be much more than enough for Mr. Bowell's Jenkins were lord high admiral. The following is the record: The Newfield, the best of the fleet of six, cost $11,500 or $56,000. The other five are possibly worth $40,000 apiece at the outside. As the Newfield and the Glendon were purchased in the middle of 1875, the accounts to hand do not include the cost of any repairs which may have been made to them. But for the year ending the 30th June, 1874, the other four worth, say, $40,000 each, ran up bills for repairs, etc., as follows:—

Napoleon III.	$27,300
Druid	22,120
Lady Head	20,000
Sir James Douglas	10,500

This was an average outlay for repairs equal to over half the original cost of the vessels; and one would have thought the gallant quartette would have been enabled to ride the "battle and the breeze" for three or four years at all events without further extraordinary outlay. But that was not to be. The year following (which ended the 30th June last) the Department put the four in dry dock and gave them an overhauling which in the case of the Napoleon III. and Douglas at least probably cost more than the first construction:

Napoleon III.	$56,000
Druid	15,000
Lady Head	23,000
Sir James Douglas	42,000

And, let taxpaying land lubbers shiver their timbers, the work of reconstruction is actually to be continued this year, and the money spent on the four above-named and the Newfield, which was only bought last year! It is hardly worth while adding up and comparing the amounts paid to show that instead of repairing our navy every year, it would be better to sell it off as old metal at an annual auction, and adding to the sum thus realized a small appropriation, buy a brand new fleet every season.

A HOPELESS APPEAL.

Mr. Isaac Buchanan has addressed a communication to the members of the Dominion Parliament on the subject of the present depression, and the duty of the Government and Legislature in the premises. He recalls the way in which at a former period, following the financial crisis of 1857, confidence was restored and industry revived by the wise national policy of the Conservative Ministry of the day, which gave to old Canada its first protective tariff, and its first start as a manufacturing community on a national scale. The tariff of 1859 had this wonderful good effect, that it inspired *confidence* in the business community, and that meant plenty of employment, good wages, and good times all round. As Mr. Buchanan says, it was not the consideration of the duty imposed on foreign goods that gave confidence, but the knowledge that we had a Parliament with a knowledge of and sympathy for its distresses. It is the country's calamity that the very antithesis of this description applies to the Mackenzie Government, and the Liberal majority by which it is sustained. The fact that the Premier is a Free Trader is itself a depressing influence of a most serious character, and is probable by which Mr. Mills and Mr. Dymond gain an apparent advantage nearly as disastrous to the country as it does incalculable damage. While a Free Trade Government chuckles over its majority in the House, there is weeping in many households, and many of our real bone and sinew are preparing to leave for the states. The Montreal *Star* the other day said that the movement of Canadian commercial houses to New York is likely to assume much wider proportions than before indicated, and that the present year will witness a commercial exodus of an extraordinary and amazing nature. No one can listen to the current talk of the street without knowing that mechanics and workingmen in large numbers are about to seek over the border the employment which they cannot obtain at home. And at this time of crisis the Premier of the Dominion, and the managing director of the journal that expounds his policy, are members of the Congress of Cliques. Mr. Buchanan must receive credit for his patriotic intentions; but his appeal is a hopeless one. It is the view of Mr. Mackenzie and the *Globe* together (see the last) the Department put the four in dry dock and gave them an overhauling which in the case of the Napoleon III. and Douglas at least probably cost more than the first construction.

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DON'T SEND THE MONEY.

We feel it to be our duty to the Canadian public to advertise, free of charge, a certain enterprising New York company, which professes to carry on the sewing machine business. A short time ago we received a well-got-up business letter, ordering the insertion of a large advertisement, and saying that part payment in cash would be sent immediately on receipt of the first number of our paper in which it appeared. The letter had a very imposing lithographic heading, thus—"The International Sewing Machine Company, Limited; sole American depot, 181 Broadway, New York." The letter was signed by three of the "European branches" of this Company were given, at London, Liverpool, Paris, and Berlin; and the information was conveyed that "Mr. J. C. Rudolph was the "acting and responsible manager" of the Company in America. The advertisement we were asked to insert referred to the "Washington Sewing Machine," described as perfect in workmanship, elegant in design, and without an equal in the world, which would be sent to any address for $45, on the following terms: $10 to accompany order, $8 in three months, $10 in six months, $10 in nine months, and the last payment of $10 in twelve months; or for $40 cash down. We accepted the orders by mail or express would meet with prompt and immediate attention, somewhat of a repetition, this, of the old figures with which he seeks to frighten the House and the country. Indeed they were conceived in the same spirit, and, Mr. Plumb, who properly takes us to the Union Pacific railway, and asks us to learn from the success of that enterprise energy and enterprise how to push a railway from ocean to ocean. Ignorant of the experience we declared that he was guilty of every indiscretion and unworthy of a Parliament. We said the other day that of this unhappy gan. (Laughter.) He made no imputation on the hon. member for Victoria, B. C., meant well for the scheme and his intentions were not to deceive anybody. To be able to see, in the wretched minority in which he was left the other evening, how necessary it is for the ablest men in Parliament to consider the circumstances by which they are surrounded, and, however clear they may be themselves, frequently to subordinate their own views to those who have a right to advise them. Before he made his motion Mr. DeCosmos was aware that he could not carry with him even his colleagues from British Columbia. They pleaded with him that no steps should be taken in the matter by any representative from their Province until the Government had spoken; but he was obstinate, and now he is at leisure to chew the cud of a bitter disappointment. He can claim but a very small success indeed when in a matter so nearly affecting the interests of his own Province he could not carry all of its representatives with him.

The debate, though so futile in its immediate result, was not without instruction. We learn from it what they have to say for a later occasion; though we can already form a tolerably fair idea that when they do speak they will be very much in earnest. The still backward state of the surveys, and the reduced estimate of Pacific railway account, tell their own tale. The salient feature of the debate was the extent of hostility to the railway which has been developed in the Grit ranks in the Province of Ontario. One does not attach great consequence to what so persistent a chatterbox as Mr. Davies of Prince Edward Island says on any question; but we would take the liberty of telling him that when referring to the matter which he solemnly settled before the Province which he represents came into the Union he was "only a boy." (Laughter.) When we call to mind how completely he controlled the Cabinet in the matter of the tariff we cannot be surprised at the peculiar deliverance on any subject of Mr. Jones of Halifax. His vision is not large enough to extend across the continent. He would be satisfied if Ontario and Quebec were joined by a railway, and Manitoba and the Pacific Province left to shift for themselves. Mr. Charlton, who is a clear thinker when he chooses to think independently of party ties, is a partisan fully up to the