

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1903.

August 12, 1903.

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH.

is published every Wednesday and Saturday at 10.00 a year in advance by The Telegraph Publishing Company of St. John, a company incorporated by act of the Legislature of New Brunswick.

C. J. MILLIGAN, Manager.

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Semi-Weekly Telegraph

ST. JOHN, N. B., AUGUST 12, 1903.

HOSPITAL REFORM.

A year and a half ago The Telegraph published serious charges concerning the treatment of patients in the General Public Hospital. The Hospital Commission at first ridiculed the complaints and the complaints, but the evidence produced by this paper was too substantial to be so lightly set aside. Public opinion was aroused, and the local government with commendable promptness appointed a Royal Commission to try out The Telegraph's charges of mismanagement, bad food, uncleanliness and lack of proper treatment prevailing in this public institution. The investigation, under oath, fully established the correctness of the charges and the public was astounded at the amazing state of affairs revealed in this local home for the sick.

The Royal Commission made very sweeping recommendations of improvements involving the expenditure of a great deal of public money. Contracts are now being let for a portion of this work. But in the meantime, what radical change has been effected in the internal management of the Hospital? So far as The Telegraph can learn it is still in the same inefficient condition, and the statement of a patient who has come out of the institution, rather than submit further to serious neglect and inattention, bears out the public belief that no honest, determined effort has been made on the part of the governing body of the Hospital to correct the serious evils which were so conclusively proven to prevail there in recent years.

The Hospital Commissioners are in charge of the institution. They have power to demand whatever funds are necessary for the proper maintenance. They are apparently availing themselves of their powers of public taxation. Why, then, is no more determined effort being made to abolish the antiquated system of management and maintain a hospital which would be a real benefit to the patients who seek its portals? Are the commissioners so determined to thwart public opinion in its demands for hospital reform that they will do nothing to remedy the inefficiency of the hospital, simply because these reforms were forced upon them? They should be ahead of public opinion in the demand for a properly conducted hospital instead of lagging behind it in the attempt to tire out press and people with a do-nothing policy of obstinate contempt for the well-justified expression of the people's desire.

These are many words, but over a year has elapsed since the Royal Commission made its report, and the evils which are published in The Telegraph today, of inattention to patients should by this time have been rendered impossible. If this gentleman's complaints are well grounded, and he expressed willingness to substantiate them by his statutory declaration, the management of the General Public Hospital requires another shaking up before that institution will be what the public demands it shall be, namely a properly conducted home for the treatment of the sick. And it is likely to get it.

Dr. Thomas H. Lunny, superintendent of the General Public Hospital, sent a long communication to the Globe on Saturday in which he abused The Telegraph as a "lengthy" and "referred to Mr. Edward Hogben, a private patient who left the institution alleging neglect and ill-treatment, as having told many untruths in his statements to this newspaper."

Dr. Lunny starts wrong. The public is not keenly interested in the opinion of Mr. Hogben, or of The Telegraph, but it is keenly interested in the conditions which prevail in the institution which Dr. Lunny is hired to superintend. It is of the first importance to ascertain if that institution is in the same wretched condition as it was when a Royal Commission investigated it. Public fear that it still is in such condition will not be abated by an altogether premature and childish letter from the superintendent. It must be clear that, if he were a wise and efficient official, Dr. Lunny would have used Mr. Hogben's complaint as a basis for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation, with the object not so much of defending the institution as of ascertaining exactly why the very serious charges were made and how, under his management, such conditions arose.

Instead of doing this the responsible head of the hospital writes abusively and with a great show of indignation as if an

unwarranted attack had been made upon an institution, the character and management of which had never before been criticized. This course will not serve.

Dr. Lunny's memory cannot be so short that he forgets the gravity of the evidence heard by the Royal Commission and the report made by that body. After that report the public desire was to have the inexcusable conditions abated, and it appears they have not been abated. The Commission did not recommend that the superintendent devote his time to controversy with those who made or published serious complaints against this public institution, but directed that cause for such complaints be removed.

It is not enough that the superintendent rushes into print with his own opinions founded on hearsay testimony. It is not enough that he quotes from the nurses' reports or conversations. By pursuing such a course he simply raises a question of veracity between himself and Mr. Hogben who went to the institution seeking relief and prepared to pay well for it, and who left convinced that he had gone to the wrong place.

The matter is essentially a public one, and it is of much greater consequence than the superintendent or the patient who complained. It involves the larger question—which must be solved—is the hospital's usefulness lessened and well nigh destroyed at present by the same abuses which were disclosed before the Royal Commission?

It is enough to say of Mr. Hogben at present that he read Dr. Lunny's letter just before leaving the city, contradicted its more important statements and said he would forward a sworn statement in refutation of it.

That Dr. Lunny would make denial was expected. That he would make a denial so childish and wandering before he was prepared to establish his case after proper investigation, was not expected. And, the incident is not closed.

CORRECTING OUR CRITICS.

From the comments of certain newspapers in Ontario and Quebec which are in favor of the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway it is quite evident that the opposition made by a large section of the New Brunswick press and people to the proposed to build a line from Quebec to Moncton through what might be termed a central route is entirely misunderstood. The statement is made that New Brunswick demanded the extension of the railway from Quebec eastward to the Maritime Province ports in order to prevent the diversion of the traffic through the Grand Trunk terminus at Portland, Maine, and when the government accepted to the Maritime Province demand, a cavilling opposition is raised to the proposed route through New Brunswick. With promises resting upon a foundation of fact and falsehood, it is but natural that a false conclusion is reached by the critics of public opinion in New Brunswick.

The people of the eastern provinces demanded that a Canadian trans-continental line should find an outlet for its traffic through Canadian ports, otherwise it is not truly national in its conception. Foreign ports must not be made prospective to the expense of the Canadian people. Up to this point the people of all sections are agreed. If another through railway is to be built from Quebec to the Atlantic seaboard the majority of public opinion insists that it must be constructed by the only national route to the nearest seaport, St. John. But no good reason has yet been advanced for the immediate construction of an eastern section from Quebec to the Atlantic. The people already own a splendidly equipped road of easy gradients in the I. C. R. and cannot understand why they should ruin their own road for the sake of building a new line to be operated by a private corporation.

The argument that the I. C. R. runs in a too circuitous route to be utilized for through transportation is not supported by facts sufficiently convincing to be at all conclusive. The proof offered is that the I. C. R. has not been able to carry grain from Montreal to St. John at a profit. We have the repeated statement of the I. C. R. officials that their company is unable to carry grain from Montreal to St. John by the short line at a profit. So that it seems no more than that neither the shortest nor longest route is profitable between Montreal and St. John on through freight.

And why? Because both have to equalize the rate to Portland, Maine, which is nearly two hundred miles shorter than the C. P. R. short line. We seriously question whether the I. C. R. cannot carry grain or any other product from Montreal to the seaboard very nearly, if not quite, as cheaply, as the C. P. R. can carry it. It has been proven that the freight can be transferred so quickly by the longer as by the shorter line, and personal observation has shown that the heavier trains capable of being hauled at cheaper cost over the lighter gradients of the longer road go far to offset the difference in mileage. The transcontinental line between the prairies and St. John would, if the I. C. R. were used from Quebec east, be as short as any rail route from the Canadian prairies to Portland, and by turning over the western export produce to the I. C. R. at Quebec its shipment through Canadian ports would be absolutely assured. Then if the traffic became greater than the I. C. R. could handle the natural route through the Temiscouata and St. John River valleys could be utilized by the purchase or expropriation of the Temiscouata Railway and Northern Division of the C. P. R.

The building of another line through the centre of the province will not assist in the settlement of the transportation problem, but the truth of the matter is that scarcely any one in New Brunswick can

bring himself to believe that such a road will ever be built. The survey will so conclusively prove the absurdity of the claims being put forward for that route that Quebec will in the end be the eastern terminus of the trans-continental line. And what will be the result? The Grand Trunk will find the winter outlet for its export traffic through Portland.

Is it to be wondered at then that public opinion in this province is so strongly set against the scheme as outlined to parliament in the Grand Trunk Pacific agreement, especially when there is no provision for the construction and operation of a direct connection with St. John as the nearest national seaport?

THE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

The appointment by the Provincial government of two members as a committee to visit the insane asylums of Massachusetts is described by a local contemporary as a useless junketing tour. From this opinion The Telegraph begs leave to dissent. There are many systems for the conduct of such institutions, some of them so radically different from anything in vogue in Canada that it is well to ascertain by personal observation how these have worked out in practical application. Nowhere can this be obtained easier or better than from a view of the Massachusetts houses for the insane. And yet many matters of vital importance in the conduct of such institutions are not such as to be determined by the efficiency of the alienist in charge. For example, there is the question of business management. At present this is under the control of the Asylum Commission composed of members of the executive government. Could the government not be relieved of this work with advantage both to themselves and the public interest, and a small governing board appointed in their stead? The experience of other institutions is of value in arriving at a decision.

Again there is the question of medical superintendence. Can this be best conducted by highly paid resident specialists or would it not be more in the public interest to have two resident doctors of lesser reputation and a consulting board of visiting physicians. In one of the Massachusetts houses for the insane we are informed there is a consulting staff composed of one physician from each county in the state. The members of this consulting staff visit the institution in turn, each doctor spending one week there. In this way all parts of the state are kept in touch with the management of the home and with the treatment of the patients from the various sections. Strange as it may seem there would appear to be a tendency for a resident alienist to become calloused to the insane and more or less careless in their treatment; regarding them perhaps as permanent inmates rather than as patients in a hospital for the hope of recovery under skillful treatment of the specialist engaged. Under the system mentioned the expenses of the visiting doctors are paid but they give their services without reward for humanity's sake and for the opportunity afforded of studying the treatment of insane patients. The committee can readily ascertain whether this system has been successful in its practical application.

What the government desires and the people demand is the most efficient institution for the care and treatment of the insane which the expenditure at the command of the management can fairly warrant them in maintaining.

The committee could find much of this information from the published reports of the institutions; they can ascertain it much better by personal observation of the institutions themselves. Nor do they require to be alienists to arrive at a sensible conclusion of the value of the systems in vogue at the various asylums they may visit.

THE GREATEST SWINDLE OF THE CENTURY.

A woman who coined \$10,000,000 from one complicated lie—Mme. Humbert—has just been placed on trial in Paris with her accomplices, and the interest in the court proceedings rivals that felt in the Dreyfus case. An ex-premier of France has described the swindle as the greatest of the century. That a woman of low birth, and of no beauty, could have done what Mme. Humbert did can be accounted for only by the fact that she possessed amazing genius for deception, and that in France especially there are thousands of persons who have more money than brains and who are credulous to a degree which it is difficult to imagine. To this gigantic swindle ten millions and the loss of more than ten millions of dollars are traceable, yet on Saturday when she faced the judges Mme. Humbert imperturbably insisted that her innocence would be established. This attitude caused Paris to laugh heartily and rub its hands in anticipation of the fine drama to come.

Follow the plot briefly. At first the woman secured heavy loans by asserting that a Portuguese had bequeathed her a fortune. That deception brought so rich a harvest that she determined upon a greater flight and invented an imaginary American millionaire. This unfortunate person she named Robert Henry Crawford. She saw this imaginary person at Nice. He was a stranger. She chanced to see him fall as he was attempting to get on a train. She ran to him, had him carried to his residence and nursed him through long weeks of suffering which

followed well-nigh fatal injuries. So grateful was this imaginary man of millions that when he died, some years later, he bequeathed her his whole fortune \$20,000,000.

This was only the introduction to the fairy tale. Alone it would not serve. There must be complications, or her prospective victims would ask why she did not at once take possession of her fortune. So a second will was invented, dated on the same day as the first; and the second will, she said, divided the estate between her younger sister and two nephews of the rich man, Henry Crawford and Robert Crawford. A third will was next produced, solemnly directing the heirs to place the title deeds and securities in the hands of Mme. Humbert and her husband until her sister Marie became of age, when the property was to be divided.

Papers purporting to be the securities and title deeds in question were placed in a safe by the authorities without examination.

Thus the nation unconsciously became Mme. Humbert's accomplice. That was a happy stroke. The earlier wills and the final one Mme. Humbert retained and these she showed as evidence that the \$20,000,000 existed. The sealed safe was placed in her house. These matters attended to the Humberts were ready to begin the harvest. They found it easy reaping. Under the woman's cunning direction loans were secured from bankers, usurers, tradesmen great and small, and simple citizens whom the glamor of the great inheritance blinded. Lawyers represented the imaginary nephews and with their aid the opening of the safe was deferred from year to year while she flourished greatly in society and even as a power in political intrigue.

She soon had a fine mansion in Paris, a splendid country villa, a yacht, a farm, a box at the opera. Among her friends were the families of President Carnot and President Faure, General Boulanger and senators and deputies. The high society in which she moved made it easier to borrow. One banker alone advanced seven millions of francs. Others parted with sums nearly as large, and when the crash came the safe with its imaginary securities had won more than \$10,000,000 in cash for the greatest confidence operator the world has ever known—a fair return for a single lie. Later, who could defend Dreyfus, is the woman's leading counsel and all Paris is mad over the great trial which has begun. Well might M. Waldeck-Rousseau refer to the Humbert affair as the greatest swindle of the century.

THE I. C. R. SURPLUS.

At a time when the whole country is eagerly awaiting the address of Hon. A. G. Blair on the national railway question, unusual interest attaches to the figures showing the successful management of the I. C. R. during the last fiscal year. There were some critics who thought Mr. Blair over-optimistic in May, last, when speaking in the House of Commons, he expressed the belief that the government railway would have a surplus of \$125,000. The figures are now at hand. They show that he was within the mark, for the surplus is \$128,177.

That it was sound policy to extend the Intercolonial to Montreal has been proved abundantly. The figures speak for themselves. They prove that the former Minister of Railways does not address the national railway problem as a theorist but as one whose word in council is entitled to weight.

We may get new light on the unwisdom of impairing the usefulness of the Intercolonial, as the proposed G. T. Pacific plan must do by a glance at the figures which tell of last year's operations. The gross earnings of the railway for the year ending June 30 last were \$6,234,527, and the working expenses \$6,106,350. In 1900 the receipts were \$2,759,999 and the expenses \$2,759,999. Mr. Blair had a surplus of \$96,822.

As everyone knows, the Intercolonial was never in such excellent shape as it is now, and were Hon. Mr. Blair's policy followed, and no plan put through to nullify the results due to his skillful and progressive policy, the national road, it is clear, would make an even more satisfactory showing in the next few years. In the few years during which he was responsible for it, Hon. Mr. Blair converted the line, which had become a national disgrace, into a modern, well equipped successful railroad. He replaced the former deficits with a handsome surplus last year and a very much larger one this year. The facts immensely strengthen the position he occupies today in regard to the Grand Trunk Pacific.

"DULL" SCHOOL CHILDREN.

A question of interest to school teachers and parents of school children is suggested by some figures and facts just published in New York. For instance, of 2,422 school children in Philadelphia, whose eyes were examined by a physician, more than forty-four per cent. had some defect of vision. In New York more than thirteen per cent. of those examined suffered from defective hearing. Of this fact the teachers were ignorant as in more cases were the people themselves, and the doctor says positively that many children who were spoken of as mentally dull or "backward" were simply partially deaf. In Germany twenty-three per cent. of 40,000 children examined were found to have imperfect vision. Of 900 examined in one American school of the better class, thirty-four per

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cent. had imperfect eyesight, twelve per cent. suffered from functional disorders of the heart, and a large proportion were in poor health from one cause or another. In the case of all these American children letters were sent to the parents warning them of the conditions observed. The value of such information must be plain enough. In many cases "backward" pupils may be as strong mentally as their more successful companions, but are struggling against the handicap of physical conditions of which their parents are ignorant. Children whose hearing and eyesight are good and who make satisfactory progress may be in the early stages of afflictions which, unless treated in time, will greatly impair health and usefulness in the years to come. That the facts be known early and the conditions remedied as far as possible is more important than mere success at school.

GENERAL WOLFE IN PERIL

When New Brunswickers who now are of middle age were school boys, they used to read that when Wolfe was crossing the river to take Quebec, he recited some verses of Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard, not that he read it; that the time was night not noonday.

No doubt the old schoolbook was right. It is a little shocking, therefore, to read of a controversy which has arisen over some mural painting for a new hotel in Toronto—by the way, gets some valuable advertising out of it. The New

York Evening Post says that an artist who was engaged to paint several historic scenes has applied for an injunction to restrain his employers from altering his pictures the rough drawings for which were submitted to them and approved. The architect, it appears, cares little for history. Says the artist to the Post:—

"I am found with the picture of General Wolfe reading 'Gray's Elegy' before the battle of Quebec. Mr. Lenox wants me to make it a noonday scene, an utter violation of historical fact. The discovery of Canada by Cabot is deemed to be too dark in tone, and I am requested to make it brighter because it is too dark for the place in which it is intended to hang it. But I do not intend to make any changes whatever."

In other pictures equally radical changes have been demanded. As for Wolfe and the Elegy it would appear that both artist and architect are far from accurate. The New York courts have power to restrain the American firm through which the paintings were ordered. The whole story smacks too much of contract work and decorative painting by the yard, but enough to have Wolfe represented as either reading or reciting at noonday we would hope the injunction will not only be granted but made permanent.

THE LUMBERMEN.

The organization of a Lumbermen's Association for the province of New Brunswick is a fact of considerable importance. While primarily the association will labor

to advance the interests of its members, and will have through its organization a powerful medium to impress its views and claims upon the government, it should also be a strong and valuable factor in the work of forest conservation. The lumber industry is one of such great importance to the welfare of the province that not only the government but every individual operator has a public duty to perform. The time has arrived when the question of a future lumber supply presses itself upon the mind of every operator, and every thoughtful citizen. How this great source of wealth may best be utilized and conserved, becomes each year a question of greater importance; and certainly there are none better qualified or more prompted by personal interest to give intelligent consideration than the men who are engaged in the lumber trade. That they have formed a strong organization, having on its executive the leading operators in the province, is therefore a fact of considerable significance; for this action places them in a better position to express and enforce their views. It may be hoped that in all cases their views will be such as may lead to action beneficial to the industry in general as well as to the individual operators.

There should be no difference of opinion between friends and opponents of the Grand Trunk Pacific bill regarding the necessity for direct connection of the line with St. John as the nearest national port. That is but simple justice.

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