

"—owes me \$1,000 for election printing, which will be a total loss, so that if you can put it in such a light to give me the work I wish you would do so.

"Trusting you will see your way to telegraph or write the returning officer by first mail, and send me a favorable reply.

"I remain, your obedient servant,
(Signed) "S. STEPHENSON."

In reply to this, a letter was sent to Mr. Stephenson, as follows:—

"DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
"OTTAWA, 10th February, 1886.

"To S. STEPHENSON, Esq.,
"Chatham Planet, Chatham, Ont

"SIR,—Adverting to previous correspondence upon this subject, and especially to your letter of the 1st instant, I have the honor to inform you that it is not in the power of the Government to dictate to the revising officer as to whom he shall select to print his lists.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
(Signed) "G. POWELL, U. S. S.

Now, the object I have in reading this correspondence is to let the revising officers all over the Dominion see that the Government has no right to dictate to them in this matter; and if they have a desire to guard the interests of the public they will not consent to be dictated to by the Government. The course pursued by the Government in favoring their friends in the printing of these lists has resulted in doubling the cost of the lists without any doubt whatever; and it is just as well that the revising officers, newspaper men, and the public generally should understand that when an Act of Parliament is placed on the Statute-book of this country, the Government have no right to dictate to the officers appointed to administer that law, either as to the course they should pursue in dispensing the patronage or in any other way. They have the Act of Parliament to guide them, and have no necessity for instructions from the Government. I do not wonder that these newspaper men are so anxious in this matter. They smell boodle on every occasion; and they can see that by manipulating the Department of State they are able to obtain patronage at exorbitant prices, which are much greater than the prices charged under the Ontario Election Act. Under these circumstances, it is time this matter should be brought under the notice of the House. I may say that this Mr. Stephenson is the man who received a gratuity of \$2,000 or \$3,000 from the Government, three or four years ago, for handling the printing of the Pacific Railway Commission report, never having done any work upon it, but just pocketing the money and giving the work to the Government contractors here. Before I sit down I would propose, not exactly in connection with this, but in connection with the manner in which returns are brought down, that they should be collected in a more connected shape. The return contains 1,370 pages of letters and telegrams, all on the same subject, between the Department and individuals, and they are so mixed up, no system at all being adopted, that it is difficult to find what one wants. When there are so many officials employed, who have but little to do, surely returns ought to be brought down in better shape and in some sort of consecutive order.

Mr. McMULLEN. I simply rise to say that I cannot allow this item to pass without putting on record my humble protest against the increase of salary of \$100 to the Assistant Clerk of the House. We are not in the financial position to warrant these increases.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. What the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Somerville) has said is but a rehearsal of what has already appeared in the public press. The hon. gentleman, to make a point, was obliged to make a statement of supposed fact, which he does not know and which is not supported by proof. There is only one point, if any, that could be made, and that is that the demand of the Government that the printing should be done in certain newspaper

Mr. SOMERVILLE (Brant).

offices had the effect of costing the country more than the printing otherwise would. The hon. gentleman being weak in his argument, was strong in his assertion. He stated, in substance, that the printing cost twice as much as it would if left to the revising officers to give to whom they chose. That statement is completely inexact. The circular which was sent to the revising officers was sent frankly and openly, and it was to the effect that the Government could have the printing done; and I think the Government should have taken the printing of all the lists into their hands, under the one condition that moderate rates should be fixed. The rates fixed in the circular were considered by Mr. Romaine and the Queen's Printer to be very reasonable, and the proof that they are so lies in the fact that the printers, not only Conservative but Grit printers, who have printed these lists, have tried to induce the Government to give higher prices than those fixed. The Grit papers have been just as eager as the others to get higher prices. Therefore, the point the hon. gentleman tried to make he did not succeed in making. It will be seen, practically, by recriminations of different printers, that the prices, as fixed by the Department, were very reasonable—not too low, but certainly not too high. No complaint has been or will be made in that respect. I do not see why the Government should not have the lists printed. If we had left it to the revising officers, the charges would have been a great deal in excess of the prices we have fixed in the circulars. As to the manner of bringing down the report, the report is well brought down. It is as much connected as possible. Of course the correspondence had to be given into several hands, for had we engaged only one officer there would have been great loss of time, and it may happen that there may be some slight want of connection on that account, but, generally speaking, the correspondence has been taken and combined as sent. We have received 161 letters at a time, and they are put in the report by order of date.

Mr. BLAKE. I entirely dissent from the position taken by the Secretary of State. The statement made by my hon. friend as to the cost of printing is one which the Secretary has not in the least answered. It would be a new thing to find that the reasonableness of prices is to be fixed by the persons who get the job; it is not generally so. My hon. friend gave the example of Ontario, and stated that the rates the Government prescribed would entail double the cost which similar work cost the Ontario Government.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. I deny that statement, and have authority for the denial.

Mr. BLAKE. My hon. friend stated the Government ought to have the right to say where the printing should be done. That may be a question for argument, but it is not the view adopted by the Government last Session. The Government then, by the Franchise Act, gave the power to the revising officer who, they declared, were independent of the Government, to determine where the printing should be done. If the hon. gentleman held the view he now takes, last Session, he failed then to convince his colleagues, and, as a member of the Government which carried the Bill, he participated in and is responsible for the policy which the Government then adopted, and which he now says is not the right one. The Act having declared that the printing should be left altogether in the hands of the revising officer, it was an impudent act on the part of the Government to send them instructions as to the way in which they should discharge their duty, and if but a few of the revising officers were possessed of sufficient firmness and regard for their position, to repudiate the impudent assumption of the Government, so much the worse for the country. A circular was sent the revising officers, saying that the printing had been arranged by the Government to