The ADVENTURES of MR. PETER RUFF - PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

III---THE LITTLE LADY FROM SERVIA

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Westward sped the little electric brougham, driven without regard to police regulations or any rule of the road. Inside, Peter Ruff, a little breathless, was leaning forward, tying his white cravat with the aid of the little polished mirror set in the middle of the dark green cushions. At his right hand was Lady Mary, watching his proceedings with an air of agonized impatience.

"Let me tell you—" she begged.

"Kindly wait till I have tied this and put my studs in," Peter Ruff interrupted. "It is impossible for me to arrive at a ball in this condition, and I cannot give my whole attention to more than one thing at a time."

"We shall be there in five minutes," she exclaimed. "What is the good, unless you understand, of your coming at all?"

Peter Ruff surveyed his tie critically. Fortunately, it pleased him. He began to press the studs into their places with firm fingers.

"I'm ready," Peter Ruff said, quietly.

"My younger brother—Maurice," she began, breathlessly—"you've never met him, I know, but you've heard me speak of him. He is private secretary to Sir James Westley—"

"Minister for Foreign Affairs?" Ruff asked, swiftly.

"Yes! Maurice wants to go in for the Diplomatic Service. He is a dear, and so clever!"

"Is it Maurice who is in trouble?" Peter Ruff asked. "Why didn't he come himself?"

"I am trying to explain," Lady Mary protested. "This afternoon he had an important paper to turn into cipher and hand over to the Prime Minister at the Duchess of Montford's dance tonight. The Prime Minister will arrive in a motor car from the country at about 2 o'clock, and the first thing he will ask for will be that paper. It has been stolen!"

"At what time did your brother finish copying it, and when did he discover its loss?" Ruff asked.

"He finished it in his own rooms at 7.30," Lady Mary answered. "He discovered its loss at 11 o'clock—directly he had arrived at the ball."

"Why didn't he come to me himself?" Peter Ruff repeated. "I like to have these particulars at first hand."

"He is in attendance upon Sir James at the ball," Lady Mary answered. "There is trouble in the East, as you know, and Sir James is expecting despatches tonight. Maurice is not allowed to leave."

"Has he told Sir James yet?"

"He had not when I felt," Lady Mary answered. "If he is forced to do so, it will be ruin. Mr. Ruff, you must help us. A mistake like this, at the very beginning of his career, would be fatal. Here we are. That is my brother waiting just inside of the hall."

A young man came up to them in the vestibule. He was somewhat pale, but otherwise perfectly self-possessed. Peter Ruff liked the look of him. He waited for no introduction, but laid his hand at once upon the young man's shoulder

"Between 7.30 and arriving here," he said, drawing him on one side—"quick! Tell me, whom did you see? What opportunities were there of stealing the paper, and by whom"

"I finished it at five and twenty minutes past 7," the young man said, "sealed it in an official envelope, and stood it up on my desk by the side of my coat and hat and muffler, which my servant had laid there, ready for me to put on. My bedroom opens out from my sitting room. While I was dressing, two men called for me—Paul Jermyn and Count Von Hern. They walked through my bedroom first, and then sat together in the sitting room until I came out. The door was wide open, and we walked all the time."

"They called accidentally?" Peter Ruff asked.

"No—by appointment," the young man answered. "We were all coming on here to the dance, and we had agreed to dine together first at the Savoy."

"You say that you left the paper on your desk with your coat and hat?" Peter Ruff asked. "Was it there when you came out?"

"Apparently so," the young man answered. "It seemed to be standing in exactly the same place as where I had left it. I put it into my breast pocket, and it was only when I arrived here that I fancied the envelope seemed lighter. I went off by myself and tore it open. There was nothing inside but half a newspaper!"

"What about the envelope?" Peter Ruff asked. "That must have been the same sort of one as you had used or you would have noticed it?"

"It was," the Honorable Maurice answered.

"It was a sort which you kept in your room?"

"Yes," the young man admitted.

"The packet was changed, then, by someone in your room, or some one who had access to it," Peter Ruff said. "How about your servant?"

"It was his evening off," the Honorable Maurice answered. "I let him put out my things and go at seven o'clock."

"You must tell me the nature of the contents of the packet," Peter Ruff declared. "Don't hesitate. You must do it. Remember the alternative."

The young man did hesitate for several moments, but a glance into his sister's appealing face decided him.

"It was our official reply to a secret communication from Russia respecting—a certain matter in the Balkans."

Peter Ruff nodded.

"Where is Count Von Hern?" he asked, abruptly.

"Inside, dancing," the Honorable Maurice answered.

"I must use a telephone at once," Peter Ruff said. "Ask one of the servants here where I can find one."

Peter Ruff was conducted to a gloomy waiting room, on the table of which stood a small telephone instrument. He closed the door, but he was only absent for a very few minutes. When he rejoined Lady Mary and her brother they were talking together in agitated whispers. The latter turned towards him at once.

"Do you mean that you suspect Count Von Hern?" he asked, doubtfully. "He is a friend of the Danish Minister's, and every one says that he's such a good chap. He doesn't seem to take the slightest interest in politics—spends nearly all his time hunting or playing polo."

"I don't suspect any one," Peter Ruff answered. "I only know that Count Von Hern is an Austrian spy, and that he took your paper! Has he been out of your sight at all since you rejoined him in the sitting-room? I mean to say—had he any opportunity of leaving you during the time you were dining together, or did he make any calls en route on the way to the Savoy or from the Savoy here?"

The young man shook his head.

"He has not been out of my sight for a second," he declared.

Who is the other man—Jermyn?" Peter Ruff asked. "I never heard of him."

"An American—cousin of the Duchess," the Honorable Maurice answered. "He could not have had the slightest interest in the affair."

"Please take me into the ball room," Peter Ruff said to Lady Mary. "Your brother had better not come with us. I want to be as near the Count Von Hern as possible."

They passed into the crowded rooms, unnoticed. They found progress difficult, and Lady Mary felt her heart sink as she glanced at the little jeweled watch which hung from her wrist. Suddenly Peter Ruff came to a standstill.

"Don't look for a moment," he said, "but tell me as soon as you can—who is that tall young man, like a Goliath, talking to the little dark woman? You see whom I mean?"

Lady Mary nodded, and they passed on.

"How strange that you should ask!" she whispered in his ear. "That is Mr. Jermyn."

They were on the outskirts now of the ballroom itself.

"Please turn round and come back," Peter Ruff said. "I want to see those two again. Walk down this corridor with me. Do you mind talking all the time, please? It will sound more natural, and I want to listen."

The young American and his partner had found a more retired seat now, about three-quarters of the way down the pillared vestibule which bordered the ballroom. He was bending over his companion with an air of unmistakable devotion, but it was she who talked. The slim white fingers of one hand played all the time with a string of magnificent pearls. Her dark, soft eyes flashed into his. A delightful smile hovered at the corners of her lips. All the time she was talking and he was listening. Lady Mary and her partner passed by unnoticed. At the end of the vestibule they turned and retraced their steps, Peter Ruff was very quiet—he had caught a few of those rapid words. But the woman's foreign accent had troubled him.

"If only she would speak in her own language," he muttered.

"MADAM," PETER RUFF WHISPERED FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN, "I AM SORRY TO DEPRIVE YOU OF IT, BUT THIS IS STOLEN PROPERTY."

Lady Mary's hand suddenly tightened upon his arm.

"Look!" she exclaimed. "That is Count Von Hern!"

A tall, fair young man, very exact in his dress, very stiff in his carriage, with a not unpleasant face, was standing talking to Jermyn and his companion. Jermyn, who apparently found the intrusion an annoyance, was listening to the conversation between the two, with a frown upon his face and a general air of irritation. As Lady Mary and her escort drew near, the reason for the young American's annoyance became clearer—his two companions were talking softly, but with great animation, in a foreign language, which it was obvious that he did not understand. Peter Ruff's elbow pressed against his partner's arm, and their pace slackened. He ventured, even, to pause for a moment, looking into the ballroom as though in search of some one, and he had by no means the appearance of a man likely to understand Hungarian. Then, to Lady Mary's surprise, he touched the Count Von Hern on the shoulder and addressed him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but I fancy that we accidentally exchanged programmes, a few minutes ago, at the buffet. I have lost mine and picked up one which does not belong to me. As we were standing side by side, it is possibly yours."

"I believe not, sir," the Count answered, with that pleasant smile which had gone such a long way toward winning him the reputation of being a "good fellow" among a fairly large circle of friends. "I believe, at any rate," he added, "that this is my own. You mistake me, probably, for some one else."

The Count good-humoredly held out his programme.

Peter Ruff cast a swift glance down the programme which the Count handed him. Then he apologized profusely.

"I was mistaken," he admitted. "I am very sorry."

The Count bowed.

"It is of no consequence, sir," he said, and resumed his conversation.

Peter Ruff passed on with Lady Mary. At a safe distance, she glanced at him inquiringly.

"It was his programme I wanted to see," Peter Ruff explained. "It is as I thought. He has had four dances with the Countess—"

"Who is she?" Lady Mary asked, quickly.

"The little dark lady with whom he is talking now," Peter Ruff continued. "He seems, too, to be going early. He has no dances reserved after the twelfth. We will go downstairs at once, if you please. I must speak to your brother. The time is very short. Is the driver of your electric brougham to be trusted?"

"Absolutely," she assured him. "He is an old servant."

"Will you lend him to me?" Peter Ruff asked, "and tell him he is to obey my instructions absolutely?"

"Of course," she answered. "You are going away then?"

Peter Ruff nodded. He was a little sparing of words just then. The thoughts were chasing one another through his brain. He was listening, too, for the sweep of a dress behind.

"Is there nothing I can do?" Lady Mary begged, eagerly.

Peter Ruff shook his head. In the distance he saw the Honorable Maurice come quickly toward them. With a firm but imperceptible gesture he waved him away.

"Don't let your brother speak to me," he said. "We can't tell who is behind. What time did you say the Prime Minister was expected?"

"At 2 o'clock," Lady Mary said, anxiously.

Peter Ruff glanced at his watch. It was already half an hour past midnight.

"Very well," he said, "I will do what I can. In the meantime—"

"In the meantime?" she repeated, breathlessly.

"Take your brother back to the ballroom," Peter Ruff directed. "Make him dance—dance yourself. Don't give yourself away by looking anxious. When the time is short—say at a quarter to 2—he can come down here and wait for me."

"If you don't come?" she exclaimed.

"Then we shall have lost," Peter Ruff said, calmly. "If you don't see me again tonight, you had better read the newspapers carefully for the next few days."

For twenty minutes Peter Ruff sat in the remote corner of Lady Mary's electric brougham, drawn up on the other side of the square, and waited. At last he pressed a button. They glided off. Before them was a large closed motor car. They started in discreet chase.

Fortunately, however, the chase was not a long one. The car which Peter Ruff had been following was drawn up before a plain, solid-looking house, unlit and of gloomy appearance. The little lady with the wonderful eyes was already half way up the flagged steps. Hastily lifting the flap and looking behind as they passed, her pursuer saw her open the door with a latch key and disappear. Peter Ruff pulled the check string and descended. For several moments he stood and observed the house into which the lady whom he had been following had disappeared. Then he turned to the driver.

"I want you to watch that house," he said, "never to take your eyes off it. When I reappear from it, if I do at all, I shall probably be in a hurry. Directly you see me be on your box ready to start. A good deal may depend upon our getting away quickly."

"Very good, sir," the man answered. "How long am I to wait here for you?"

Peter Ruff's lips twisted into a curious little smile.

"Until 2 o'clock," he answered. "If I am not out by then, you needn't bother any more about me. You can return and tell your mistress exactly what has happened."

The motor car had turned round and disappeared now, and in a few moments Peter Ruff stood before the door of the house into which the little lady had disappeared. The problem of entrance was already solved for him. The door had been left unlatched; only a footstool had been placed against it inside. Peter Ruff, without hesitation, pushed the door softly open and entered, replaced the footstool in its former position, and stood with his back to the wall, in the darkest corner of the hall, looking around him—listening intently. Nearly opposite, the door of a room stood ajar. It was apparently lit up, but there was no sound of any one moving inside. Upstairs, in one of the rooms on the first floor, he could hear light footsteps—a woman's voice humming a song. He listened to the first few bars, and understanding became easier. Those first few bars were the opening ones of the Servian national anthem!

With an effort, Peter Ruff concentrated his thoughts upon the immediate present. The little lady was upstairs. The servants had apparently retired for the night. He crept up to the half-open door and peered in. The room, as he had hoped to find it, was empty, but Madame's easy chair was drawn up to the fire, and some coffee stood upon the table. Stealthily Peter Ruff crept in and glanced around, seeking for a hiding place. A movement upstairs hastened his decision. He pushed aside the massive curtains which separated this from a connecting room. He had scarcely done so when light footsteps were heard descending the stairs.

Peter Ruff found his hiding place all that could have been desired, his secondary room itself was almost in darkness, but he was just able to appreciate the comforting fact that it possessed a separate exit into the hall. Through the folds of the curtain he had a complete view of the further apartment. The little lady had changed her gown of stiff white satin for one of flimsier material, and, seated in an easy chair, she was busy pouring herself out some coffee. She took a cigarette from a silver box and, lighting it, curled herself up in the chair and composed herself as though to listen. To her as well as to Peter Ruff, as he crouched in his hiding place, the moments seemed to pass slowly enough. Yet, as he realized afterward, it could not have been ten minutes before she sat upright in a listning attitude. There was some one coming! Peter Ruff, too, heard a man's firm footsteps come up the flagged stones.

The little lady sprang to her feet.

"Paul!" she exclaimed.

Paul Jermyn came slowly to meet her. He seemed a little out of breath. His tie was all disarranged and his collar unfastened. The little lady, however, noticed none of these things. She looked only into his face.

"Have you got it?" she asked, eagerly.

He thrust his hand into his breast-coat pocket, and held an envelope out toward her.

"Sure!" he answered. "I promised!"

She gave a little sob, and with the packet in her hand came running straight toward the spot where Peter Ruff was hiding. He shrank back as far as possible. She stopped just short of the curtain, opened the drawer of a table which stood there, and slipped the packet in. Then she came back once more to where Paul Jermyn was standing.

"My friend!" she cried, holding out her hands— "My dear, dear friend! Shall I ever be able to thank you enough?"

She laid her hand upon his arm—a little caressing, foreign gesture.

"Tell me," she said, "how did you manage it?"

"We left the dance together," Jermyn said. "I could see that he wanted to get rid of me, but I offered to take him in my motor car. I told the man to choose some back streets, and while we were passing through one of them, I took Von Hern by the throat. We had a struggle, of course, but I got the paper."

"What did you do with Von Hern?" she asked.

"I left him on his doorstep," the young American answered. "He wasn't really hurt, but he was only half conscious. I don't think he'll bother any one tonight."

"You dear, brave man!" she murmured "Paul, what am I to say to you?"

He laughed.

"That's what I'm here to ask," he declared. "You wouldn't give me my answer at the ball. Perhaps you'll give it me now"

They sprang apart. Ruff felt his nerves stiffen—felt himself constrained to hold even his breath as he widened a little the crack in the curtains. This was no stealthy entrance. The door had been flung open. Von Hern, his dress in wild disorder, pale as a ghost, and with a great blood stain upon his cheek, stood confronting them.

"When you have done with your love-making," he called out, "I'll trouble you to restore my property!"

The electric light gleamed from a small revolver which flashed out toward the young American. Paul Jermyn never hesitated for a moment. He seized the chair by his side and flung it at Von Hern. There was a shot, the crash of the falling chair, a cry from Jermyn, who never hesitated, however, in his rush. The two men closed. A second shot went harmlessly to the ceiling. The little lady stole away—stole softly across the room toward the table. She opened the drawer. Suddenly the blood in her veins was frozen with fear. From nowhere, it seemed to her, came a hand which held her wrists like iron!

Her screams rang through the room. Even the two men released one another.

"It is gone! It is gone!" she cried. "Some one was hiding in the room. Quick!"

She sprang into the hall. The two men followed her. The front door was slammed. They heard flying footsteps outside. Von Hern was out first, clearing the little flight of steps in one bound. Across the road he saw a flying figure. A long stream of fire poured from his hand—twice, three times. But Peter Ruff never faltered. Round the corner he tore. The man had kept his word—the brougham was already moving slowly.

"Jump in, sir," the man cried. "Throw yourself in. Never mind amout the door."

They heard the shouts behind. Peter Ruff did as he was bid, and sat upon the floor, raising himself gradually to the seat when they had turned another corner. Then he put his head out of the window.

"Back to the Duchess of Montford's!" he ordered.

The latest of the guests had ceased to arrive—a few were already departing. It was an idle time, however, with the servants who loitered in the vestibules of the Montford House, and they looked with curiosity upon this strange guest who arrived at five minutes to 2, limping a little and holding his left arm in his right hand. One footman on the threshold nearby addressed him, but the words were taken out of his mouth when he saw Lady Mary and her brother—the Honorable Maurice Sotherst—hasten forward to greet him.

Peter Ruff smiled upon them benignly.

"You can take the paper out of my breast-coat pocket," he said.

The young man's fingers gripped it. Through Lady Mary's thankfulness, however, the sudden fear came shivering.

"You are hurt!" she whispered. "There is blood on your sleeve."

"Just a graze," Peter Ruff answered. "Van Hern wasn't much good at a running target. Back to the ball room, young man," he added. "Don't you see who's coming?"

The Prime Minister came up the tented way into Montford House. He, too, wondered a little at the man whom he met on his way out, holding his left arm, and looking more as though he had emerged from a street fight than from the Duchess of Montford's ball.

Peter Ruff went home smiling.

THE COUNTRY BOY'S ADVANTAGE.

There is a peculiar quality of superiority which comes from dealing with realities that we do not find in the superficial city conditions, says Orison Swett Marden in Success Magazine. The life-giving oxygen breathed in great inspirations through constant muscular effort, develops in the country boy much greater lung power than is developed in the city youth, and his outdoor work tends to build up a robust constitution. Plowing, hoeing, mowing, every thing he does on the farm gives him vigor and strength. His muscles are harder, his flesh firmer, and his brain-fibre partakes of the same superior quality. He is constantly bottling up forces, storing up energy in his brain and muscles which later may be powerful factors in shaping the nation's destiny or which may furnish backbone to keep the ship of state from floundering on the rocks. This marvelous reserve power which he stores up in the country will come out in the successful banker, statesman, lawyer, merchant, or business man.

GOVERNMENT AWAITS VOTE ON HARBOR BRIDGE

(Continued from page 3.)

The bill does not provide for the unseating or disqualification of a candidate.

Mr. Maxwell opposed the passing of the act without its being printed, but Hon. Mr. Robinson pointed out that unless there was a general election before the next session the act could be amended then. The purity league of Westmorland were anxious for it to pass. The bill was passed unanimously without being printed or even read.

Under a bill brought in today and passed, it will be possible for persons intending marriage to have their banns published one or more times, according to the custom of their denomination, and further, that a form of certificate must be attached to every marriage license which is to be filled out, and also forms must be provided by municipalities upon which returns of marriages can be made.

Mr. Burchill divided the house unexpectedly when the bill to guarantee bonds of the Southampton Railway was being read a third time. He moved the three months hoist. There were many members from both sides of the house absent, but Burchill, Copp, Bryne, Currie, Legere, Sweeney voted against the measure, and twenty-one opposition members and LaBillois voted in favor of it.

Bills Introduced.

Fredericton, N. B., April 12—Hon. Mr. McLeod moved that the fee paid on the introduction of the New Brunswick Hydro-Electric Power Company's bill be returned to the promoters, as the bill had not been recommended.

Hon. Mr. Hazen said that although he did not wish to oppose this motion, he thought the practice of returning fees on bills which did not meet with favor should not be adopted by this legislature. There might be exceptional cases when a fee should be returned but he did not favor the practice. He also pointed out that there was a rule of the house that if a bill was not recommended at one session, and was introduced again at the next, the fee payable on the second introduction would be only $10.

Hon. Mr. Hazen introduced a bill respecting enquiries as to corrupt practices at elections of members of the legislative assembly.

Hon. Mr. McLeod introduced a bill to amend the act incorporating the St. John Valley Railway Company.

Hon. Mr. Hazen introduced a bill to amend the act incorporating the Sackville and Westmorland Agricultural Society. He explained that the bill was introduced to remove all doubts as to the legal status of the society which had been incorporated under another name in 1852, but had carried on its business as an agricultural society of late years under its present name.

Hon. Mr. Hazen introduced a bill to amend the Workman's Compensation act. He explained that the object of the bill was to correct errors in previous acts and make provision for the collection of damages ordered paid to employes under previous acts.

Hon. Mr. Flemming submitted the supplementary estimates.

House went into committee on supply, with Mr. Sproul in the chair.

Hon. Mr. Flemming explained that the first item was for $200 for bringing up the salaries of two engrossing clerks, $100 each.

There was also an amount of $178, being an additional amount to meet the services of the sergeant-at-arms and other officials of the legislature who were paid by the day.

An additional $1,000 was included, being an additional amount for services made necessary by the extra length of the session. There was also an item of $500 to be paid the estate of the late Thomas Robison as deceased's indemnity for this session. There was also an item of $200 to provide for a gratuity to Mrs. Robert Burns, widow of the late caretaker of the Suspension bridge, St. John. Honorable members would remember that Mr. Burns lost his life under very distressing circumstances.

The last item was for $1,000 to provide for the expenses of searching for the brown tailed moth. He explained that the expense in this connection would be entailed very largely in giving lectures with illustrations, showing school children and others the exact appearance of the nests of brown tailed moths in order that they might go out and look for them. The agricultural department is arranging to carry on this work and will have the co-operation of the department of agriculture, Ottawa. The agricultural department is arranging to pay prizes to children finding nests.

The items of the supplementary estimates were all agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Flemming introduced a bill to provide for repairs and improvements of roads and bridges and other public services.

Hon. Mr. Flemming introduced a bill for the defraying of expenses of civil government of the province.

The house went into committee with Mr. Sproul in the chair and agreed to the two last mentioned bills.

The house went into committee, Mr. Wilson in the chair.

The bill to enable the inhabitants of the town of Dorchester, in the county of Westmoreland, to assess themselves for fire protection and street lighting and to give them certain other powers, was agreed to as amended.

The bill to amend the act amending the act of incorporating the St. John Valley Railway Company and relating to Sackville and Westmorland Society were agreed to.

After these bills were reported the house went into committee, Mr. Sproul in the chair, and agreed to the bill to amend the New Brunswick Elections act with amendments.

The house took recess at 6 o'clock.

Hydro-Power Bill Thrown Out.

Fredericton, N. B., April 12—Principally because there were no plans and specifications of the proposed power works at Lepreaux, the Hydro-Electric power bill was thrown out by the corporations committee this morning. The division was 12 against and 8 for. Premier Hazen Hon. Messrs. Flemming and Maxwell voted for recommending the bill to the house, while Hon. Mr. Grimmer and the other Charlotte county members were against it. Among those who appeared in support of the measure was A. R. Gould, of trolley railways fame; J. E. Wilson, of St. John, who introduced the bill in the legislature, held to his contention in the house yesterday that the plans and specifications must accompany applications for power privileges.

The same sad fate awaited the bill incorporating Wm. C. Van Horne and F. S. Pearson and others as the Manganese Company, with power to purchase everything but the moon. The committee gave this bill short consideration and speedy death.

LOBSTERS SCARCE AND EXPENSIVE

According to at least one of the wholesale fish dealers in St. John, the lobster fisheries of the Bay of Fundy have become so depleted that there is no longer much profit in them. So far this year the local market has been bare of the crustaceans, and the reason he gave was that the fishermen did not set their traps this spring as usual.

On the other hand, some of the dealers are inclined to think that the local shortage may in a measure be caused by the present high prices obtainable in the United States. The other day it was said the captain of one of the bay steamers disposed of three barrels of lobsters at the rate of sixty cents a pound. These went to the Boston market. At all events whatever is the reason of it, lobsters, as one man remarked, are just now "like good watches."

There is no immediate prospect of the price of salt fish falling off any. It is not likely that there will be any change for at least another month. In the meantime, fresh fish are also scarce, owing to the backward nature of the spring.

MORE BROWN-TAIL MOTHS DISCOVERED IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Dr. Saunders of the entomological department, Ottawa, is at present in Charlotte county inquiring into the late appearance of the brown tail moth in that locality. Since the discovery of the nests of the pest at Pomeroy Ridge, as reported in The Telegraph, a systematic search has been made with the result that the caterpillars have been found in other parts of Charlotte county. Every effort will be made to keep the brown tail moth from becoming such a scourge as it has been in the New England states.

NORTH SHORE HORSES DROWNED THROUGH ICE

Newcastle, April 10—On Saturday there were very many accidents upon the ice. Alex. Parks, of Upper Derby, hauling a load of shingles, lost his team, harness and sleds through the ice off Sheriff O'Brien's mill, Nelson. His loss was about $500. He had refused $400 for the two horses alone.

Joseph Hubbard, of Redbank, going home from Newcastle the same day lost a horse off the Sinclair mill, near the Northwest bridge. When the animal was pulled out of the water it was dead. Mr. Hubbard's loss is about $200. The same afternoon the horse belonging to Daniel Aiton, of Redbank, went in near Hickson's mill, and was rescued with great difficulty by millmen who went to the rescue, and David J. Buckley came very near losing his horse off Lynch's mill. There were also several accidents off Chatham. The ice is very unsafe.

MARITIME CUSTOMS OFFICERS MEET IN ANNUAL SESSION

Delegation Appointed to Press Their Claims on Government for Increased Salaries.

Moncton, N. B., April 12—A convention of custom officers, called to meet in Moncton, was held in the supreme court chambers this evening with thirty or forty present. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Collector Baker, Amherst; first vice-president, Collector P. J. Veniot, Bathurst; second vice-president, Collector Geo. Godkin, Summerside; secretary-treasurer, Geo. Watt, Chatham. The executive is composed of officers and collectors of Halifax, Moncton, Charlottetown and McAdam.

The matter of salaries occupied an important place in the discussion, and the following were appointed a delegation to proceed to Ottawa and endeavor to secure from the minister of customs increases of salaries commensurate with the increased cost of living and more nearly equal to the amount paid for similar services in business houses; P. J. Veniot, Geo. Watt, S. Harding, W. J. Hoyt, A. C. Currie and Collector Campbell, Sydney.

Collector A. T. Dunn, St. John, was temporary chairman until the election of officers, after which Vice-President Veniot took the chair.

The new organization is called the Association of Customs Officers of the Maritime Provinces. A vote of thanks was extended to Mayor Reilly for the use of the meeting room. The delegates will return home tomorrow.

A slice of bacon cooked with spinach or other greens gives a delightful seasoning.

SUPREME COURT APPEAL MATTERS

Fredericton, N. B., April 11—The supreme court met this morning with all the judges present. Clerk T. C. Allen was absent on account of illness. The following common motions were made: In the matter of the International Railway Company of N. B., and in the matter of the New Brunswick Railway Company and in the matter of the New Brunswick Railway Act, Phinney, K. C., moved on behalf of the International Railway Company for a rule fixing date for payment and distribution of certain amounts paid into court under arbitration.

Mr. Taylor said that he was present on behalf of the N. B. Railway Company to move for distribution of the same amount and read a petition of the International Railway Company. They stated on behalf of the N. B. Railway Company that the company is willing to abandon the claim for anything above the amount paid into court. The court ordered the amount to be paid to the N. B. Company in full for their claim and further considers as to the costs.

Ex parte Thos. F. Dixon and thirty-three others, Teed, K. C., moved for a rule nisi. A writ of mandamus was directed to Chas. D. Shaw and others, commissioners of sewers of Hopewell parish, Albert county, commanding them to make an assessment on certain marsh lands under Chapter 179 Con. Statutes for the purpose of paying applicants for work and labor done for the commissioners. A rule nisi for mandamus was granted returnable on the 21st inst.

PREFERED THE RARE.

Bix—So Hollins had a fire in his library. Much damage?

Dix—Well, all his rare books are well done, now.