

April 18, 1872

ACCOUNTS PAID FOR CONFIDENTIAL PRINTING

Mr. YOUNG moved for copies of all accounts paid or received for confidential printing from date of last return.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (Cornwall) said it was the habit of some hon. members to place on paper, notices of motions, calling for all manner of information. It would be more satisfactory in many cases if hon. gentlemen would ask for such information from the Committee of Public Accounts. Such demands made upon Government were really useless. He had some experience in such matters. They gave much trouble, were printed in an appendix, altogether lost sight of, and costly.

Mr. YOUNG thought the hon. gentleman, to use an expression he had heard made use of on the other side of the House, was barking up the wrong tree. There was certainly some truth in what had been said by the hon. member from Cornwall, (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) but if he had been in his place oftener than he was during last Session he would have known that a great improvement had taken place in the manner of getting printing done. Setting aside the plan proposed by the Printing Committee of giving everything, in the way of printing, out by contract, the Government had given the Confidential Printing without any contract whatever, and the House should know what is being paid for the work. He believed the amount was larger than ought to be paid. He was aware that the member for Cornwall was of a very economical turn of mind, but it was often the case that economy was carried too far.

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RETURNS OF CUSTOMS AT HUDSON'S BAY

Mr. YOUNG moved to know whether customs duties had been collected in James Bay, into which two or more vessels yearly entered to take off furs and bring in English goods. He believed no duties had been collected.

Hon. Mr. TILLEY said that the duties could not be collected without authority, but the information which the hon. gentleman sought for would be given.

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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA

Hon. Mr. HOWE:—Committee of the Whole for Friday next to consider resolution for the appropriation of the sum of forty-five thousand dollars annually, for the term of five years, to defray the expenses of the Geological Survey of Canada.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE wanted to know why this money was required for five years. He was aware it had been done before, but that was no reason. There was no money that he would more cheerfully give, but he thought that the granting of this money should not for so long a period be granted, and so dispense, as it

were, with the yearly action of Parliament in the matter of a money grant.

Hon. Mr. HOWE intimated that the officers employed in the Survey were only employed for a limited period, and it was to give them some assurance that their services would be retained.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE thought the geological staff should form a part of the Civil Service.

Mr. MILLS wanted to know whether the Geological Survey had been placed under control of the Provinces as the mines and lands belonged to them.

Hon. Mr. HOWE thought it better that the Dominion should retain the charge of the Survey as they were in a better position than the Provinces to secure the best scientific men.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said that the suggestion of the member for Lambton (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) that the geological staff should be put on the staff of the Civil Service was worthy of consideration, as the work would extend over many years.

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INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY

Mr. JONES (Leeds North and Grenville North) moved for correspondence respecting the Intercolonial Railway Bridge to be constructed across the Miramichi River. It had been stated in the newspapers that a number of engineers had been called upon by the Commissioners to determine the proper foundation for the bridge over the Miramichi River. According to the last Return there were 55 engineers and four commissioners, and they ought to be sufficient to determine an engineering question of this kind without calling in outside assistance. The Commissioners did not appear to have confidence in their chief engineer. The general extravagance in connection with the railway was a result of the appointment of Commissioners totally incompetent to perform their work. From the first they had been at variance with the Chief Engineer, and a kind of civil war had been going on between them.

Hon. Mr. McDUGALL (Lanark North) said a good deal of discussion had taken place as to whether a safe foundation could be obtained by the bridge, and he believed various experiments had been made, and that it was now ascertained on the authority of able engineers that a foundation of any strength could be had. He wished to ascertain if this were so.

Mr. WALSH explained that when the contracts had been given out it had been on the understanding that rock would be found at a certain depth. What had been supposed rock, however, proved to be gravel and sand, and it had then been considered by the Government and the Commissioners that the advice of engineers not connected with the work should be called in. They had reported that though the foundation was not rock it was perfectly safe and