

an invitation that if done in a plausible way, it would be admitted. Mr. Freeland is ready for the occasion, and he does not allow many hours to pass until he indites a letter and sends it back saying :

First. That we confirm your understanding that the company would be as well pleased if the stamped envelopes were withdrawn from the proposed contract.

Why shouldn't they ? There is nothing in it for them. New machinery would have to be brought and kept, and the best they could get out of it would be the interest on the cost of it—nothing to be made. Yes, they say, we would be pleased if you would just withdraw that from the contract.

Second. In compliance with your request that we furnish a statement of the terms on which we will supply certain inland revenue stamps in larger quantities, if required, we would say that, over and above the quantities of same in the printed specifications, and multiplied by 5, on which, on November 23rd, 1896, is based, we will supply from the same plates at the following rates per 1,000 stamps for the term of the contract.

And they give a schedule of prices. I will not go into that.

Third.—

This is the important point.

Third. We are pleased to know that our understanding of the printed specifications is correct, as to obtaining elsewhere papers, inks, colours, or the ordinary tools of the engraving trade, steel rolls and steel plates ; as the language of the specifications is such that a different construction might have been intended ; and stating also that the only point in which our conditions seem to conflict with the terms of the specifications is in respect to the dies, and asking, if we attach any importance to the making of these outside of Canada, to give fuller information on the subject.

Then follows the information.

But, Sir, one of the aims of this present Government from 1878 up, and of the old Government preceding it, was to cultivate and establish here in the Dominion of Canada a force of men of sufficient skill and sufficient working power to make for us our currency in the engraving and in the mechanical execution as well. The mechanical execution, when you have the machine and the machine-like men, is nothing compared with that skilful and ingenious and unfrequent talent of doing the nice work of the engraver, of being able to design for yourself, transfer that design to the steel and make the dies. What follows after that is all mechanical. If the Minister of Finance does not know that, five minutes spent in the establishment will tell him that the work after the design is on the steel, is mechanical. The die is, if hon. gentlemen know it, and most of them do, I suppose—I am sorry that I have not one here—the die is the first product of the engraver's skill. He makes his design, be it a beautiful maiden, or a ship

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at sea, or some pregnant ideal. The engraver goes to work with his plates, his steel, and the tools of his trade, and he transfers that image or design, by patient work, taking from two to eight weeks to perform it properly, and at a cost which will run from \$150 to \$1,000 for the skilled work alone of transferring that to the steel, which is the die. After that all you have to do is to harden the die, transfer it to the soft steel roll, and transfer that again, by the same mechanical process to the plate, and then print off your stamps, bills or whatever they are. The essential work is done by the engraver, but this product of the engraver is simply a tool of the trade, according to the argument of Mr. Freeland, which has been admitted by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance. But, Sir, from the moment that the New York concern got the Minister's consent to have that work done in New York, from that very moment there is no heart or soul in that business in Canada, there is simply the work of a machine which turns off from the die, which is the product of the engraver's skill, simply the mechanical product. Well, they go on to argue that out. I could follow their argument, but I will not. It is apparent to every member of this House that a die is not a tool of the trade, and does not belong to that category. What do they say ? Enough to make the Finance Minister's blood boil, or ought to have made it boil, at least :

It being this company's intention to prepare the work in the highest style of the art, the limitation of the use of such talent as is procurable within the Dominion, would be detrimental to our intention. Such talent is not resident in Canada, nor obtainable in the market, while the portrait, vignette and lathe work engravers of the parent establishment could be employed here with much greater efficiency, each in their several branches, in executing the original and preparatory work, immediately under the personal supervision of the officers of the company ; nor would it be wise to dismount and move to Ottawa the extremely delicate machinery which we propose to use, for the short term of five or six months required to produce all the original dies and matrices for the entire contract term of five years.

I ask the members of this House to examine the work of their Dominion bills, to examine the work of the bank bills of this country, to go down to that establishment and examine the dies and the prints from them, and to say whether there is talent in Canada, and resident to-day in Ottawa, which is able to do fine work. I say that the Finance Department had found no fault, I say that the style of the art is good, equally as good in quality, it is well executed, and there are native Canadians to-day doing that work in that establishment, and who can successfully compete with the men in the parent establishment in the city of New York. But, Sir, it is not for the Finance Minister of this country, when he is engaged in the important work of seeing