

The Toronto World

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TRUST FUNDS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Why should any official appointed to receive money on behalf of the people or the government be allowed to keep in his own hands for a single day?

Surely enough defalcations have occurred to compel the adoption of a plan which would protect the public. If a man is appointed to collect public moneys the cheques ought to be made payable to somebody or someone other than the recipient.

Take the case of Mr. McDougall, whose handling of the succession duties is now called in question. Why should any cheque have been made payable to him on account of succession duties?

The rule should have been that this money be payable to the order of the Treasurer of the province of Ontario, and as such should have gone immediately into the bank account of the province.

It looks now as if Mr. McDougall was in the habit of receiving this money to his own order and depositing it in his own account, and then checking some or all of it to the government's credit when he saw fit. Take the case of the money paid in to a collector of customs. As a matter of fact, the collector never handles it. It is paid in over the receiving clerk's desk by a marked cheque, which is deposited that day to the credit of the government of Canada in a bank appointed for that purpose.

A similar rule should prevail in regard to all public officials who have public moneys passing through their hands. No cheque should be made payable to his order, but to the municipality or the government or other public concern to which it is due, and forthwith deposited in the regular bank of the body entitled to it.

CANADIAN AND ALL-BRITISH PRESS SERVICE

Premier Burt's of Australia, while in Toronto, wanted to know why it was that the Canadian press did not join together and secure an independent news service from Great Britain and other parts of the empire.

He commented on the fact that Canadian cable news comes, at present, through a tainted channel—that it is, in fact, prepared primarily for Yankee consumption, and is not, therefore, creditable from the Canadian standpoint.

There is a good deal of ground for the Antipodean statesman's remarks. Much of the cable information received at New York and rehashed for Canada deals with matters of interest to United Statesers but of little interest to citizens of this country.

What is worse, the service thus obtained too often shows an anti-British and anti-Canadian bias, and not infrequently, misrepresents events of vital national and Imperial weight.

The subject raised by the chief of the Australian Commonwealth has come in for considerable discussion in this country, but apasmodic agitation has realized no tangible results. It seems to The World that the time has arrived when action should be taken to secure a national cable news service. In course of time, the biased news at present emanating from New York is bound to have an unfortunate influence upon Canadian public opinion, and the Canadian press owes it to the Canadian people to give them a wholesome and reliable cable news.

There was a time when Canada was not able financially to pay for such a service, but, in her present wealthy condition, this excuse cannot be advanced. The Victoria (B. C.) Times discusses the question in these words:

In the early days of the Dominion, when there were only a few daily papers, and these published in less than half a dozen cities, the question was merely one of expense. They simply could not afford to maintain a cable news service, and, to obtain a report of the events of the day, were compelled to purchase the news of the Associated Press, which, as it came from the special cables of the great American dailies and distributed among the papers of all parts of this continent. In those days, the cost of spicing news according to the assumed taste of the reader had not been ascertained. The facts were given, the student of public affairs being left to read into them whatever meaning his particular prejudice, coloring, or interest might suggest.

Now, in the days of the Associated Press, a different system of handling its news has now been adopted. Whoever writes the news may take it to the value of the news it supplies to Canadian papers, there is no questioning the fact that it is a thoroughly up-to-date and reliable source of information.

But, while the Associated Press is an admirable institution from the point of view of the class it is specially designed to serve, it has no claim to the name of a national news service. It is a creature of the United States, and its news is adapted to the tastes and prejudices of the American people.

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PAID BY THE WORLD

The statement has been made in the papers and not contradicted that the pay to the highest of the guards at Toronto Asylum is only \$25 a month.

It is a disgrace to the government, and particularly to Mr. Stratton, in whose department it comes. I have no personal interests to serve, but knowing the kind and careful treatment accorded patients, it seems to me more just to an educated, trustworthy and deserving class of officials, their work requires long hours, vigilance, night and day, and an extraordinary amount of patience and tact to deal with the vagaries of inmates. In view of this, it is false economy and injustice to give them such small pay as they now receive.

Toronto, Oct. 1.

Justice.

THE BOOK YERKES SHOULD WRITE

Chicago Record-Herald: It is reported that friends of Mr. Charles T. Yerkes are urging him to write a book on the subject of the telephone system in Toronto.

Mr. Yerkes himself is quoted as saying: "Yes, British adherence to tradition and repugnance to establishing precedent are the chief reasons why a man who has spent two years in accomplishing what he has been accused of doing should not be allowed to write a book on the subject."

The accomplishment referred to is the extension of the telephone system in Toronto, but the book might reveal British stupidity in a high degree.

Mr. Yerkes has greater opportunities as an author. He could write a much more interesting and instructive, and, in fact, a national volume on his early experiences in Chicago, and his subsequent exposition of the swift and easy method which he employed when British conservatism did not look the way.

And this work would be of historical importance. It would not concern Chicago alone but would be an illuminating treatise on the telephone system in the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A frank statement of facts from Mr. Yerkes would be worth more than the most laborious disquisitions of the professional writers of history.

MUNICIPAL TELEPHONES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Editor World: A writer to The Pall Mall Gazette recently endeavored to show that the municipal telephone systems in London and Glasgow have been unsuccessful, and as his letter has been published in a Toronto paper, it will be of interest to your readers to know how erroneous and misleading are the statements contained in the article.

With regard to London: The initial cost of the undertaking was \$48,700 and the area covered 250 square miles, the average charge to subscribers being \$22.27 per annum, but the subscribers' numbers have increased to 650,000, and the municipality made a profit of \$100,000 in the first year.

In Glasgow, the municipality made a profit of \$121,750. The fact that these additional subscribers were granted, after an exhaustive investigation by the government inspectors, and the fact that the National Telephone Company, which has a few friends or stockholders in the city, has been supplied with letters of complaint. I will, however, quote the following: "The service generally has proved acceptable to subscribers. It is apparent that the rapidly with which new orders have been received. There are, however, some complaints, but these are the result of the great increase in orders and the eagerness for early connection exhibited by the public."

The best proof, however, that the service is acceptable is the fact that there are now over 7000 subscribers, and a series of letters from the public, in the columns of a Toronto paper, to misleading statements on this subject. The writer of the article in the Toronto paper should have an opportunity of judging how much reliance is to be placed on the statements of the monopolies who oppose municipal ownership, written by the friends of the National Telephone Company.

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