

Meacham replied that when he and Mr. Ross were teachers there were such systems of examinations, and the teacher was judged by his general work.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross—There always were examinations for admission to the High Schools.

Dr. Meacham—There were practically no examinations in the Public Schools.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross—The hon. gentleman is mistaken; there never was a time when there was no such examination.

Dr. Meacham reiterated his charge that the moment a child got through the examination it was an encumbrance to the school in trying the same examination. In his own experience a book class had been refused by a

Hon. Geo. W. Ross—The fifth form has never been abolished, theoretically or practically.

Dr. Meacham said that there was a great decrease in the numbers attending it. In 1870 there were some 70,000 pupils in it.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross—No, no.

Dr. Meacham replied that he thought that was the case, while now there are but 8,000. This point got over, Dr. Meacham went on to criticize the timber administration, and got into a trouble with Hon. A. S. Hardy over an assertion that Mr. F. W. Fitzgerald, the surveyor, got an annual income of some \$15,000 on an average. Mr. Hardy promptly pointed out that Mr. Fitzgerald is really a contractor, and out of his sum hires six or seven men, and bears all the expenses of the surveys.

Dr. Meacham then drew his speech to a close, concluding with some criticisms of the Agricultural College and the Government's treatment of the liquor license funds.

THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

When Dr. Meacham concluded Hon. Mr. Gibson rose to continue the debate, the Liberals giving him a hearty cheer. He had not risen to treat the whole subject at issue, he said, but to give some information upon one or two points which had been misapprehended and regarding which a number of erroneous statements had been made. This proved to be a critical review of Mr. Marter's attack upon the system of purchasing supplies for public institutions, and a carefully worked out analysis it was. A complimentary reference to Mr. Marter and to Mr. Howland opened his speech, the Provincial Secretary remarking that he would have been more pleased if Mr. Howland had entered on the side heretofore to his family. He also remarked that Mr. Howland a few days before had been asking for the public accounts on the ground that the debate was a public audit, but yet in his speech had made little or no reference to the public accounts.

MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE.

Mr. Gibson then turned to the expenditure upon the maintenance of public institutions. Hon. gentlemen opposite had charged that the system of purchasing supplies for these institutions was wrong, and that while maintenance cost \$763,000 per annum, from 10 to 25 per cent. of this was wasted by the system. This, he said, was entirely misleading and unworthy of the gentlemen of the Opposition when put forward in that bald and misleading way. In 1893 some \$763,000 was spent for maintenance, but it was never explained by the hon. gentlemen opposite that of this sum \$252,000 was paid for the salaries of attendants and employees. The sum was almost a third of the whole sum with regard to which it could not be pretended that the competitive system could be adopted. There was no other method open to the Government, for the engagement of officers could not be effected by public competition. Another class of items was the amount actually paid for supplies bought under contract, such as coal, butter, flour, oatmeal, etc., which amounted to \$189,000; deducting these items only some \$221,000 was left, the amount on which a large saving, according to hon. gentlemen opposite, was gradually coming down. There was yet another large item of expenditure which was purchased in the manner which had often been explained in the House and which had met with the approval of both sides. It was the item of meat. The supplies of this important article were purchased by special arrangement by an officer of the Government who was engaged for that purpose to purchase cattle which were supplied to the various institutions, and were butchered by their own employees. This was only in the

larger institutions, for in such institutions as the Penetanguishene Reformatory, the Deaf and Dumb Institute and the Institute for the Blind this method would not pay, and the meat was there purchased by tender. This method not only paid as regarded the price, but also secured a good quality of healthy and wholesome meat. The cost of the meat was below the wholesale price, and infinitely below the price if purchased in the ordinary way, even when the salary of the butchers and other officials was taken into account. This item amounted to \$59,000, so that there was but \$262,000 left to consider as to the method of procuring supplies.

A LARGE REDUCTION.

But of the supplies purchased with this sum by no means all could be purchased by the tender system. Amongst these were medicines and medical comforts, which amounted to \$4,916 77; gas and light, which were generally arranged with the municipalities, and which amounted to \$15,425 24; water supply, which cost \$8,700 25; furniture and renewals, for which it was impossible to call for tenders as the nature of the repairs could not be anticipated, so that many articles would have to be tendered for which would not be needed, and this item was \$10,386 04. Next there were repairs, which amounted to \$22,542 07, and which were for such things as would arise around a farm and for which the labor of the patients was often utilized or mechanics brought in from time to time. Besides these there were the travelling expenses of officers, \$925 37; recovering escaped inmates, \$394 10; freights and duties for supplies purchased, \$1,709 12; amusements, \$1,357 60; schools and religious instruction, \$4,318 05; incidentals, \$800 08; removal of patients, \$314 35; interments, \$187 50; and unenumerated, \$395. Taking all these together the sum by which the \$262,000 would have thus to be diminished was \$97,419 25, reducing it very considerably.

THE TENDER SYSTEM.

Then there was another class of goods which might be cited. Amongst them might be enumerated:—iron and tinware, \$2,480 31; hardware and glass, \$4,999 87; crockery and glassware, \$2,360 30; ice, \$1,246 96; feed and fodder, \$15,311 01; straw for beds, \$954 05; making a total of \$27,352 50. Iron, tinware, crockery, glassware, glass and hardware, Mr. Gibson said, were purchased a few pieces, or, oftener, a single piece, at a time, as required, to replace similar pieces worn out or broken. In variety they extended over nearly the whole catalogue of these goods. To purchase them by contract was simply impracticable, because to do so it would be necessary in the notice calling for tenders to print nearly the whole of several trade catalogues, and without being able to specify, except in a very few articles, even approximately, quantities wanted. In the case of ice, no one could predict the crop, or where it might be necessary to go for the supply, and persons tendering would necessarily have to do so under conditions not favorable to economy in purchasing. In the case of feed, mixtures were various, such as with mill-sweepings, oat hulls and the hulls from split-peas, and to purchase these by contract would involve a never-ending source of disputes and with no absolute test that would be practicable in settling them. In the case of fodder and straw, these were mostly purchased from farmers in the neighborhood of the institutions, and no one farmer could, as a rule, supply the whole quantity needed. If bought by contract the supply, instead of being obtained from the producer, would fall to the middleman at an increased cost.

Yet another class might be given. Mr. Gibson went on, in which a system of tender would be impracticable; such were the items of: Clothing, \$31,434 42; boots and shoes, \$11,109 76; bedding, \$8,753 67, and brushes, brooms and mops, \$3,620 14, making a total of \$54,917 98. The articles in this list, the Minister explained, are mostly manufactured by the inmates of the institutions, and supplied by the one institution to the other, being charged up by the one to the other. The industries at the Central Prison manufacture a large proportion of these supplies or the material for them, and obviously there could be no advantage in covering them by contract.

Now, Mr. Gibson went on, when all these deductions had been made, the balance of \$82,325 remained, which was really the common fighting ground of the Government and of the Opposition, and he wished the country to understand that the supplies which the Opposition contended should have been purchased by tender did not amount to \$763,000, but to some \$82,000. (Applause.)