

July 11/18

COUNCIL CHAMBER
City Hall, July 11th, 1918.

The Board of Control held an investigation into the disappearance of liquor from the office of Inspector Tracey in the City Hall, on Tuesday, July 9th. The Deputy-Mayor presiding.

The following statements were heard:--

James

~~THOMAS~~ LYNCH -- Caretaker City Hall --
To Controller Finlay --

- Q. What time do you close the doors of the City Hall at night, leading from Argyle Street and the Parade?
- A. Anywhere from 7.00 to 7.30.
- Q. Every night?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Locked?
- A. Yes.
- Q. They are locked every night except when there is a meeting?
- A. Yes.
- Q. On Tuesday night last when did you make your last rounds of the building?
- A. I came up the centre stairs at twenty minutes after eleven.
- Q. Did you notice any of the doors open then?
- A. No.
- Q. Could you say that the Inspector's door was closed then?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Were there any workmen here?
- A. No. They go at nine o'clock.
- Q. Did you try Mr. Tracey's door?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you find it open in the morning?

July 11/18

A. The plasterers found it open in the morning.

To The Deputy-Mayor --

Q. How do the plasterers get in in the morning?

A. They come in through the Police Station.

Q. What time do you open up?

A. Ten minutes to seven or seven o'clock.

Q. Who was down stairs first, you or the workmen?

A. I met the plasterers coming up on the first landing and I bid them good morning. I was going down the side stairs. I usually go to the lower offices and clean them first -- the police offices. This man told me when I came up that he thought I had been in there cleaning and had left it open. Since the explosion, if any of the officials come in to do any work if they dont slam the doors they wont close. You can get out, but you cant get in. They come in through the Police Station. The Library has not been open since the explosion.

Q. Do you know of any official working here in the Hall on Tuesday night?

A. No.

To Controller Finlay --

Q. You said that at eleven o'clock it was closed?

A. Yes.

To Controller Taylor --

Q. Did you ever find that door open before?

A. No. I never found it open.

Q. Did you ever hear of its being open?

A. Yes. Three weeks ago I was sweeping the Council Chamber and the Secretary of the Board of Health, Mr. Watters, said to me "Tracey has gone away and left his door open." I went out in the hall, and Officer Mulronev was walking up and down minding the place. That was twelve o'clock in the day.

Q. You do not know whether Mr. Tracey was in the building?

A. No. The door was open.

July 11/18

ARTHUR PETTIPAS, Asst. Secretary Board of Health --

To Controller Murphy --

Q. About ten days ago the door was open. Mr. Ross of the Acadian Recorder was there. I think it was in the morning. The City Solicitor came along a few minutes after. I said to Mukronev "You had better stay here or there may be some trouble" and he stayed there and then Mr. Tracey came up, and I said "Your door was open again" and he said "I could not have quite closed it. The catch is bad, and when I pulled it to it did not fasten." I think he remarked at that time that that was not the first time the door had not locked.

James

THOMAS LYNCH -- re-called --

To Controller Taylor --

Q. Was the fanlight in good condition?

A. No, the fanlight was broken in Tracey's door. It was fixed yesterday afternoon. The glass was all out and has been since the explosion. There was a piece of blind there.

To Controller Finlay --

Q. Were any of the other transoms out?

A. They were all out. I believe the contract only covers the outside of the building.

JOHN J. MUIRONEY --

To Controller Finlay --

Q. What do you know about the door?

A. Mr. Ross and I were talking and Mr. Ross said "Wouldn't I like to get in there", and he took the handle of the door and went in. He discovered that the door was open.

Q. That would be about what time?

A. During office hours.

To The Deputy-Mayor --

Q. You stood there?

A. He said "Let us try to close it" and I said "No, you leave that to me and I will look after this door, just to show this fellow" and I went to the 'phone and rang up the Chief of Police and he told me to stay there until further orders and I stayed there for an hour. I closed the door and came down stairs. Then I saw Tracey go up stairs and I ran up. The Recorder

July 11/18

was there. I said to Tracey "Your door was open."
He said "How did that open?"

To Controller Murphy?

Q. Is that all the conversation that passed
between Mr. Tracey and yourself?

A. I said "Your door is open, do you know that?"
He said "Go on" and I said "It was open and
I closed it."

To Controller Finlay?

Q. You closed it?

A. Yes, I closed it, and I said "See if anything
is missing." That would be yesterday fort-
-night.

To The Deputy- Mayor --

Q. Did you ever on any other occasion find the
door open?

A. No.

Mr. Mulroney asked to be permitted to make
a statement in regard to alleged searching
of his stores by Mr. Tracey.

(Not allowed).

EDWIN S. TRACEY --

To The Deputy Mayor --

Q. Can you explain this matter as it stands at
the present time?

A. I did not discover that my office had been
tampered with until about half-past three
yesterday. In the morning I did not come
direct to the office. I went down town first.
Then I attended the Court session, and went
upstairs about twelve o'clock. I opened the
door and got some papers out of my desk, and
rushed down to Mr. Murray's office and then
went to dinner. After dinner when I went to
the office and sat down to write I saw the
valises gone. I found that four newvalises
that I had seized at the depot some time pre-
-viously -- stuff that had been brought in
from Montreal - were gone. That would be
twenty gallons. One valise was left. It had
no handle to carry it by. There were two
cases of King George Scotch Whisky gone.
That was a case pending destruction. I am
not quite sure that there is not a ting of
over proof rum gone, that was lying around.
I then saw the Janitor and he said that the
door had been wide open at seven o'clock in
the morning. He said that the door had been
found open by the masons or workmen on that
floor at seven o'clock in the morning.

July 11/18

James

~~THOMAS~~ LYNCH -- recalled --

To Controller Murphy --

- Q. To whom did you report the fact that the door was open.
- A. I was ordered to report to you, but the first time I saw you was about half-past three yesterday afternoon.

Mr. TRACEY -- continuing --

The Janitor said he closed the door, not thinking there was anything wrong any more than the door being open. Just as I was leaving the Janitor was sweeping the hall and he came in with the dust pan in his hand and asked if there was anything missing and then he told me the particulars of the door being found open in the morning. Then I told Mr. Kennedy. The Chief was not in.

To Controller Murphy --

- Q. Do you know where the newspaper got the impression that when you approached the City Detective he was flurried?
- A. I saw the newspaper article. Mr. Kennedy and I spoke about it this morning.
- Q. Who was present when you interviewed the Detective?
- A. There was no one present.
- Q. Then necessarily anything that passed between you and Kennedy either one of you would have had to convey the impression?
- A. Exactly. Mr. Ross was the first man who had it. He came to me and I gave him particulars.

To The Deputy-Mayor --

- Q. When anything like that happens in the Hall to whom do you think the report should be made -- to the newspapers or to the persons who are representing the citizens? Don't you think the report should have been made to the Board of Control the first thing this morning?
- A. I reported to the Chief of Police last night.
- I always keep my door locked. I never use the little catch that allows the latch to go in and out. Last summer I used to leave it open so anyone could come in or out when I was there, but on one occasion I went away and left it open and since then I never use it. My door is locked whether I am in the office or not.

July 11/18

To Controller Murphy --

Q. That was not the case when I went in your office this morning?

A. The door was ajar when you came in this morning. Sometimes I leave it ajar when I am there. The little catch that releases the lock is never pressed back by me. I always make a point of trying the door when I leave. I came back one forenoon when the Council was in session and Mr. Mulroney met me and said the door was open. Mr. Ross also said it was open. I said that I had left it locked, and I found that the thumb latch had been moved. I accounted for that as I thought at the time that somebody coming out might have slipped up this little catch and of-course when I went out and closed the door it was not locked. I laid no blame to anybody for that. Since that time I always try the door. I left at ten o'clock Tuesday night and I shook the door two or three times before I left. I did not go back after ten o'clock, and could not say what transpired.

Q. Did you confer with the plasterer or mason who found the door open?

A. I did with one man, but he was not the man who reported to the Janitor.

FRANK HANRAHAN, Chief of Police, called --

The first I heard of the place being entered was when I saw it in the paper this morning. The valises would weigh I should say about 75 lbs. each. The weight I should say would be about 400 lbs.

To Controller Murphy --

Q. Did you have any impression that the room was entered through the transom?

A. My theory would be that it went through the door because it is a six-light transom. Part of the sash is left and if a man entered by the transom he would naturally pull that away because he would have to turn on that transom. He could not go down head first. He could not turn with this sharp edge.

To CONTROLLER TAYLOR --

Q. What is your theory about the door being open on a previous occasion?

A. It might have been turned inside by someone coming out that morning. They might have slipped the catch coming out.

July 11/18

Q. Closing the door you would not leave it open yourself?

A. Closing the door I would naturally think it was locked.

To CONTROLLER MYRPHY --

Q. Did you have the transom boarded?

A. Yes, yesterday.

Q. It did not suggest itself to you since the explosion that it might be well to have that done?

A. No.

To CONTROLLER TAYLOR --

Q. Do you want the impression to go out that someone got in there in the middle of the day and opened that door?

A. No. My door does not open with the knob turning. You have to turn the Yale lock as well. In doing that someone may have slipped the little latch, not knowing the mechanism of the lock.

Q. Would that be yourself?

A. No.

Q. Did you miss anything that day?

A. I think there was one bottle missing from the drawer, but I would not be positive of that.

Q. You would not yourself go out in a hurry and leave it open?

A. No. The only way in which I could account for it was that it might be somebody going out lifted the latch. Ever since I try the door every time.

HORACE KENNEDY, Detective, called --

I cannot throw any light on the question. The matter was reported to me yesterday at four o'clock by Mr. Tracey. He said the office had been entered and a quantity of liquor stolen. I questioned him as to when he was last in his office. He said about ten o'clock the night before. I asked him if he was sure he locked the door and he said yes, he was positive, and he said the Janitor had told him a short time before that the workmen had found the door open that morning. I went up with him and examined the door and I saw that the transom had been broken out and a ladder there were anyone in my opinion could have gone in through the transom. I then questioned the

July 11/18

workmen and the Janitor, and the plasterer Mr. Hodgson said he had found the door open yesterday morning at seven o'clock with the lock catch back. I have been doing all I can, but so far have not discovered anything.

To CONTROLLER FINLAY --

Q. Mr. Tracey said that it would be impossible for a man to get in through the transom without breaking part of it that is there now?

A. I could get through it. I am not saying that anyone did go through the transom, but they could. The ladder was outside.

That night the Deputy Chief's door was broken and Gray and Aitken, the officers on duty were instructed to be particularly vigilant. They were in there all night and they saw no one come in. Unless you pull the Argyle Street door it will not snap. I have opened that door at night and walked right through. It is very easy for anyone to go out and not lock the door. I have often gone through there late at night. (Referring to the newspaper article) I assure you I was not flustered.

Controller Murphy gave as his opinion that liquor should not be stored in the City Hall, but kept in a warehouse.

Mr. Tracey stated that a warehouse is used, but it has to be opened by a Customs Officer, and therefore cannot be entered at all times.

Inspector Tracey, the Chief of Police and Detective Kennedy were instructed to submit written statements on the matter.

WILLIAM EMMERSON, Electrician, called --

I came in about half-past eleven and went to the office first and then I went up-stairs. I was working up there until about a quarter to one. I was up and down from the work room to the office two or three times during that time and never heard anything. I came in through the Police Station and went out through the Argyle Street door. I am satisfied that the door was locked. Mr. Lynch asked me to try the door a second time and I always do. My office is on the same floor as Mr. Tracey's. I did not notice whether Mr. Tracey's office was open. I would hear anyone breaking in. You can hear every sound here at night time. There was no one else here. No office open. I would hear the moving of goods.

ADJOURNED.