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A WEAK SYSTEM.

The particular time at which a firm may join an alderman or civic official or other citizen in a friendly glass appears to have given some trouble to the members of the city council yesterday. Perhaps if the heads of all the civic departments were made more directly and fully responsible for everything, connected with their departments, and when an enquiry was thought necessary the heads and not the subordinates were called to account, there would be less aldermanic time wasted, and a better general service ensured.

This does not refer to the department of public safety any more than to others. The aldermen spend too much time wrangling over matters that should never reach the board room or council chamber at all.

LIGHTING THE CITY.

Mayor White yesterday set before the city council the possibilities of lighting the city with power to be provided by Silver Falls, or by the falls at Mispec. The question has been referred to a committee. His worship has evidently given careful consideration to the question, and the committee should do the same. The subject is one of much importance. If the city can do its own lighting as cheaply as it is now done by a company the argument is in favor of such a course, because the city would provide a good service. And if, as the mayor believes, the city can do the work cheaper, there is all the more reason for taking such a step as soon as it can properly be done. The present electric light service is very unsatisfactory as well as expensive.

BOARD OF TRADE.

Mr. H. B. Schofield, the new president of the board of trade, is a young and successful business man, who has given a good deal of attention to trade matters, especially in connection with trade between Canada and the West Indies. He may be counted on to urge upon the board a vigorous policy. The effort to increase the membership of the board should appeal to the business men of the city. The board has done much useful work in the past. In Halifax, the board of trade has largely increased its membership, associated itself with other organizations, and adopted what it terms "the forward movement." St. John also should have a forward movement, along similar lines. The next few years will be fraught with much that will be of importance to the welfare of this port, and an alert and progressive board of trade can do much to advance the city's interests.

STATE OWNED RAILWAYS.

State owned railways in Prussia appear to be a success. A recent Berlin cable says:-

"An official memorandum of the Prussian ministry of railways showing the growth of the state-owned system since 1879 compares the rates and the management with those of private owned lines in foreign countries. No figures are given concerning the United States lines, but this generalization is made: 'It is true that in the United States rates are generally lower, especially in through freight and bulk goods, than with us. Local charges are high, unequal and fluctuating and are so classified that shippers often are unable to determine in advance what the rate will be. Reductions, and increases often follow each other in rapid succession. This is a condition which is justly condemned by industrial and shipping people. The great number of insolvencies and foreclosures, sales of American railways which occur yearly down to the latest date, must not be forgotten in comparing the German with American railways.' The memorandum says that the Prussian rates per kilometre hauled have been reduced sixteen percent, since 1879, when Russia began to nationalize her roads. The existing rates are about two-thirds those in Great Britain, taking the London & North-eastern as a standard. The volume of freight in Prussia has increased 122 percent, and the gross receipts 227 percent."

VERY FUNNY.

The Star last evening printed the following editorial:-

It is reported that David Russell has a new scheme to upset the government by having so many of its supporters put in jail for libel that it will be in a minority in the house and will be forced to get out. Then a new government is to be formed with Pugsley as leader, Blair as High Chief Resigner and a few Russells as cabinet ministers. Dave, himself, it is said, is to be governor-general. It is also rumored that this scheme is but the preliminary of a far greater one which is to change the form of Canadian government to an unlimited monarchy with David the First as king, and a few of his royal friends and relatives as viceroys of the different provinces. Though each of these is to be paid a large salary, of

several millions a year—with pickings—it is calculated that it will be cheaper in the end than having a parliament with those awfully expensive and amazingly uncertain elections every little while.

Let there be some mistake about it, the public should be, and are hereby informed, that this allusion to "the Russells" is not made in a serious vein. It is a humorous paragraph. It is intended to be a joke. Whatever opinion friends of "the Russells" may have of this kind of humor, they must not assume that the Star meant to be other than brilliant in its deliverance.

This explanation is given in all kindness, because if all the friends of "the Russells" should cease buying the Star, that journal would have to tell a much bigger "whopper" the next time it issued a circulation statement.

The Globe, on the other hand, refers to Mr. David Russell in a somewhat contemptuous vein, but is less outspoken than on a former occasion, when it was glad to apologise for its references to that gentleman.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

President Roosevelt, in his message to congress today, made no reference to the tariff or to reciprocity. After touching upon the prosperity of the country he took up the question of capital and labor, and the new problems arising, and expressed the view that labor organizations were wise and often necessary, to secure the rights of the wage earner. But he protested against violence or mob rules as intolerable under any circumstances. Dealing with great corporations, the president said they could only be effectively controlled by federal, and not state authority. Great corporations were necessary, but the public interest should be guarded by legislation. The president urged the need of legislation to prevent railroad accidents. He would limit the hours of labor of train men, employ only experienced men in responsible positions, and adopt the block system. With regard to railroad rates, all rebates should be stopped, and the interstate commerce commission given full power to revise rates and regulations. A national quarantine law, an improved currency system, the encouragement of the merchant marine by congress, a law against bribery and corruption at elections, and action to prevent delays and obstruction of justice were other reforms urged by the president. He held that Alaska should have a representative in congress, and governmental methods in that territory improved. With regard to foreign policy, he pointed out that it was essential to keep up the army and navy in a state of fitness to command respect. National disarmament is out of the question until some method is devised for international control over offending nations. The desirability of securing arbitration treaties was touched upon, and the proposed second Hague conference, in which he had asked other nations to join. The president denied that the United States felt any land hunger or entertained any project with regard to other nations, save such as was for their welfare. No nation acting with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters need fear any interference from the United States. Chronic wrong doing or impotence might ultimately provoke intervention by a civilized nation, in America as elsewhere.

On the whole, the president's address is without a single sensational feature, and does not contain any allusions at all calculated to provoke criticism on the part of other nations.

A caustic-tongued conservative said today that the nominations of the liberal candidates for the local house reminded him of Kipling's poem, "The Cruisers," where he terms them "the choosers of the slain."—(Toronto News.)

Unless the Japanese get busy very soon the world will begin to think that there is something in the Russ as an contention that Kuropatkin and Stoessel are getting along more comfortably than has generally been assumed.

The Halifax Chronicle urges the double tracking of the Intercolonial from Moncton to Halifax, with such divergences from the present route at certain places as would secure a better grade.

At a meeting of the Ottawa city council last evening it was decided to submit a by-law, at the January elections, for the purchase of the Ottawa electric street railway by the city.

Congratulations to Mayor Baxter of Portland, Maine, who has been elected by 1027 majority.

HON. A. G. BLAIR'S REPLY TO RECENT ASSERTIONS.

A Sweeping Denial of Charges Made Against Him With Regard to His Resignation --- Challenges a Minister to Make Good His Statements.

Montreal, Dec. 5.—The Montreal Gazette of tomorrow morning will publish the following:

"Editor Montreal Gazette: 'Sir.—Since my return from the maritime provinces, I have seen the full text, with scare headlines, of a daring political statement in which my name is freely used, and in which I am referred to as not having been frank with the public as to the reasons of my resignation of the chief commissioner of the Railway Commission; with having conspired with two important railways and other parties to damage the government; with having plotted to make an attack upon the administration of the interior department; with having co-operated with others to expose scandals against the government on the eve of the election; with being privy to an arrangement whereby several of the government candidates in the province of Quebec, in consideration of \$10,000 each, were to withdraw from the field on the eve of the contest; with failing to take the platform against the G. T. P. scheme; with having been sandbagged into silence lest some secret which I feared would come out should be exposed; and with having arranged that I should receive \$100,000 as soon as the scheme outlined should be carried out."

"Let me deal with these statements seriatim, first, however, give to the public the assurance that these allegations constituting a tissue of falsehood from beginning to end."

"First.—That I was not frank with the public as to the real reason for my resignation. What I stated at the time was and still remains true. I said I intended taking up more congenial employment and so I do intend, and I more than hinted at that time that I had found my position on the board more uncomfortable than I feared I should when I accepted the appointment. I could not enter fully into details on this subject but do not wish to say that I arranged that I should receive \$100,000 as soon as the scheme outlined should be carried out."

"Second.—As to my co-operation in hostility to the government with two of the great railways. My answer is that I took no part whatever except by voting in the election, from the beginning to the end of the contest. It is true I resigned the office between two and three weeks prior to election day but I was not of the opinion that my resignation would cause more than a few days comment and the result showed that my judgment in this respect was sound. I hear now for the first time that two of the great railways in Canada had anything to do with my resignation, and speaking for myself, I do not know and have no information which would lead me to believe that the railways in question were antagonizing the government."

"Third.—That I conspired with others to make an attack upon the administration of the department of the interior, I pronounce this statement wholly devoid of truth. I never heard from any source whatever, that such a movement was in contemplation by any one. I most assuredly had no such thought in my own mind. No one ever mentioned the subject to me nor did I to any one."

"Fourth.—As to my having conspired with any one to expose scandals against the government on the eve of the election. This statement is wholly void of truth; such an intention on anyone's part, I hear for the first time from the World's publication."

Fifth.—What is alleged as to the intended withdrawal of the Quebec candidates, is so far as I am concerned or am aware, an entire fable. The statement is the creation of a very disordered or a very malicious mind, and indeed the same may be said with regard to almost all of the whole publication."

"Sixth.—As having failed to take the platform after my resignation from the board, I did not state at any time that I intended doing so. The telegram announcing my resignation said in effect that beyond reaffirming my objection to the railway scheme I intended to take no part in the campaign. I had not the slightest thought when I resigned of going into the fight and my telegram contained all the affirmation of my views on the railway question I had at any time in contemplation."

"Seventh.—It is said the fear of the disclosure of some secret compelled me to do so, and that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was able to force me to pursue this course. If any one either in or outside the government is in possession of a secret of the nature described I hereby not only give him permission to disclose it, but invite him to do so. I make the statement about to say that he did not even suggest to me that I should not take part in the campaign, nor did anyone in his behalf do so. I understand that a member of the government had a statement in Montreal that 'Blair dare not speak; that the government had the papers which show his guilt. If there is any member of the government from whom this street report emanated, he will do me a favor if he will produce the papers and let the public know what the nature of these potential documents may be."

"Eighth.—As to the last allegation that I was to receive \$100,000 cash when the scheme as laid out had materialized, I give this and the connected statements an emphatic denial. No such arrangement nor understanding was had by me with any person. I did not receive \$20,000 as alleged, nor any other sum on account. No question of \$65,000 nor any amount whatever, nor any dispute of any kind involving such a question has arisen between Mr. Russell and myself. The statement in its entirety is absolutely untrue in every respect."

"Let me add that I recently saw in a government newspaper that my expectations and plans at the time of my resignation from the railway board as to my own future had not been realized and would need to be revised. This is a very interesting statement, and I confess I am indebted to the newspapers for the information. I had not myself made the disclosure, and except that the public press has so stated, I remain still in blissful ignorance of the same."

"Yours faithfully,
"ANDREW G. BLAIR."

SHY ON WATER.

Ontario Wants Rain as Water Supply is Failing Them—Dairy-men Suffering.

Toronto, Dec. 6.—(Special).—There is a water famine in many parts of Ontario just now, particularly in York county. The wells and creeks are all nearly dry and so short is the supply that farmers will be compelled to dispose of their stock if there is not rain very soon. In many districts farmers have been compelled to haul water for their cattle, in some places from long distances. The dairymen are the worst sufferers, and milk is scarce. The observatory officials hold out very little hope for immediate relief.

A FATAL SHOCK.

Young London, Ont., Girl Dies From Injuries Received Five Months Ago.

London, Ont., Dec. 6.—(Special).—Five months ago Miss Bessie Howie, book-keeper with Deddick & Brown, brushed aside a wire which was hanging over her desk. In doing so, she was severely shocked, her finger being burned by the electricity. Shortly afterwards she was taken ill and did not recover, dying yesterday. It is supposed, as a result of the shock.

NEW TEMPLE OF HONOR.

The organization of a new Temple of Honor and Temperance, the second in the series of new temples to be organized in connection with the efforts being put forth by the Grand Council of New Brunswick, will be instituted tomorrow, Wednesday evening, at 8 o'clock, in the Orange Hall, Germain street.

The future prospects of this temple are bright, as the charter list is representative of leading citizens in all walks of life. All temples are invited to attend and assist in making the organization work a success.

IT WILL PAY YOU, IF YOU ARE IN BUSINESS TO ADVERTISE IN THE TIMES.

THE BOARD OF TRADE.

H. B. Schofield Chosen President at Yesterday Afternoon's Meeting.

The St. John Board of Trade held its annual meeting at the board room, yesterday afternoon. The secretary read the annual report and reviewed the work of the past year, after which Herbert C. Schofield was elected president. Dr. J. McLaughlin spoke briefly and did Mr. Schofield. Mr. Fisher moved a vote of thanks to the retiring president, Mr. McLaughlin, who made a brief reply.

Alexander Macaulay was elected president. The meeting then voted on a motion of Charles Everitt was proposed for membership. The president declared him a duly elected member of the board.

Mr. Fisher then referred to the suggestion which the council had made to the board with regard to appointing a committee to visit the King's school and report on the subject of manual training. He hoped that a committee would be appointed to go to Kingston and they would probably bring back a report that would result in benefit to our schools here.

Mr. Hatheway spoke briefly, heartily co-operating with the remarks made by Mr. Fisher regarding the appointment of a committee to investigate the system of Sloyd training in schools.

It was resolved to appoint a committee of eight for the purpose stated. The following council was elected: W. P. Hatheway, W. S. Fisher, T. H. Estabrook, D. J. McLaughlin, W. H. Thorne, John Sealy, W. M. Jarvis, J. H. Likely, G. Fred Fisher, J. Hunter White.

The same board of arbitration was re-appointed for this year. Committee for investigation Sloyd school system is as follows: W. S. Fisher, W. P. Hatheway, Dr. J. McLaughlin, W. M. Jarvis, J. H. Somerville, R. S. Murray and the president.

Some discussion followed as to the means to be adopted for increasing the membership of the board.

It was resolved that the council should prepare circular letters setting forth the object of the board, and each member should be asked to forward one to a friend and thus endeavor to secure his name for membership.

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P. E. ISLAND CANDIDATES

In the Provincial Elections to be Held Tomorrow.

Charlottetown, P. E. I., Dec. 6.—One liberal and one conservative were elected by acclamation in the provincial nomination for Prince Edward Island. The candidates elected by acclamation were:

J. W. Richards, of Bideford, second district of Prince Liberal; and Archibald G. MacDonald, of Georgetown, fifth district of King's, conservative.

Candidates nominated for the remaining twenty-eight seats are as follows:

Councillors named first, then assemblymen.

Prince county, first district—John Agnew, Benjamin Gallant, liberals; H. W. Turner, Edward Hackett, conservatives.

Second—Alfred W. McWilliams, liberal; Peter J. Bolger, conservative.

Third—Hon. Peter McNutt, J. F. H. Arsenault, liberals; Charles MacDonald, J. F. Arsenault conservatives.

Fourth—Capt. Joseph Read, Samuel R. Reid, liberals; John Anderson, Michael C. Delaney, conservatives.

Fifth—Geo. Godkin, John M. Clark, liberals; J. E. Wyatt, James A. McNeill, conservatives.

Queen's county, first—Geo. Simpson, Matthew Smith, liberals; William Campbell, Donald Nicholson, conservatives.

Second—John McMillan, Dr. Douglas, liberals; Douglas Currie, Thomas Doyle, conservatives.

Third—James H. Cumiskey, H. James Palmer, liberals; Peter McCourt, Leonard Wood, conservatives.

Fourth—F. L. Haszard, David P. Irving, liberals; Henry Wood, Samuel A. Nicholson, conservatives.

Fifth, Charlottetown and Royalty—George E. Hughes, Dr. James Warburton, liberals; Dr. Rodick McNeill, S. Brown, conservatives.

King's county, first—Thomas Kickham, H. H. Acorn, liberals; John Kickham, A. L. Fraser, conservatives.

Second—J. D. McInnis, Arthur Peters, liberals; H. D. McEwen, James McIsaac, conservatives.

Third—P. D. Bowler, Nathaniel McLaren, liberals; Patrick Kelly, W. A. O. Morson, conservatives.

Fourth—Thos. L. Cook, Geo. Inman, liberals; Murdoch McKinnon, A. P. Prowse, conservatives.

Fifth—W. W. Jenkins, liberals; J. A. Mathieson, conservative.

LABOR LEGISLATION.

Boston, Dec. 5.—Representative Ross, of New Bedford today filed at the state house for the consideration of the next legislature the so-called overtime bill, which governor Bates voted at the last session. The representative has two propositions. He submits again the bill voted last year which prohibits the employment of women and minors in textile establishments at night time, and he submits another to extend this prohibition of overtime to women and minors employed in manufacturing and mechanical establishments.

SAW THE COMET.

Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 5.—A cablegram was received at the Harvard College Observatory, today from Professor Kreutz, of the Kiel observatory, stating that Tempel's second periodic comet was observed on its return by the astronomer, M. Javelle, at Nice, Nov. 3. It was also observed by him at Nice, Dec. 1, in right ascension 19 hours, 40 minutes, 15 seconds. The cablegram stated further, that Comet's ephemeris is nearly correct.

MORE BLOODSHED.

Salonica, Dec. 5.—A Greek band on December 3, murdered twenty-four Bulgarians in the village of Aitos, near Sorovitch. An order was issued today for the mobilization of sixteen battalions of Monastir Red-lifs.

NOTABLE FRENCHMEN.

Governor Couturier of "the Colonies, St. Pierre, Martinique," and his commissioner, M. Galhae, passed through the city on their way home today. They have been visiting France.

The governor is of fine appearance, and with his commissioner, was most courteous to the newspaper reporters who were endeavoring to obtain an interview with them. As neither governor nor commissioner could speak English, a translating dictionary was brought to the scene, and it was found that the French dignitaries had been enjoying a trip to France. They proceeded on their journey on the Atlantic express. They will go direct to St. Pierre.

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