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WHAT NEXT?

That was a remarkable address delivered by Mr. Eben Perkins last evening on temperance laws and their enforcement. He began with the license commissioners, and charged them with taking advantage of the letter of a law to violate the spirit of it. Then he said:—"A man who breaks the law knowingly is either a fool or a knave. He either lacks mental balance or is receiving recompense for his crime in the way of graft. You know the commissioners. Draw your own conclusions."

This is strong language. But Mr. Perkins went further, and stated that he saw the early-closing law violated by thirty-five men in thirty minutes, among the men being a member of the Methodist church and an alderman.

His next charge was that the inspector, after raising a saloon after hours, dropped the case when threatened by an alderman with loss of his job.

Turning to the beer shops, he said the beverages the majority of them sold was worse than that at licensed bars. In this connection he asserted that the attorney general got legislation raising the percentage of alcohol allowable in non-intoxicating beverages, because a manufacturer had said a certain class of his product must be sold in beer shops or go to the sewer.

Mr. Perkins also asserted that there were bar tenders in St. John who would sell a man liquor till he dropped down and then rob him; and that the officials knew who those persons were.

According to Mr. Perkins St. John needs a new set of license commissioners, a better class of aldermen and church members, a new inspector, a new attorney general, a better class of bar tenders, new policemen and some other important changes.

It would seem that something more should be said on this subject. Mr. Perkins is a responsible citizen, and has made sweeping charges, some of them sufficiently definite to call for a reply. His caustic phraseology gives a rude jolt to the self-complacency of all classes of citizens. His motto appears to be:—"Let no guilty man escape," and he apparently finds guilt to be practically universal. This is a time of sensations.

DEBT AND TAXES.

The great reason for urging a change in the method of electing aldermen is that the change would probably result in a more business-like city council.

No doubt many citizens who never had a like experience before have wondered during the last few weeks at the activity, and in some cases lack of courtesy, with which they have been pursued by tax collectors for the taxes of the year which has not yet expired.

"We need the money," would be the candid explanation of the aldermen. As usual they have over-expended, despite the fact that the rate of taxation was increased this year.

There does not appear to be any proper check on the expenditures. The various boards decide to incur bills and the treasury board passes the bills. The debt of the city is steadily increasing. The rate of taxation is increasing, but the expenditure on the various services, such as streets, sewers, fire, light and police, is increasing in a greater ratio than the rate of taxation.

The water account and general revenue account show a surplus of perhaps \$20,000 per year, but this is more than swallowed up in the other departments.

It will no doubt be found at the end of the year that the balance, which was a very small one last year, will this year, despite the increased taxation, be on the wrong side of the ledger.

The street department is responsible for a great deal of the over-expenditure. That account is probably \$50,000 behind. And what have the city council to show for the enormous expenditure of recent years on the streets? No continuous constructive policy has been adopted. Money is spent freely year after year to patch and mend, without satisfactory results.

The financial position of St. John today is not nearly as favorable as it would have been had there been keen business men at the council board for the last few years.

With regard to the future, the outlook points to an increase in debt, and therefore a heavier interest charge. Important improvements are needed, and there never was a time when a thoroughly capable and clear-headed council was so much needed.

The reply of the present council to the statement of this need is a proposal that their term be extended for two years.

There will be no satisfactory change unless the citizens themselves

take some action. If the most capable business man in St. John were a candidate for alderman on a reform issue, he might under the present system have to face the combined opposition of the whole of the present members. They are satisfied with existing conditions.

If this council goes to Fredericton with a proposal to extend the aldermanic term to two years, without any other change, it should be met by a petition from the citizens protesting against any such legislation. The question before the taxpayers is more serious than many of them realize. They will no doubt realize it when the next civic financial statement is submitted—if they take the trouble to read the document. If they do not, the tax collector will in due time make the point clear. It is time for a change.

GETTING BUSY.

The temperance organizations appear to be taking an active part in the Ontario provincial election campaign. The Toronto correspondent of the Montreal Witness, which is a strong advocate of advanced temperance legislation, wrote on Dec. 13th, as follows:—

The Ontario Alliance provincial executive is being summoned for Friday afternoon to issue an additional manifesto to the temperance electors of the province, in view of the dissolution of the legislature, and Mr. Ross's pamphlet on the recent address of the Alliance. Last night about forty of the leading prohibitionists of the province had a meeting under the presidency of Alex. Mills, of the Ontario Citizens' League to promote the nomination of temperance candidates. Tonight a Methodist district temperance conference with regard to the Ontario situation will be held at the Queen Street West Methodist Church, called by the Rev. Dr. Chown. A. M. Featherston, of the Citizens' League, points out that temperance men regard as fatal to Mr. Ross's attitude the fact that he had previously excused himself from action on the ground that his government was against him. In reconstructing it, however, he chose two men, Messrs. Graham, and McKay, who had opposed temperance legislation. J. W. Stephens, M.P.P., says the people welcome the dissolution as a happy release. Dr. Pyne, M.P.P., says the Ross Government will be absolutely crushed.

CHEMICAL ENGINES.

According to the Glace Bay Gazette the authorities of that town have about the same idea regarding the relation between a fire engine and a team of horses as that which prevailed in the St. John safety board for some time. The safety board at first proposed to have one pair of horses for two engines. When an alarm was sounded the horses would run out with the chemical engine. If it could not control the fire, the horses would be unhitched, trot back to the station and get the other engine. The fire in the meantime would be given a fair start, so that the larger engine would not be called out for nothing.

In Glace Bay, according to the Gazette of that town, it is the chemical engine that lacks horses. That paper says:—"Would it not have been better if the horses for the chemical had been at the fire station, or a little nearer to it, and if the town had a pair of horses for the chemical instead of having to depend on a livery stable to make up a team? As a matter of fact the chemical is of little if any use to the department for the reason that it is about the last piece of apparatus to arrive at a fire."

St. John's experience with the chemicals is yet to begin. The lesson of Glace Bay is not without some interest to the safety board of this city.

THE WAR.

It must be confessed that the remarkable success of the Russian garrison in holding Port Arthur so long a time, and the long period that has elapsed since the Japanese army made any aggressive move in the neighborhood of Mukden, give point to the remarks of some military critics, who assert that the Japs have been over-cautious in some things and permitted valuable time to be wasted.

Of course it is impossible at this distance to learn exactly what the next intended move of the Japanese armies may be, but it is obvious that every week of delay gives the Russians a chance to increase their strength and make more difficult the Japanese advance toward Harbin.

There does not seem to be any doubt, however, that Port Arthur must soon fall. The marvel is that it has been able to hold out for so long a period.

"Send me \$500 dad," wrote the young man from college. "Money makes the mare go."

The reply was equally brief.

It said: "Yours received. I enclose \$50. That ought to be enough for a jackass."

SEASON IS OPEN NOW.

Lobster Fishing in Full Swing on the Maine Coast.

(Eastport Correspondence Bangor News).

The lobster season has opened in this section of the Maine coast and some of the big crustaceans are being gathered up in the trans of down east fishermen, who are making good wages with their catches, as lobsters are always in demand.

The photo represents some large shell fish which were brought to this city and there was little chance for the State inspectors to make a seizure as many of the lobsters weighed from 12 to 15 pounds, and all were over the limit in length as can be noticed.

For several years government officials have visited different parts of Passamaquoddy bay and the St. Croix river, where they scattered millions of the small "fry" in the salt waters, and it is now evident from the catches of lobsters that have been made during the past season that the little shell-fish managed to escape the different kinds of fish that gobble them up before they reach the bottom of the bay and find refuge under rocks. Here they remain until old enough to take their part in the fight for existence against the other fish as their heavy shell is a good protection in a fight and as is well known the claws of the lobster are used to advantage when they come in contact with other members of the deep.

Of course the American lobster fishermen are somewhat handicapped at the present time as our Dominion cousins across the bay can gather up a nine-inch lobster in safety, while on this side of the line the possessor of a ten-inch shell fish would come in for a call from the fish inspectors and not only have his fish seized but would have a fine to pay, but there are ways to dispose of their short catches as had been reported with the coming in of the new law across the border.

If any of the Yankee boatmen succeed in catching any of the nine or even ten-inch lobsters they can easily dispose of them to Canadian boatmen who are sure of getting the money back and a profit besides, so the State law does not seriously affect those who are out for the lobsters, even if they are shorter than is allowed.

There are indications that at the coming session of the legislature that the present lobster law will receive some attention, especially from the coast representatives who are more familiar with the salt-water fish questions than those from the interior. It is probable that the law will be somewhat modified so that even if we are not given the same wide range as the Dominion fishermen there will be a slight change in the length, as it will mean more lobsters for the people who enjoy them.

It is generally understood that there is little chance of this supply playing out in this part of the coast and it is also remembered that last winter so many lobsters were caught in eastern Maine that many of the owners of pounds along the coast of Washington county had such a large stock on hand, when the market was well supplied and prices dropped considerably, that lobster fishermen were instructed not to bring in any more until there was a change.

A number of the coast towns were visited by the News correspondent at that time and not only was the lobster found on most of the small hotel tables but the pounds were over-loaded. At the present time the catch has not been as heavy and there is a steady demand for all that comes to the city. It is considered an expensive luxury to have lobsters on the table more than once a week, although this will probably change in a short time when the boatmen get out with their traps and give more of their attention to this kind of fish which can be easily turned into money on their return.

Of course with the present law in force there will be no chance for any lobster canneries to be started up in this city or vicinity as was recently mentioned, in fact two of the Island City fish canners had an idea of operating such a plant during the winter here, but over the line it is probable that the annual canning of the shell fish will begin when their season opens and as usual a number of sealers and can-makers from here will be engaged in helping to put up the goods.

AMHERST NOT DISAPPOINTED.

Yesterday's Election Turned Out as Expected—Winter Fair Closed.

Amherst, Dec. 16.—(Special).—The result of the provincial bye election in this county yesterday was about as expected. The leaders of the conservative party deemed a contest at this time inadvisable and consequently took but little part. Mr. Day did not spend much time to the county and was comparatively unknown in many sections. Mr. Paul, the liberal candidate, held a number of meetings throughout the county and was assisted by Hon. W. T. Pipes and H. J. Logan, M. P., so that his majority of over six hundred in a very small vote polled, was quite expected.

The Maritime Winter Fair closed last night after being in session for four days, the interest being maintained until the end. The educational advance of these annual gatherings has been greatly demonstrated, and can but result in much good to the farmers of the maritime provinces. Ideal weather prevailed throughout the four days. The number of visitors in attendance was equal to any previous years. The president, E. B. Elderkin, is, with the other officers, to be congratulated for the very efficient manner in which the whole affair was conducted.

The press owe much to W. W. Hubbard for great assistance given by him in obtaining reports. Among those who contributed largely to the interest by their lectures and addresses are Prof. C. C. James, Prof. F. W. Hodson, Prof. J. H. Grisdale, Dr. James Fletcher, R. Graham, Prof. Cummings, R. F. Holterman, C. McNeil, and others.

MUST BE CAREFUL.

Crime in U. S., Due to Undesirable Immigrants.

(Montreal Gazette.) "The prevalence of crime in the United States can be traced to the lack of proper restrictions on immigration in the past," said Dr. Roddick at the annual meeting of the Women's National Immigration Society, held yesterday afternoon. "The results of indiscriminate immigration are today seen in the descendants of people, morally and physically unfit, who entered the country many years ago." The importance of the work done by the society in aiding the immigration of women of a desirable class was emphasized by Dr. Roddick and other speakers, among whom were Rev. Mr. Doull; Mr. Marquette, provincial immigration agent; Mr. Patterson, and Mr. J. Hoalahan, Dominion immigration agent, in the discussion which followed the reading of the secretary's report. Mr. Marquette pointed out that next year the number of immigrants for domestic service could easily be brought up to five or six hundred.

The report of the secretary said that five hundred and twenty-five immigrants passed through the harbor showing an increase of 25 compared with last year.

Table with 2 columns: Nationality and Religion. Nationalities include English (403), Scotch (54), Irish (35), Swedes (12), Norwegians (16), French (1), Germans (1), Welsh (1), Dames (1), Americans (1). Religions include Church of England (307), Church of Scotland (20), Church of Ireland (19), Church of Rome (30), Presbyterians (35), Lutherans (29), Wesleyans (18), Baptists (20), Congregationalists (13), Salvation Army (9), Methodists (19), Plymouth Brethren (3), Latter Day Saints (2), Catholic Apostolic Church (1).

Total ..... 525

The work was exceptionally heavy, nearly 11,000 meals were served, and in addition to this the conditions under which the work was done were very trying owing to the burning of the building last May. The rebuilding of the house brought with it many advantages in the way of equipment. It was the general opinion of the meeting that with the work so well organized in Canada means should be taken to secure a wider co-operation on the other side. As it is valuable assistance has been given by the British Women's Emigration Association, but generally speaking the Canadian society is not sufficiently well known to the British public.

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To Decide Championship.

New York, Dec. 16.—To decide the international hockey championship says the Tribune a game between the Quebec Hockey club, the champions of Canada, and the Wanderers hockey club, champions of the United States will be played at the St. Nicholas rink here on Dec. 23rd. This will be the first appearance of the Quebec men, in the United States.

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RUSSIA DISGUSTED.

St. Petersburg, Dec. 15.—Much disgust is manifested over the manner in which the notorious Russian adventurers have handled Russian newspapers abroad by fictitious stories of Russia having received secret information about the North Sea incident. The authorities here are in no way responsible for these reports and express confidence in the testimony which will be submitted to the international commission in Paris.

THEY USUALLY DO. (Philadelphia Public Ledger.) "So he's really dead. Well he made a hard fight. If ever a man had an iron will he had it." "Yes, but I'll bet the lawyers will break it."

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