

SALARIES IN HALIFAX.

THEY ARE SAID TO BE TOO BIG FOR THE RATEPAYERS.

Assessors Who Wanted an Increase of Two Hundred Dollars Each—The Hustle to Have the Matter Reconsidered—How It Was Finally Settled.

HALIFAX, Dec. 26.—An interesting phase of Halifax civil politics is furnished in the attempt on behalf of the three city assessors to have \$200 per annum added to each of their salaries, making them \$1,400 and \$1,200 respectively. In the first place, it is not legal for the council to make such an increase except it be provided for in the estimates. Notwithstanding this fact, a majority of the aldermen at a former meeting voted to give the assessors the advance they asked. And those good men are not hard worked officials either. Hours of 10 to 4 o'clock, with an hour and a-half for dinner, are not a very severe tax on any one. The city council granted the increase, though by a very small majority, but that did not settle the matter. Alderman W. J. Stewart gave "notice of reconsideration."

The next meeting of the council came round. Ex-alderman Pickering established himself lobbying manager for the assessors three, and Assessor Eaton himself took the most active share of the direct canvass. The afternoon on which the meeting was to be held disclosed the fact that some of the anti-increase aldermen would not be present whether by accident or design "doth not yet appear". Ald. Musgrave, Butler, and Foster were out of town. That would seal the fate of friends of reconsideration when the vote came up, so there was just one thing to do—prevent a meeting. Accordingly when roll call came more than half the aldermen were away. All the old anti-increase city fathers were conspicuous by their absence, and with one or two away from the other side there was no quorum.

Again the canvass was resumed. Manager Pickering was hard at work, Assessor Eaton took off his coat on behalf of himself and his mates. The other side were not idle. The friends of economy proved to be both lucky and energetic. They were strengthened by the return from the United States of Ald. Mitchell, and they made a difference of two in the change of front presented by Ald. McFratridge, who responded to the pressure of "fourteen real estate owners in his ward, who adjured him not to vote again for any such increase in salary as that proposed. Besides this John Mullan, a strong worker in ward 5, was a deadly enemy of Assessor Eaton, and the strong worker's word had great weight with Ald. McFratridge. So the alderman crossed the line to the side of no increase in salary.

In due time the meeting took place. Every alderman was in his chair except Mr. Musgrave who could not bring himself to a decision. Ald. Stewart moved his reconsideration. When the vote came Ald. Butler unfortunately was temporarily absent from the council chamber. He had been button-holed so unmercifully by friends of the assessor, and argued with so energetically by aldermen on the other side, that it is not to be wondered at if he congratulated himself when he found that the vote had been taken during his momentary absence. The vote stood a tie, the names being:—For reconsideration,—Ald. Stewart, Geldert, Redden, Hamilton, Mitchell, Hubley, McFratridge, Foster—8. Against Ald. Ryan, Dennis, Lane, O'Donnell, Eden, Creighton, Mosher, Outhit—8.

Mayor McPherson had his mind made up in favor of refusing to endorse the proposed increase, to be called upon to decide the matter by his casting vote. He thought Ald. Butler would have voted against the increase, but, as that did not happen, he had to step into the breach himself and destroy the tie. As he did so the visions of \$200 more to salaries already respectably large faded from before the eyes of the three assessors, and \$600 a year was saved to the burdened tax-payers of Halifax.

Thus it is that this question was settled, after the expenditure of time and everything almost great enough to dispose of the war score between Great Britain and the United States. But it was always thus with the city council of Halifax where a paltry personal matter is concerned. Let them turn over a new leaf with the coming new year.

They will have a chance to begin the good work even at the end of this year. It is the intention of the "salaries committee" to bring in a report at a meeting of the council tomorrow (Friday) evening, recommending changes in the interest of economy and efficiency. Let the good work proceed. Men who earn their salaries should be encouraged, but not otherwise. The salaries list of the city of Halifax including the police, poor's asylum, etc., amounts to more than \$64,000. Every cent of \$20,000 could be taken off by re-organization and retrenchment. The salaries committee consists of Ald. Hamilton, chairman; Ald. Stewart, Mosher, Ryan, Redden and Foster.

Success of the Travellers' Ball. HALIFAX, Dec. 26.—The ball given by the Maritime Commercial Travellers' association on Monday night was an affair which reflected the highest credit on those ambassadors of trade. The dining-room of the Halifax hotel was extemporized into a ball-room and there the 200 dancers passed

the merry hours. Mrs. Geoffrey Morrow, Mrs. A. Mackinlay, and Mrs. R. L. Borden, the last named in the absence of Mrs. F. C. Siman through illness, were chaperons. The travellers' ball is coming more and more to be one of the prime social events of the season. It was not held last year on account of the death of Sir John Thompson. The company commingled well and there was not much of that cliquism which sometimes dampens the enjoyment of public balls. One young man was there and dressed with taste, too, who attracted some attention by his anxiety to show the diamond ring that adorned his finger. He had cut his glove so that the massive ring was apparent even to an onlooker with half an eye without the lessons of long experience.

NEED "PROGRESS" IN MONTANA.

A Former New Brunswicker Tells of the Bad State of Politics.

It is a pleasure to get hold of a paper like PROGRESS that is not afraid to call black, black. I believe if PROGRESS was out here it would not rest satisfied till some of the desperadoes who are at large were roped and swung. What would you say if you had to chronicle the following—just a year ago the 27th of this month at the town of Landusky, just fifty miles from here, one of the most brutal murders was committed that ever happened and the murderers are to-day at large. In the town of Landusky, there lived three brothers called Curry. They were the bullies of the town and with the exception of Old Pike Landusky they did as they choose with all the inhabitants. There was always a fence between the Curry boys and Old Pike, and at last it came to a climax. On the 27th of last December Old Pike was in the saloon at Landusky. The saloon was crowded, when in walked the Curry boys. One of them, Kid Curry went up to Old Pike, and struck him over the head with his revolver. The other two pulled their revolvers and told the crowd they'd shoot whoever would interfere. When Pike was struck he fell. Curry then started to tramp on him, and on Pike drawing his six shooter to defend himself, Kid Curry shot him twice and killed him. The three then walked out of the saloon, mounted and kept in hiding for a week or so, and today are still in the terror of Landusky, and for the simple reason that they can command too many votes to make it an impediment to the officials to have him arrested.

Another such affair happened at Warm Spring Creek in April last but at that time one of the desperadoes got what he wanted. On Warm Spring Creek there lived a bachelor by the name of Marshall, who is a good quiet citizen he got in the bad graces of a gang by the name of Davis over a water right. The Davis' made it so warm for him that he determined to leave the country, so he sold his ranch. The night before he was to leave, he got word that he was to be visited that night. He then beelied himself, and when about midnight he heard mounted men coming he was prepared. He was lying at the back of his cabin with a Winchester in his hands and on one of the men dismounting and striking a match he let him have the contents and shot him dead. The others were taken to Benton but are again at large.

Such are the effects of the elective system. Canada can kick, but there is more justice in one hour in Canada than in a whole year in Montana. The system here is a fraud. Judges, Sheriff and County Attorney all have to be elected and have to pamper to the mob to get office. As the leading attorney in Benton told me the other day politics here are too dirty for an honorable man. It is the exception for an official to have even ordinary ability. Generally the rag tag and bobtail run for office and get there through the bar room door. What would you say if you had to buck against all that? I believe you'd do so like a man and I wish that PROGRESS or another such paper was in this country. This, in all else the finest place in all America, is run by nothing but desperadoes and money. It is a shame that such men are allowed at large perhaps to again go to the east as has been known and become the guests of even a penitentiary warden. FRANK S. BLISS.

Harlem, Lower Snake Creek Montana Dec. 1895.

"77" FOR GRIP "77" will break up a Cold that hangs on.

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VERY SHARP BLACKBIRDS.

They Knew When They Were Outside of the Line of the Fence.

Gen. Lew Wallace recently related an incident which shows to a remarkable extent the wonderful sagacity and memory of blackbirds. "At my home over in Crawfordsville," said the General, "we have a large number of tall trees on the lawn, and in course of time these trees became the roosting place at certain times of the year for hundreds of thousands of blackbirds. They came in in great black clouds, and in spite of all I could do, they refused to leave. Of course they were a great nuisance, and I was in despair as to some means of getting clear of them. I stood for days with my gun firing into them of an evening and killing hundreds of them, but the rest did not seem to be sufficiently struck by fear or grieved to want to part company with me; and my hospitality. I then devised a new scheme.

"Procuring a number of Roman candles one evening, I lighted them one by one, after dark, when the bougns of the trees were bent low with the weight of the creaking birds, and I poured the candles into the tops of the trees at a great rate. The sudden innovation startled the birds as nothing had ever done before, and they became panic stricken. That night I was free of them.

"The next evening, however, the habit of returning there to roost was stronger than fear, and they began coming in by thousands as the evening approached. After dark I began with another volley of candles, and the birds began to realize that there was a determined bombardment in progress. They fled precipitately, and the driving only a few returned. A few last shots put them to flight, and I was troubled no more.

"But what do you think those birds did? My dividing fence runs between the trees on my property and the trees on the property of my neighbor, which are equally high and equally suitable for a home for the blackbirds. When the birds were driven from my lot they flew over across the dividing fence to the trees of my neighbor and settled. There was no bombardment over there, and they have stayed there ever since.

"This was a long time ago, but never since the last Roman candle was fired into them has one of those birds settled on one of my trees. They are 'tabooed' as effectually as though they were on fire. The great clouds of birds each morning and evening fly directly over my trees going and coming, but not a bird settles upon a tree that is on my side of the dividing fence. "Another strange thing is that if any one of an evening, stands in my lawn and makes a slight noise, as slapping his hands, there will be the wildest commotion among the birds in the neighboring trees. They become restless and almost panic stricken. If, however, the same person crosses the fence and stands directly under them and makes twice as much noise, they pay no attention whatever to him. He can even throw great clouds of birds each morning and evening fly directly over my trees going and coming, but not a bird settles upon a tree that is on my side of the dividing fence. "I have wondered several times just what impression those birds have of me and my property that they have so decidedly given me the cold shoulder. They know every tree that is on my lawn, and will settle by thousands on the other side of the fence within a few feet of the dividing line. Of course, I have not bothered them over there, as they were not my guests."

ON DESTRUCTION ISLAND.

Life as it Comes to the Keeper of a Pacific Coast Lighthouse.

The keeper of the Government lighthouse which was established a few years ago on Destruction Island doubtless leads a lonely life, but he has some experiences which a lover of the romantic and the adventurous might well covet. The island itself is not without a certain weird fascination. Thirty-five miles short of Cape Flattery it rises abruptly from the face of the ocean. It has a picturesque, though wild and rugged beauty, and as it stands facing the northern blasts that have sent more than one stout ship to the bottom, it calls up the name of Isle de Dolores, which the early Spanish navigator Quadra gave it to commemorate his misfortunes, and the latter name of Destruction Island, given to it in 1787 by Capt. Berkeley on account of the sad fate of several of his crew who were murdered on its savage coast. On wild and stormy nights, when the wind is whirling the sea into foam against the beetling edges of the island, the scene passes the merely beautiful and becomes majestic and sublime.

On such nights the keeper has visitors that do not come to the door of the ordinary land lubber. Flocks of wild fowl, attracted by the bright light, fly blindly toward it, and, with the force of the wind aided by that of their own stout wings, they are driven against the lens with a momentum that sometimes shatters the thick glass, but oftener results merely in instant death to the birds. Sometimes there is a positive volley of birds against the face of the light, and as many as a dozen have been known to strike it simultaneously. After a stormy night it is not uncommon for the keeper to pick up at the base of the tower as many as twenty-five dead birds. Many of these are of the choicest kinds, and the keeper's table seldom lacks a supply such as an epicure might crave.

During the day the keeper is frequently greeted by the thrilling sight of a whale hunt by Indians in the neighboring waters, a chase as hazardous and exciting as any on mountain or plain. Each canoe goes out with a crew of six oarsmen, one spearsman in the bow, and the Captain or helmsman in the stern. To the end of the spear

an air-tight sealskin, inflated like a bladder, is attached by a line fifty feet long. A dozen of these boats go out together when a whale is sighted. Scarcely a single boat moves out from the little fleet and approaches the big game, the oarsman stoical and calm, the spearsman erect, rigid, statuesque. It is a moment of grave peril. A splashing oar, a sudden move, a wavering hand or hot head at the helm, and boat and crew would go down beneath a single stroke from the great monster now, so near. At precisely the right instant the spearsman hurls his spear with unerring aim, and the battle begins. And then one standing on the island cliff sees the little boat dart away and the whale fiercely churning the water.

The other boats come up rapidly. Weakened by loss of blood, retarded by the air-tight skins that float on the water, and worn out by turning hither and thither in whimsical pursuit of his many foes, the whale slowly gives over the unequal contest, and is towed at last, like a great hulk of a merchantman, to Neah Bay, where the Indians gather for a great feast.—Seattle Paper.

AS TO FIGURE SKATING.

There Are Four Important Strokes Which the Learner Should Study.

The advantage of figure skating is that it can be practiced on any small pond, provided the ice is perfectly smooth. The more numerous opportunities thus afforded make it very popular where there are no large streams.

In figure skating, arcs, circles, numbers, letters, spirals, and serpentine are formed, either backward or forward, slowly or rapidly, on one or both feet, singly or in combination. The style may be analyzed with four kinds of strokes, all made on the edges of the blade—the inside forward, the outside forward, the inside backward, and the outside backward. The variety of evolutions which can be developed from these four movements is endless.

Nothing about skating surprises one more than the fact that, no matter what difficulties are encountered in learning a figure, once acquired it is the merest child's play to perform it.

"Fights" is a favorite figure. It is executed as follows: The toe of the right skate is stuck firmly into the ice. The left skate, on the inside edge, describes a small circle around it, the body making a full turn—one loop. The left skate then changes to the outside edge, supporting the weight of the body, the right skate being lifted from the ice, carried behind and across the lift foot and toe, planted in the center of the second loop, when it bears its share of the weight until the left foot has completed the second loop, when the motion is repeated. A whole series of fights can be cut with one foot, while the toe of the other skate remains fixed at a given point—forward, backward, etc.

There is a tradition that Benjamin West was able to trace with his skate on the ice the outlines of any statue that might be named to him. If the story is true, Mr. West deserves to rank as the champion skater of ours, or whatever century he lived in.

Regulating a Husband.

A novel plan for regulating a husband is reported by the Philadelphia Call. The engagement was a long one, the love-letters exchanged legion. With these letters the bride has papered her boudoir. No man could, in the face of such evidence of eternal devotion, object to the price of a new bonnet or be stingy in the matter of pin money.

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