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His Worship Was Angry.

The Closing Scene of the Year at the Common Council.

A Cool Greeting to an Excellent Proposition—The Argument Between Messrs Newcombe and Schofield Described—Topics of Much Interest to the Tax Payers.

When Mayor George Robertson arose in his place at the special meeting of the council, Tuesday afternoon, he had the celebrated and much-discussed C. P. R. contract in his hands, and he wanted the representatives of the people to confirm an agreement which he had been largely instrumental in forming. It is true that he had some help from Messrs. Timmerman and McLean of the C. P. R., to say nothing of these astute railway men, Messrs. O'Shaughnessy and Van Horne, but on the other hand, the suggestions of Recorder Skinner and that able gentleman, Mr. Millidge, must not be overlooked. So, with the approval of the board of trade and, Mayor Robertson said, the "unanimous approval" of the press and the citizens, the mayor presented the agreement to the council. Incidentally it may be remarked here that his worship drew a long bow when he used the words "unanimous approval." He must have forgotten the letter of Mr. Edward Searr, one of the mayorality candidates, who, while not expressing any decided opposition, was certainly not in accord with the proposed agreement. The press, if PROGRESS makes no mistake, was not entirely in agreement with the proposed contract and so far as the people are concerned they knew little about it. The mayor said the agreement had been printed in one newspaper, but all the people do not take one newspaper. There are five dailies in the city and to reach all the people the document should have been given the widest publicity. If there was any object in not doing this, that particular point was easily gained.

But exactly two minutes from the time the mayor opened the council the aldermen confirmed the agreement. Alderman Macrae made the motion, somebody seconded it—no discussion—carried. Then Alderman Daniel made the necessary motion that the seal of the City of St. John be attached to the all important parchment, and another link was forged in the chain that binds the city to the big railway corporation.

Mr. Fred Sandall is chamberlain for another year, and PROGRESS in common with many if not all of the people, hopes that he will continue there for a long time. But a motion was necessary to appoint him or another twelve months, and needless to say, there was not a voice raised against it.

The appointment of constables for the wards and special officers came up in due order and each and every alderman made his motion in due course that the men at present serving in this unenviable capacity be appointed again. And so it passed until the name of Mr. Thomas J. McPherson was reached when Alderman Christie made a "kick". He understood that this official was coming out as alderman at large and the council had no business to appoint him. He should have resigned before he sought the votes of the people. Several of the aldermen agreed and Mr. McPherson was laid upon the shelf for a time. No one was appointed in his place, but if Thomas J. persists in making a race for the aldermanic chair he may lose his collection of civic taxes. Speaking of this, Alderman Macrae and McMulkin deplored the large number of people who had not paid their taxes. Of course, every candidate would like to see all the taxes paid. It would mean more votes, but whether that would help any of them to a great extent is doubtful. One alderman told PROGRESS that he did not believe in the system of depriving a man of his vote because he had not paid his taxes. He said that the holding of an election did not make any material difference in the amount received by the chamberlain. If the constables were efficient that would be the best means to swell the receipts.

In the discussion that took place when this subject was up one alderman stated that the experiment of a constable for each

ward had been tried before and that it had proved worse than a failure. The delinquents knew the officer and avoided him. The officer was intimate with the people of his ward and failed to find them; whereas a stranger could go into the same ward and collect the money. And so the chamberlain advised the council to return to the old system.

If the city paid as little for everything they bought as they do for printing what a difference it would make in the tax bills? Wharves costing nearly a million dollars are built by the day's work and the material is bought from Tom, Dick and Harry, just as it suits the whims or the preference of the man who orders it. He may ask a price and he may not, but he does not worry his head about whether the price is near cost or the merchant has a decent profit. But when the board of management or any other city board wants a report printed, all the printers of the city get a most polite invitation to tender and the printers have been hard enough competitors in the past to fight against each other and get the prices down to a point where no one can make a profit and some may make a loss. More than that, the city wants a deposit from the printer to guarantee that he won't throw up his contract. Well, the result of all this was that when the treasury board called for tenders to print the city accounts—the biggest job the city has—only one was received—the Telegraph's—at 56 cents per page! Low enough to satisfy even an alderman, but what would the price have been had the Telegraph known their's was to be the only tender. Twice as much without a doubt. And it would have served the city right.

PROGRESS has given Alderman Christie great credit for his persistence before and has occasion again to speak in the same line. And again it was the pulp mill and the Carleton water supply. It is clear to everyone that the pulp mill cannot be in operation until the big 24 inch main from Spruce Lake is laid and as the alderman in question secured the unexampled rights and water privileges for the promoters of this new industry he is anxious to push the matter to an end.

Some time ago the city called for tenders for something like 3000 tons of pipe and a firm away down in Pennsylvania made a quotation several thousand dollars lower than the estimate of the engineer. So far, so good. But at this time the plans of the proposed route to Spruce Lake had hardly been filed in the common clerk's office, at all events they were not filed, when the notice appeared in the press calling upon all who had claims for damages to come forward and file them. That of itself necessitated a change of date and a new advertisement. Some of the aldermen maintained however that if the city ordered the pipe which would amount to something like \$90,000 the claimants for land damages would put up their values and the city would lose more than they would gain by the prompt purchase. This view prevailed on the first days meeting in spite of the assertion of Alderman Christie that the city was protected by arbitration and that its own arbitrator might be depended upon. But when the adjourned meeting met next day Mr. Christie was on his feet again and he had the plan of the proposed route. More than that he had Director Smith there to back up his opinion about the price of pipe. The result of it all was that Ald. Smith of Carleton made the motion that the pipe be purchased from the lowest tenderer and this was carried, the only audible nay being that of Alderman Millidge who stoutly maintained that the purchase should be delayed.

The appointment of the city's arbitrator on land damages was promptly recommended and John A. Chesley ex. M. P. was the man. Mr. Chesley was one of the commission that drew up the act uniting St. John and Portland and he should be a

careful and judicious man in the present instance.

There were some smiles about the board when the suggestion was made that Gray Murdoch be employed to assist Wm. Murdoch in the work of construction etc. Gray Murdoch is a son of William Murdoch and he is following the profession of his father. He offered to do the work for \$4.50 a day, and find himself. This last condition was no doubt important. There are few people in the employ of the city who would not undertake to "find themselves" on \$27 a week. Even Mr. Hurd Peters the city engineer, who gets \$3 a day has to "find himself." But the council was in a complaisant mood and there is not much doubt but that the engineering in connection with the new water works will be kept in the Murdoch family.

That long talked of claim of Hugh Andrews of the North End came to the front again in the shape of a court summons for the amount claimed. Mr. Andrews used to do a good deal of work for the city in the electric light station in the North End. He is an electrician and consequently commands good pay for his services. His dispute is with the director of safety who refused to initial his bill. When the particulars come out they will doubtless be interesting as PROGRESS understands that the machinist's work was taken from him and given to a firm particularly favored by the council in this respect.

As at all last meetings of the Council there was plenty to do and much to interest the people. That promoter of steamship companies, Mr. Newcombe, was outside the council chamber and with him the veteran Capt. Fleming. They were interested in getting a berth for the Manhattan Steamship company. Along with them however was Mr. S. Schofield and his aide-de-camp Mr. Dunlavy and in addition to these gentlemen Mr. John Thompson and Mr. Joseph Knight were also in attendance. When invited inside, the mayor, after casting a slight dash of cold water over the prospects of a permanent berth for the Manhattan Line, invited Mr. Newcombe to state his case. He did so in a plain but satisfactory sort of a way and did not take up much time. He left the impression that the company he represented had nothing small about it and was ready and willing to add to the harbor revenue. There was a good deal of technical discussion about "drops" and "overhang"—no doubt very important to Mr. Newcombe and his steamers but not interesting to the reader. But the fact was revealed that the city has very little wharf accommodation on the eastern side of the harbor—only the so called Monticello wharf and the Pettingell. These wharves have been pretty steadily occupied last summer and this winter and how the city proposed to lease one of them without being unjust to the West Indian, Thompson and other lines of steamers was a puzzle.

Mr. Samuel Schofield when called upon proceeded to show the unfairness of any such move and he did it in his most gentle and smoothest manner. Mr. Schofield never gets excited—or rarely does. He always has his notes when he makes a speech and he is careful that any important facts or figures shall be typewritten and has a few copies in his breast pocket for distribution. The newspapers are sure of some plain copy and Mr. Schofield has no fear of incorrect or garbled statements appearing in the press. So, armed with his documents he proceeded to annihilate Mr. Newcombe's project, after having served that gentleman and his worship the mayor with his documentary facts.

But Mr. Newcombe had a chance to reply to both Mr. Schofield and Mr. Thompson and he made it plain that a regular New York passenger steamer could not depend upon a transient wharf like a tramp but must have a home when she reached port. He made some interesting statements about summer travel and where the moneyed tourists came from. Boston and New York did not supply Maine with her tourists but Chicago and the Western States did more in that direction that all of New England. There were more Louisville people in Bar Harbor last season than New Yorkers. These are interesting facts to the Tourist Association which is looking for the tourist with cash.

Mr. Newcombe, however, gained a point, for a committee was appointed to look over the Monticello wharf and report

the next day. When they did report the question was decided in short time for Mr. Newcombe decided to take the Monticello berth provided proper facilities were provided. Thus the Manhattan Steamship company will soon come to St. John and everybody is glad because it means another feeder for tourist travel.

There was lots of fun at the council meeting Wednesday and it began when Alderman McGoldrick moved a resolution that any citizen who came to the city hall and paid his taxes should not have the fifty cents marshal's fee collected from him. As a matter of fact executions are out against all of those who have not paid their taxes and are no doubt in the hands of the constables. But constables are mortal and in many cases do not find it easy to locate a man. Perhaps they do not know him. Then later this same man will walk into the chamberlain's office and want to pay his taxes. He is surprised and gets angry very often because the chamberlain or the office officials will not take the amount he offers unless he pays half a dollar in addition. And in many cases he walks out without paying and seeks out his favorite alderman to lay his complaint before him.

Alderman McGoldrick must be well known for he had a grist of such complaints. Then the fun began. Every alderman wanted to speak at once and tell his sad experience. Macrae got the floor and seconded McGoldrick's motion and told how he had the taxes of a Carleton man in his pocket at that moment minus the half dollar. Messrs. McMulkin, Hamm and others chimed in and Alderman Christie told a funny story of how time after time he had been handed a tax bill and the amount of it to hand to the chamberlain only to find when he did so that there was an extra charge of fifty cents. The Mayor wanted Alderman McGoldrick to withdraw his motion but the alderman from Stanley could not see it in that light and after Millidge had declared that it was contrary to law and the recorder had sustained him the mayor was forced to rule the motion out of order.

Those who ride bicycles and the merchant tailors should be tickled to death with the action of the board. They passed a by-law making it cost the pretty sum of \$100 if other than a ratepayer came to town to take orders for clothing and the letter of the bicyclists protesting against the night lamp was attached to the obnoxious by-law which on motion of Alderman McGoldrick was referred back. This probably means that the objectionable portion of it will be eliminated. PROGRESS has an idea that there is not an alderman who can ride a bicycle. There may be some mistake about this but the writer has no recollection of seeing a city father scorching on any of the high or byways.

By the time all this business was through the mayor had a word to say and it was plain that he wanted all of the aldermen present to remain and listen to him, for when Alderman Hamm, doubtless remembering that there was a certain man on a certain street whom he had not canvassed, started in hot haste to put on his rubbers and coat, preparatory to leaving, the mayor asked him to remain.

That was cue enough for the alderman that he wanted all present to remain while he laid his proposition before them. Which in brief was this. Recognizing the growing importance of the port of St. John and the increased trade, his worship had come to the conclusion that a dry dock was a necessity. In order to effect its construction he had communicated with the Dominion government and with their consent and good will had obtained letters of introduction to the colonial secretary through whom he would seek imperial aid for the project. To do this he asked the city to defray his expenses while in the old country.

Now this wasn't much to ask, especially when his worship assured the council that he was offered transportation free of charge. But while he talked—and he made a rattling good speech—the aldermen seemed inclined to smoke and chat in the outer room. No doubt the session did seem wearisome but it wasn't exactly respectful to the chief magistrate to greet his utterances with puffs of tobacco smoke from the ante room. Perhaps this nerved the mayor a little and he talked with greater force and vim than he does usually. He certainly outlined a splendid future for St. John, pointed out what had been done and what might be done.

When he sat down one might naturally

WHO WILL BE ELECTED?

THAT IS THE QUESTION THAT WORRIES THE CANDIDATES.

For Civic Honors—Another Ten Days of Suspense and Then it Will Be Over—How The Battle Rages and Who are Fighting The Present Aldermen.

There was an hour or two of considerable suspense among civic politicians this week when it was thought that there would be a third candidate in the mayorality field on account of the council's reception of the mayor's proposition. But it blew over and the excitement vanished with the rumor.

PROGRESS has never seen such a keen, quiet canvass as is being carried on from all sides. The opposition—where there is opposition—is of the sort that does not admit of idleness and as a consequence the aldermen are doing their best to hold their own. Strange to say there is no one retiring from the board except the mayor and this is in direct contrast to what is heard all through the year when the aldermen complain of meetings and committee meetings and the importunities to which they are subject. But still they want to stay there. Why is this? Is there anything beside the \$100 a year that makes them so anxious to serve the city and give up their valuable time and energies? Perhaps the best answer would be, the love of power that abides with every man, coupled with the satisfaction of having a prefix to one's name with all that such implies.

The first gun of the mayorality contest was fired in Carleton when Alderman Daniel held his meeting. There were speeches and applause and then the band played. But the speeches were good, the attention of the citizens earnest and the information they received of much value. Coupled with Dr. Daniel the speakers were Messrs. Macrae, Christie, Keast and others, including the mayor, who having stated his intention to take no part in the contest had perhaps better have remained on the east side. Carleton is, Dr. Daniel's friends think, his weak point and hence the meeting. But it is hard to tell in this contest where the weak points of the candidates are.

Mr. Sears is making a personal canvass, and doing it upon somewhat different lines than he did last year. He is tireless, apparently and as fresh at the close of a hard day's canvassing as in the morning. Such are the advantages of a giant frame and an iron constitution. Mr. Sears has not, so far as PROGRESS can learn, sought to make any combinations, but no doubt there are certain of the aldermen who will favor him while others will remain with Dr. Daniel.

The old banner ward of Kings has the most persistent canvasser in the city. Alderman Hamm does not propose to give up his seat in the council without a struggle and he is on the street early and late looking for votes. His opponent, Col. John R. Armstrong, wears the same placid look as usual and has not, apparently, awakened to the fact that the honor of representing some forty or fifty thousand people is in the scale. He hasn't done any canvassing, he told PROGRESS, and he further remarked that he did not believe in canvassing for that sort of an office. If the people wanted him, well and good, if not, well and good. Surely that is a happy form of mind. That is the quietest state of Alderman Millidge who is never moved by anything except something goes wrong or he disapproves of at the council board. Then he moves all over. It is a case of perpetual motion—while he is on his feet. His opponent, Mr. N. W. Brennan, thinks it well to let the people know that he is out for election and he put his card in the newspapers—by the way, it is in PROGRESS—and takes every opportunity of making his views known upon civic affairs.

The man in the council certainly has a better chance to canvass than the outsider. There has been a little bidding for popular support at the board this week. Among them may be mentioned the adoption of the tailor's bye-law; Alderman McGoldrick's motion to cease collecting that obnoxious additional fifty cents to a man's taxes at the Chamberlain's office; the compliant attitude toward the cyclists—all these are election straws, but they were moves in the right direction all the same.

Capt. Keast is after the scalp of Ald. McMulkin and PROGRESS learns that he is

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