

NO INCREASE IN POLL-TAX TO PROVIDE FOR PATRIOTIC FUND

City Council Unanimous on That Matter---Final Decision on Method of Raising Money Postponed Until February Meeting---Ald. McLellan Alone Favors Bond Issue---Citizens Express Their Opinion

The City Council last night postponed final action on the question of method of raising the Patriotic Fund apportionment in 1917, until the February meeting. The opinion of the aldermen, with the single exception of Alderman McLellan, was that direct assessment should be the method. Ald. McLellan favored a bond issue. Several citizens present expressed their opinions on the matter, and there seems little doubt that the general opinion favored direct assessment. By a unanimous vote the Council decided that the poll tax should not be increased for the purpose of raising the Patriotic Fund apportionment.

A large number of citizens were present. His Worship made a statement prior to the expression of opinion. He told of the sessions of the Provincial Government on the matter of the Patriotic Fund, and said he had been misrepresented by the Gleaner in a report of one of the sessions. He then called for an expression of opinion.

Ald. J. M. Lemont.

Ald. Lemont said that some citizens would like to see the amount spread over five years, others over a longer term. Personally he favored assessing for the amount in one year. Fredericton's tax rate in 1916 had been \$2.00. Citizens, he thought, could not expect ever to have a lower rate. They were demanding more in the way of public services. Assessing the amount in 1917 would mean no more than 50 cents on the \$100. No one in Fredericton seriously felt the burden of the war. In 1916 Fredericton had experienced great prosperity, and the tax rate, heavy as it was, had not been greatly felt. The

burden should not fall upon posterity any more than could be helped. Bond issues would come in the future to provide civic improvements.

Mr. J. F. McMurray.

James F. McMurray favored an increase of \$2 or \$2.50 in the poll-tax to help provide for the Patriotic Fund. All classes of people should pay their share.

Mr. W. G. Clark.

Ex-Ald. W. G. Clark strongly favored Ald. Lemont's suggestion that the apportionment should be raised by assessment year by year. He strongly opposed any proposal to have a bond issue. He did not particularly favor any increase in poll-tax, as the increase suggested would provide only a small portion of the required amount. General assessment would be the fairest method.

Mr. A. C. M. Lawson.

A. C. M. Lawson agreed with Ald. Lemont but was in favor of an increased poll-tax, as all should bear the burden.

Mr. M. B. McNally.

M. B. McNally agreed with Ald. Lemont that the required amount should be raised by the 1917 assessment. He did not expect that this would be the last demand upon the people for the Patriotic Fund. An increase in the poll-tax, he felt, was just, as there were many young men who paid nothing but a poll-tax. He was opposed to a bond issue except for permanent public works.

Ald. Shea.

Ald. Shea opposed any increase in poll-tax. Fredericton's poll-tax already was the highest in the Maritime Provinces, and was as high as the work-

ing man could stand.

Ald. Everett favored assessment, but was opposed to an increased poll-tax.

Favored Bond Issue.

Ald. McLellan said he hardly had expected a final decision to be made so early. He wished for time to consider the matter and pointed out that Ald. Reid, head of the city's finance department, was away. It would be well to wait for him to be present before coming to a decision.

Although not committed to a bond issue to provide for the Patriotic Fund, he felt that there were strong arguments in favor of it in preference to direct assessment.

The Council should consider the fact that a bond issue over a period of ten or fifteen years would be preferable to a large number of citizens. For that reason he was of the opinion that a week or ten days could well elapse before a final decision was reached.

There were many public services which urgently demanded expenditure. The roads and the streets of the city were in a deplorable condition. If they were allowed to go down, a double expenditure would have to be placed upon them in the future. Ald. McLellan said he believed that the final decision in the matter might well be delayed until the regular February meeting.

Ald. Lemont Inquires.

In response to Ald. Lemont, the Mayor said that industries exempt from ordinary taxation were liable for assessment for the Patriotic Fund.

Ald. Lemont said that was another argument in favor of direct assessment. As far as the poll-tax was concerned, he wanted no increase. A two-dollar poll-tax was what the city should have.

Seconded by Ald. Burnett, he moved that the poll-tax be not increased.

Ald. Walker agreed that the poll-tax was too high at present. He strongly favored direct assessment for the Patriotic Fund, but thought consideration of the matter could be delayed until Ald. Reid would be present.

The motion of Ald. Lemont was carried unanimously.

Consideration Deferred.

On the motion of Ald. Wilkinson, seconded by Ald. McLellan, consideration of the Patriotic Fund assessment was postponed until the next regular meeting.

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(Chatham World.)

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