

# Round-Table Conference with School Board to be Held

**Request of Board for Legislation to Devote Vocational Grant to Capital Account Laid on Table—School Board Harshly Criticized—Breach of Faith in Matter of Expenditure on New High School is Charged.**

The City Council of Fredericton as it is now constituted after the recent civic election, decided last night in committee to request the School Board to hold a round-table conference with the City Council for the purpose of discussing the entire matter of school expenditure and particularly means of reducing the appropriation for 1926. The round-table conference is to take place on Tuesday of next week.

The action of the Council was the result of the Finance Committee being waited upon Monday afternoon by a delegation from the School Board composed of P. J. Hughes, K. C., and J. M. Lemont. Mayor Clark presented the request of the School Board to the Council last night. It was that the City Council promote legislation to amend the legislation of 1925 so as to permit of the use of the \$31,000 to be received from the Province for Vocational Training and Equipment in the new High School, to meet capital expenditure instead of to provide sinking fund. His Worship gave a detailed statement of the finances showing that \$183,810 had been expended on the new building although the bond issue had been for \$150,000.

Ald. Goodspeed after some discussion moved that the required legislation be promoted. In amendment Ald. Mitchell moved that the matter lie on the table until after a round-table conference be held between City Council and School Board at which school matters in general be discussed and particularly the possibility of curtailing expenditure for the present year. Ald. Goodspeed withdrew his motion and the amendment was carried.

During the discussion the opinion was expressed that the School Board having exceeded estimate by upwards of thirty thousand dollars on the new

school, there was nothing for the city to do but pay it. Ald. Mitchell and Ald. Ross, however, expressed the opinion that the School Board had merely taken a method to expend \$180,000 on the new school although promising to keep within the bond issue of \$150,000. Ald. Mitchell was particularly sharp in his comment upon the course of the School Board after leading the citizens to believe by advertisement, speeches and other propaganda, that the increase in the tax-rate caused by the new school would not exceed fourteen cents, to incur expenditure which would make the increase much greater than that amount. He characterized the course taken as a breach of faith. Ald. Currier and Ald. Davidson took the ground that if the representatives of the City Council on the School Board would not carry out the will of the Council a change should be made.

## The Mayor's Statement.

Mayor Clark presenting the matter to the Council said that J. M. Lemont and P. J. Hughes, K. C., of the School Board had met the Finance Committee. They had said that the School Board was desirous of working in harmony with the City Council. The statement of the cost of the new High School showed that \$169,336 had been spent on the building, \$11,474 on equipment and \$3,000 was to be spent on additional equipment, making a total cost of \$183,810. For Vocational purposes \$31,000 was to be received from the Province, of which \$10,000 already had been paid and \$21,000 was to be received in March.

The proceeds of the sale of bonds had been \$154,635. The sale of the old buildings on the site had produced \$200 and interest on bonds while they were held had totalled \$1,473 making

a total of \$156,208. In addition there was an overdraft of \$12,000.

The legislation of 1925 authorizing the issue of bonds to the value of \$150,000, at the request of the City Council, had included a rider to the effect that the grants for Vocational Training be devoted to providing a sinking fund. The School Board desired that the Council would promote legislation to amend that rider so as to permit the \$31,000 for Vocational Training to be devoted toward capital expenditure. The School Board was desirous of purchasing the High School site the Federal authorities having put a price of \$8,000. The transaction as proposed by the School Board would result in a saving on \$3,000 on interest charges and in other ways.

## Circumvented.

Ald. Ross remarked that it looked as if the School Board had circumvented the City Council and had succeeded in getting its original wish to expend \$180,000 on the school in spite of promising to spend only \$150,000.

Ald. Mitchell said that a promise had been made to the citizens that the building of the new school would increase the rate of assessment only fourteen cents. The expenditure actually made would make the increase considerably more than that.

Ald. Smith said he had been one of the aldermen who had voted for the new school. He believed that the statement with regard to the increase in assessment had been made.

Ald. Mitchell said he believed so too. The citizens had been informed to that effect. The advertising published by the School Board had stated so. In public meetings the statement had been made. Fletcher Peacock had said so. The promise given had been disregarded.

## Council Should Control.

Ald. Currier said that the situation was curious. The law provided that the Council should appoint five members out of nine on the School Board and at that rate it should control the School Board. There certainly should be some limit to the power of expenditure of a School Board.

Mayor Clark remarked that under

the law a School Board had the power to carry on the operation of the schools irrespective of what the City Council wished.

Ald. Smith said that the School Board did the best it could. He had some experience in regard to Vocational matters and he knew how difficult it was to keep expenditure down.

Ald. Ross quoted some comparative figures of school assessments showing the marked increase in the past few years and said it did not look much like expenditure being kept down.

## Unfair to Taxpayer.

Ald. Mitchell said it hardly looked like a fair deal to the tax-payers after the statements which were made publicly before the plebiscite on the new school.

## Change Suggested.

Ald. Goodspeed said the Council had the appointing of a majority of the members and should do something.

Ald. Ross said that some members could be asked to resign.

Ald. Currier said that if the members of the Board were so set in their ways they should be changed.

Ald. Davidson said that some new blood could be injected.

Ald. Mitchell said that he believed the time had come when the School Board should be elected. In Ontario that system was in effect.

Ald. Ross said that the plebiscite had been along the line of a popular vote and what had it accomplished?

Ald. Mitchell said that at the time of the plebiscite certain promises had been made by the School Board and those promises had been broken.

Ald. Ross—"Promises are made to be broken."

Ald. Mitchell proceeded to quote from statements in advertisements issued by the School Board at the time of the plebiscite and contrasted what had been promised with what actually had been done.

"The chairman said he was prepared to stand behind it," read Ald. Mitchell.

"A long way behind it," remarked Ald. Goodspeed amid laughter.

## Economy Suggested.

Ald. Mitchell asked if school estimates could not be reduced in some other direction. He would like to know about Vocational Training and whether or not the Province was paying its full share.

Mayor Clark said that he believed there could be saving in operation and interest.

Ald. Ross remarked that the great desire of the School Board at the pres-

# Action on Annual Grant To Board of Trade Held Up Pending a Report

**Committee of Three to Investigate Possibility of Accommodating Board Office in City Hall—Mayor Not Impressed by Value of Board Which He Says Has Got Into a Rut—Power to Issue Certificates for Admission to Hospital Limited to Three Officials.**

The City Council in committee Monday night decided to defer action on the matter of the annual grant of \$1,500 for the Board of Trade pending a report of a special committee of three which was named to investigate the possibility of accommodating the Board of Trade office in the City Hall with a saving of rental. The Council also discussed Victoria Hospital matters relative to free and part-pay patients the Hospital Board requesting a payment of one thousand dollars in addition to the grant of \$3,000 for such patients. The result was that on motion the power of issuing certificates for free or part-pay patients was limited to three persons instead of being possessed by all members of the Council. The three are the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the City Clerk.

## Board of Trade Grant.

Alex. Murray and G. W. Hodge appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade and asked for the customary grant of \$1,500. After the delegation withdrew the application was discussed.

Ald. Mitchell said this grant had been voted for years. The Board of Trade office was at the lower end of Queen Street. It was his opinion that the office should be in the City Hall. It was a question of furnishing accommodation at City Hall. There also was possibility of furnishing a secretary at the City Hall. The matter of place of holding the Babies' Clinic, now held in the Board of Trade office, was to be considered. Several women's organizations objected to the Board of Trade rooms as unsuitable for the Baby Clinic. He would suggest accommodation in the New High School. On that account he would move that a special committee be named to consider the whole matter.

## Contrary Opinion.

Ald. Smith objected that there was no accommodation in City Hall. The Baby Clinic had been there and had been found objectionable. The Board of Trade office he considered a community centre.

Ald. Currier asked that information be given concerning method of supporting Boards of Trade elsewhere.

Mayor Clark said they were self-supporting as far as he knew.

Ald. Smith said he understood a grant was given in Saint John. His Worship said that was not correct.

Ald. Ross asked if His Worship as a business man could not give information concerning the functions of the Board of Trade.

## The Mayor's Opinion.

His Worship said he was a member of the executive of the Board of Trade. He could say that some years ago the Board was quite active. Of late years he could not see that the Board had accomplished much except in trans-

ent time was to provide for the extra expenditure which had been incurred on the new school.

## Conference Suggested.

Ald. Mitchell said that it would be a good idea to hold a round-table conference with the School Board and have an understanding.

Ald. Currier said the idea was a good one.

Ald. Ross said that probably something could be found out by it.

Mayor Clark said that the School Board would present a report at some time which would show the items of expenditure.

## Motion And Amendment.

Ald. Goodspeed moved that the request of the School Board relative to legislation be complied with.

Ald. Mitchell in amendment moved that the request lie on the table until a round-table conference be held.

The amendment was declared carried.

Ald. Smith called for a standing vote.

Ald. Goodspeed withdrew the original motion and the vote became unnecessary.

Tuesday the 9th was set for the date of the round-table conference.

portation. At the last annual meeting it had been reported that but one standing committee had been formed that had been the Transportation Committee of which ex-Mayor R. L. Phillips had been chairman. It had been very active and had held numerous meetings. Otherwise there had been little activity. He suggested that Ald. Smith express his opinion.

Ald. Smith said that his opinion was that the Board of Trade was a valuable organization. Its office was a centre for giving information to tourists and others, and many organizations met there.

Mayor Clark said that he favored a Board of Trade but believed that it should not be supported by a public grant. The Board had got into a bad rut depending practically on a civic grant.

Ald. Smith pointed out that a membership fee of five dollars a year was collected.

## Change Might Do Good.

The Mayor said that he believed that a change might produce good results.

The motion of Ald. Mitchell was passed.

Mayor Clark named Ald. Mitchell, Ald. Smith and Ald. Currier as the Committee.

## Hospital Matters.

Col. T. G. Loggie for the Board of Trustees of Victoria Hospital by communication drew attention to the fact that the cost of free and part-pay patients at the Hospital charged up to the city had amounted to \$4,000 which was \$1,000 in excess of the city's grant of \$3,000.

The communication suggested that there be curtailment of the power of issuing certificates for the admission of free and part-pay patients to the Hospital.

## Discussion ensued on the matter.

Ald. Smith expressed the opinion that under existing legislation the city could be forced to pay the required amount of \$1,000.

Ald. Ross disagreed saying that only in the case of Municipalities which gave no grants to the Hospital could that be done. The amount would be considered a debt of honor.

## Excellent Suggestion.

Ald. Mitchell said that there was one excellent suggestion in Col. Loggie's communication which should be considered and that was relative to curtailing the powers of issuing certificates of admission. He had been approached only recently and asked to issue a certificate in a case in which he did not think free treatment was deserved. His refusal was met with a statement from the physician [who] had applied, that he had put the patient in the hospital and he would get the certificate from someone else.

Ald. Ross said he believed he had refused a certificate for the very same case.

## Power Curtailed.

On motion it was decided that the power of issuing certificates for free and part-pay patients from the city would be limited to the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the City Clerk.

## Other Discussion.

Discussion ensued on a number of items in the account of free and part-pay patients from the city, also on the items of the free dental clinic.

Ald. Mitchell commented on an item of \$510 for a woman whose address was given as Millville but who was charged to the city of Fredericton.

Mayor Clark expressed the opinion that the Baby Clinic could be accommodated in the High School. The city contributed toward that in the grant of \$500 to the Victorian Nurse. Application for the same grant had been made.

# CHAMBERLAIN MAY HAVE QUIT

London, Jan. 31.—The resignation of Sir Austen Chamberlain as Foreign Minister is rumored in political circles.

The rumors say that, if he resigned, a peerage would be conferred upon him. Lord D'Abernon, ambassador to Germany, is mentioned as Chamberlain's successor.

# Where An American Hangs His Hat

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