



TRUTH FOR THE PEOPLE

OLD SERIES.—17TH YEAR.

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THE ISLAND AS A SUMMER RESORT.

If there was ever anything of which a city ought to be ashamed, then ought Toronto blush for her shameless neglect of the island lying before her doors. Our city is growing at a rapid pace; the number of "lungs" which she possesses is small, and we should be on the alert to secure every acre of bush, every hill and hollow, every cool breathing place possible for our citizens during the sultry weather.

But what have we been doing in this direction? Really nothing. Through the splendid generosity of Mr. Howard we have a delightful piece of woodland interspersed with hill and hollow in the neighborhood of the Humber; but for this, of course, no credit is to be given to the city. Winter by winter, gale by gale, the sea pounds at the unprotected and unstable sides of the Island; and year by year the area of dry land is growing narrower, till now we are threatened with the total submergence of the place. Three or four years ago a strong appeal was made to the Dominion Government for a sum of money to aid in building break-waters round the Island at vulnerable points, and in response to the request it was contemplated by the Board of Works department to give a handsome sum. But lest the Tory Government should acquire added popularity in Toronto through its generosity, some of those who speak for the Liberal party began to chaff Sir Hector Langevin through the newspapers, and they said that the minister ought to build a roof over the Island. As a consequence the handsome amount contemplated was not given; tiny efforts have been made in the direction of preservation; but the island is rapidly disappearing.

And not alone is the Island disappearing but the bay is filling up, and presently, if the water-traffic with Toronto is not to be completely at an end we shall be obliged to pay out a pretty sum for dredging. We do not know what steps, or if any, are being taken by the City Council to save this valuable piece of land. We do notice, however, that there is an unusual excitement through the city just now about parks, and drives. This is all very well; indeed the idea is a capital one. But the ravines will not run away; tempest and wave are not destroying their foundations. We want the eyes of these gentlemen turned towards the Island, and turned there immediately. It is their duty to avail themselves of the best engineering advice, and to set at work at once so that the Island may be saved from the bombardments of next winter. This question stands head and shoulders above any other presented now for the consideration of the Council; and the citizens at large expect that their representatives will be faithful to their trust. We have to commend His Worship for the many vigorous steps he has taken in the direction of public morals; we now expect that he will use his enthusiastic energies towards saving our Island. Stopping the sale of whiskey is one thing, and a very good thing, but even this will not protect it

from the waves in the storm. Whiskey and water are had; his Worship has taken away the whiskey and left the water!

When one comes to look at the almost criminal neglect shown by the city council in this matter, he cannot but ask himself this question: For what purpose do the politicians of the wards seek election to the council? It would seem as if they did so in order that they might bear the title of Alderman merely. At least this, we are morally certain, is the chief reason. By and by the people of Toronto will come to see that "any body at all" is not "good enough to be an alderman." This city as we have already said, is growing with extreme rapidity; at a rate greater than our city council are aware. Why should they lie on their ears while events run ahead in swift race? Bye-laws will always be necessary; but the city politicians wrangle about sprats when a whale requires their consideration.

Altogether the management of this Island has been very bad. The portions of it exposed to the waves are disappearing; but its heart is becoming the reservoir of poison. Vast stretches of the water so enclosed is stagnant, and the frogs are bidding the unlovely liquid a final good-bye. We know well what this means. Now it is not alone the duty of this city (of course we are entitled to some assistance from the Federal Government) to protect the Island from further inroads by water; but we should take immediate steps towards reclaiming those long reedy stretches now submerged. No attention should be given to those who tell us that in doing this we should destroy those delicious little lakes and necks upon which skiffs sometimes call. There is no scarcity of water; there is plenty of it surrounding the Island. All then contained within the outlying fringes of the entire Island should be reclaimed, and reclaimed at once. It would not be an undertaking of enormous expense; but how insignificant would be the outlay when weighed against this achievement.

Supposing some were to still adhere to the view that a portion of the water-stretch should remain, then why not convert such portion into a place for aquatic fowls as they have in their gorgeous gardens in Hell-fax? From rockeries might rise sprayey fountains; trees might be planted, summer-houses and seats erected; and a thousand and one other things done to make the place inviting, and worthy of the Conroy Island of Toronto. But it is intolerable, nay, it is shameful, that affairs should remain in their present plight.

In connection with the project for reclaiming these water stretches, and bringing the face of the land elsewhere above tide level, we have a suggestion to offer which we hope His Worship and the city council will take into their consideration. At once the work of raising the sunken levels should be commenced. It is the custom now to cart the earth taken out of excavations to some out-lying city lot. Here it becomes, in time, a nuisance; and the person who pre-

poses building is obliged to have the heaps carted to a point still further distant. In this way a constant nuisance is being committed; but thanks to the shortsightedness of our Aldermen there seems to be no remedy. Now, what we propose is this; that a regular scow service, of say one or two or more scows, be established to convey all the matter from excavations to the Island. The cost of filling and raising them would be greatly reduced; while it would be a great convenience to the teamster and builder. Instead of being obliged to cart earth two or three miles, the teamster need but drive down to the city front, and there discharge his load upon the scow. If the Board of Works Committee would consider this matter and do something in it, they would well earn the gratitude of the citizens.

We do not object to the exertions which some of our Aldermen and the Board of Trade are making in connection with the Rosedale ravines. What we do question is the wisdom of allowing to stand a matter that cannot stand without fear of evil consequences. These gentlemen should divide their enthusiasm; and they should give their first, their immediate, attention to the Island.

We do not know enough about engineering to be able to make any suggestions as to what form the defences against the waves should take, but we have read several proposals. It is quite clear that it would not be well to ring the Island about with a heavy breakwater; for that would make an end of the beach, and the beach is the greatest natural attraction at the island. But at the western end of the Island private persons for their own convenience have built narrow wharves or groins, extending some distance into the surf. Experience has shown that these groins not alone serve as a protection for the beach, but gather shingle. Imagine a series of these, sturdily built projecting outward from the threatened portions of the shore. The truth is the Island would soon increase in size, and the harbor-filling process would be at an end. There may however, be some better method than this. If there be, let the City Council get professional advice upon the matter. Something now is needed, and needed quickly.

If we are not mistaken there is a clause in some by-law making it unlawful for persons to set up camps upon the island without obtaining license to do the same. Under such license we believe they are amenable to certain regulations. Well, there are now upon the Island several tents, whether licensed or not we are unable to say. But we do know that these tents, or some of them at least, are without those adjuncts which the cleanliness and health of the Island require. Whatever the duties of the proper authorities the City Council are in connection with these matters, it ought to perform them.

If it is not out of place in this heading which this is to be the first of a series of articles on the subject that since Aldermen

wise pause and consider whether it would not be well for the city to become the possessor of that range of bush-land immediately beyond the first ravine, and owned by a large land company. This bush is "primeval," and it would be a delightful and convenient place of resort for those who did not care to go to High Park or to the Island. We have no doubt but the city could purchase this land at much better terms than it would be able to do ten years hence; and breathing places, spots screened from the sun by leaves, resorts where you may forget the toil of the day and the clink of tireless wheels, is not a luxury but a necessity. Such a purchase would not be an extravagance; nor do we believe that the people of our city would consider it such.

THE YOUNG LIBERALS AT MONTREAL.

Despite the ridicule heaped upon this association by newspapers devoted to the interest of the Conservative party, the greater number of the resolutions which it passed at the late convention held in Montreal commend themselves to the approbation of all true Canadians. It has for a long time past been charged against Mr. Blake and his followers, that is to say Gritdom in its old-fashioned form, that they propose nothing new, that their policy is one of negation, that they are able to pull down but incapable of building up; in short, that all their arguments are merely the cry of Oats seeking to get in. To a large degree these accusations have not been inaccurate; but this is less due to the incompetency of the Opposition than to the attitude of the stars. Sir John Macdonald and his followers took the right side of the question when the discussion arose concerning national policy. They were more en rapport with the people upon the building of the Canada Pacific Railway than their opponents; in short, whether they have or have not been corrupt; whether they have or have not been patriotic, the people have been willing to repose a greater measure of faith in them than in their opponents. This is of course a great measure to be debited to the Opposition party itself. The Liberal interest has always been unfortunate in drawing in its ranks a number of fossils and sticks-in-the-mud; men whose personality has been repellant, or whose views have been "behind the age." Mr. Mackenzie, the most honorable man that ever lived in public life in this country, and whose ties were beyond question, was not ready to lay aside his ideas begotten of old as time-rotten as the rotting of the Anglin is a