

# City Council Decides to Dig Up 10 Feet of Main St. Paving

## Ex-Inspector Carleton's Charge Will be Probed and Results Made Known

### Ald. Jones Asks for Outside Opinion, but Motion is Voted Down--Civic Investigation Under Oath Also Defeated--Mayor and Aldermen Score Hysterical Newspapers--Lively Proceedings at Yesterday's Meeting of Council.

The common council at a special meeting yesterday on motion of Ald. Smith, decided to dig up 10 feet of the Main street pavement at a point to be indicated by ex-inspector Carleton in order to see whether his charge that the concrete was not laid to a depth of 6 inches is correct. On motion of Ald. Baxter a resolution was adopted affirming the belief of the aldermen that the specifications had not been altered in any way.

A resolution by Ald. Jones to appoint two men outside the council to investigate was voted down, as was also a resolution by Ald. Potts to appoint Ald. Elkin and Holder a committee of investigation with power to engage council and take evidence under oath. The mayor and the aldermen generally said some sharp things about the press, and intimated that the silly season was in progress.

Besides the mayor, there were present: Ald. McGoldrick, White, Sprout, Russell, Smith, Jones, Potts, Wigmore, Hayes, Willett, Elkin, Lively, Holder, Vanwart, Baxter, Scully, with the Common Clerk and the City Engineer. The mayor said he had called the meeting at the request of a number of aldermen to inquire into the question of whether the Hassam Company were complying with their contract.

Ald. Jones Explains.

Ald. Jones, said that as one of the men responsible for calling the meeting, he felt it was up to him to make an explanation. It was well known, he said, that ever since the Main street contract had been awarded there had been rumors or complaints that the company had not been following the specifications. Rightly or wrongly the newspapers had made insinuations based on statements of ex-inspector Carleton, that reflected upon the aldermen and engineer. He thought they should have a thorough investigation and satisfy the public.

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CANADIAN COAL CORPORATION.

On motion of Ald. Baxter the council went into general committee.

Ald. Baxter then asked whether Ald. Wigmore had authority for his statement that the engineer had told one of the tenderers that it would not be allowable to substitute a concrete for a dry stone wall.

Ald. White said that that statement was from one of the tenderers.

Ald. Baxter said that, that was the first thing in the whole agitation which seemed to him to demand investigation.

Ald. White said that it was said about town that the contract was the greatest steal ever perpetrated upon the city of St. John. After referring to the unrest he asked the engineer whether any alderman or tenderer suggested to awarding the contract had suggested to him the advisability of substituting an alternative method of mixing concrete.

The Engineer:—"No, they did not."

Ald. White then wanted to know whether the formulae for mixing cement had been changed. There seemed to be some doubt that the right percentage of sand and cement was used.

The Engineer:—"The present inspector sees that the right quantities are used."

Ald. White said there was an impression that Mooney & Son had tendered for the work. It was not generally known that McLeod and McDonald's tender was \$30,000 higher than that of the Hassam Company. He then asked whether the specifications in regard to the size of the stones was being fulfilled.

Permitted Large Stone.

The Engineer said that the Hassam method permitted the use of larger stones and he had allowed it. By the hand mixing method it was necessary to use small stones.

The Mayor:—"You enforce the conditions regarding two-inch stones in the work at the March Bridge, where a different method of mixing cement is used."

The Engineer:—"Yes."

Ald. Baxter said Mr. Carleton had made a statement to the papers that the concrete was only two inches thick in some places. He had not made that statement to the Board of Works. He ought to be brought before the board and asked why he permitted only two inches to be laid.

Ald. White said that the engineer finally came to the conclusion that the Hassam method cost 50 per cent. less than the ordinary method. Other contractors said 45 or 50 per cent.

Ald. Wigmore wanted to know how the flow of water was regulated in the mixer. Mr. Carleton had said there was too much water used.

The engineer said the amount of water was a matter of judgment.

No Tenderer Approached Him.

Ald. Baxter asked the engineer whether any tenderers had approached him and asked whether he would consider a concrete wall in place of a dry stone wall.

The Engineer:—"I have no recollection of any such conversation."

Ald. Wigmore said Mr. MacDonald of MacDonald & McLeod had made a statement that he had approached the engineer in this connection.

Mr. Murdoch:—"Who ever told you that I thought it would be cheaper than a concrete wall?"

Ald. Baxter said in any case the Board of Works had ratified the proposal to permit the erection of a concrete wall. If there was any blame in that connection it would not fall upon the engineer.

Ald. White wanted to know whether the Hassam method was approved by Mr. Murdoch with a view to substituting a concrete for the dry stone wall before the contract was awarded.

Mr. Murdoch:—"I have no recollection of any such overture."

Specifications Not Changed.

Ald. Baxter then explained the action of the Board of Works in ratifying the change to a concrete wall, and asked Mr. Murdoch whether the specifications had been changed at a subsequent date.

The Engineer:—"I have a copy of Troy specifications from which I copied the specifications calling for tenders."

The common clerk took the original from the engineer, and because Ald. Elkin remarked that it was insinuated that his worship was the only honest member of the board, the mayor took the printed copy from Ald. Baxter and the two were compared and pronounced identical.

Ald. Potts wanted to know the difference in the costs of laying the pavement by the different methods.

Ald. Hayes:—"We're concerned with results."

The engineer said he couldn't tell what the exact difference in the costs would be. The Hassam method was employed in New England and had been found satisfactory.

On the suggestion of Ald. Baxter the engineer explained why he required stones of less than two inches in dimension at the March bridge, and allowed larger stones on Main street. On the March bridge contract he said the concrete was mixed in the old way and had to be hand tapped when put down. Consequently smaller stones were required than when the roadway was put down by a steam roller.

Mr. Carleton Didn't Complain.

Ald. Baxter:—"Did Mr. Carleton ever report to you that the concrete was being laid at a less depth than six inches?"

The Engineer:—"No."

Ald. Potts:—"That is a flat denial of Mr. Carleton's statement."

Ald. Baxter:—"Mr. Carleton never told the Board of Works that the concrete was less than six inches. It came out in his letter to the press."

The mayor said Mr. Carleton had told him that in his judgment the concrete was less than six inches. "I think the inspector ought to have

measured it if he had any doubts," he added.

Ald. Potts said he had received a letter from A. Hague stating that on the 19th of July the right proportions of cement had not been used. He handed it to the common clerk.

Ald. Lively said the engineer could not be blamed as he was a busy man. The engineer said he would ask the inspector about the change made by Mr. Hague.

The Mayor:—"Mr. Hague applied to me for the position of inspector."

Not Getting Money's Worth.

Ald. Potts said the impression was that not enough cement was being used, and that the people were not getting their money's worth.

The engineer said that provided the mass of the stone was impregnated with the cement it was not a question of the amount of cement. If the stones were properly locked together the cement the more of them the better it would be.

Ald. Potts thought the engineer had not done his duty. He had not been on the work often enough.

Ald. Potts thought Mr. Murdoch, will you produce your daily record. A charge has been made that you have been remiss in your duty."

Ald. Potts thought they should have an investigation into all the details indicated by Mr. Carleton in order to see if his charge that the concrete was not 6 inches in depth was true.

Ald. Potts said he didn't believe any alderman had been implicated in any grafting transaction.

The Hysterical Press.

Ald. Baxter thought the press were doing an injustice to the council and the engineer, as well as needlessly stirring up the people.

In reply to Ald. Russell, the engineer said that in his opinion the city was getting good value for its money.

The mayor then read the engineer's record, showing how many times he had inspected the work.

Ald. Smith moved that ten feet of pavement be taken up at a point indicated by Mr. Carleton today, and see if his charge that the concrete was not 6 inches in depth was true.

Ald. Elkin said that Mr. Carleton had been remiss in his duty, and ought to have been discharged. They had the engineer's statement that he had not made any reports to him while in the present inspector reports daily in writing. There were 200 schools of concrete in St. John today, and 199 of them were probably wrong. He thought the people did not believe the aldermen were incompetent or grafters, or both. There were only a few editors in the city and seventeen aldermen. He did not think they should be blamed by one or two kickers. Personally he didn't care what the papers said. But he thought it was the duty of aldermen should rest under a cloud.

Ald. Sprout Wants Inquiry.

Ald. Sprout said he was tired of hearing people talking about concrete who knew nothing about it. He thought they should have an investigation. Mr. Hassam wanted it, and it would clear the air.

Ald. Scully said it was only fair to the council, the board of works, and the Hassam Co. that an investigation should be held. Many citizens had approached him about the matter, though personally he had no suspicions.

Ald. Hayes wanted to know whether the road had been rolled before the concrete was put down.

The Engineer:—"Who ever told you that I thought it would be cheaper than a concrete wall?"

Ald. Hayes said he never stood for wasting the people's money. At the same time considering the matter had been so stirred up, he thought they should have an investigation. He had visited Main street seven or eight times, and thought the work looked satisfactory. Personally he had every confidence in the engineer but thought he ought to be censured for not keeping inspector Carleton up to the mark when he was on the job.

Dig Up The Street.

Ald. Baxter said an investigation by a committee appointed by the council would not be very satisfactory. Personally he thought the best plan would be for the council to guarantee the costs of a prosecution by any citizen who was prepared to make charges of a definite character. He thought however, that Ald. Smith's

motion to take up a section of the street ought to show how much truth there was in Mr. Carleton's charges. It might be that Mr. Carleton was right and Mr. Murdoch wrong, but it was apparent that Mr. Carleton had not recognized Mr. Murdoch's authority in the matter. He would not vote for the engineer's dismissal until it was shown that he had done something wrong.

In reply to Ald. Elkin, Ald. Baxter said a committee of the council would have power to take evidence under oath.

Ald. Elkin thought an investigation should be started.

Ald. Lively thought that instead of taking up 10 feet, they should take up a smaller strip in four places.

Ald. McGoldrick:—"Why not take up the whole street and bring it to city hall?"

Ald. McGoldrick said the city was getting the job done for \$11,500 lower than any of the other tenderers would have done the work for, and he thought the machine made concrete was of a good quality.

Ald. Potts thought Ald. Smith's motion should be extended.

Ald. McGoldrick said he was rather in the limelight. Some smart remarks had been inspired to poetry about the chairman of the board of public works. But he didn't wait poetry—he wanted charges. If anybody said he had any connection with the Hassam Company he would deliver the goods.

Business Men Satisfied.

The engineer had been sent to New England to look into paving matters, and he was not convinced that the engineer had forgotten what he learned. So far as he could learn business men in the city considered the paving job was a good one. Mr. Clarke was one of the best mechanics in the city, and in view of the fact that St. John was starting to lay down a lot of permanent paving, he or his associates would not do a bad job, and forfeit all chances of getting another contract. Personally he was not a boodler, and he did not believe any contractor had offered anything to the aldermen. The parties who made such dark hints, should bring in their charges.

The mayor said the aldermen were taking the matter too seriously. If any of them were running for the federal House, the Glasgow mill article would be considered a rather courteous compliment. The council was a butt of newspaper criticism in the silly season, but newspaper criticism was not meddling. Continuing the mayor said he had every confidence in the engineer and personally he would be disposed to ignore the tumult. He did not think they should call upon a supreme court judge to sit upon the fact that one of Mr. Carleton's sons was employed as time-keeper on the Main street work. Apart from that he knew of no charges. He did not propose to appoint anyone to investigate while there were no charges. He had no faith whatever in expert evidence.

Ald. Vanwart said he put no faith in the boodle business, and did not believe in having an investigation without charges.

Letter from Mr. Hassam.

The common clerk then read a letter from Mr. Hassam. The manager stated that the company had given surety bonds to keep up the pavement for two years. If the council wanted the remainder of the work done, the old-fashioned process, the company would comply with their wishes, provided it was relieved of its guarantee. No action was taken on this letter, as all contractors have to give a guarantee bond.

Ald. Smith's motion was then adopted unanimously.

Ald. Baxter then moved that the committee report to the council that after a careful examination of the specifications they had found that there had been no alterations in the specifications.

In speaking to this Ald. Baxter referred to the city's experience in connection with the extension of the water system to Loch Lomond. It was, he said, impossible to satisfy the talkative section of the community, and anybody who tried it was a fool. The council had called in an outside engineer to handle the question, because the people demanded an expert, and later the council was blamed because it did not trust the local engineers.

Confidence in Engineer.

Ald. Lively thought the city would have saved \$50,000 on the water works, if Mr. Murdoch had been in the right place. He was the right man in the right place, and deserved a vote of confidence.

Ald. White said the resolution was rather premature.

Ald. Baxter said it merely stated the set of conditions was not just before one contractor and another before another contractor.

Ald. Potts:—"I think the resolution is unfair to the council at the present stage."

Ald. Baxter:—"Then I withdraw the resolution."

Ald. Willett:—"I remove the resolution."

Ald. Potts contended that the resolution was unfair. The council couldn't press their confidence in the engineer till they had an investigation. Not that he was not ready to give the engineer justice.

Ald. Baxter's resolution was then put and carried.

Yeas—Baxter, Elkin, Russell, Sprout, Hayes, Willett, Vanwart, Wigmore, Smith, Lively, McGoldrick.

Nays—Holder, Potts, Scully, White, Jones.

Council Re-Convenes.

The council was then convened. Ald. Jones then brought in his motion, asking that George E. Fisher and Edmond Bates be appointed to look into the matter, and submit a recommendation to the council.

Ald. Baxter wanted to know what lines the investigation would follow.

Ald. Jones:—"The committee should see if the specifications are complied with, and make a recommendation to council."

Ald. Baxter thought the commission might presume to judge the specifications, which was none of its business. He moved in amendment that the first section of the general committee's report, or Ald. Smith's resolution,

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be adopted. This was carried, all voting for it, but Ald. Jones. The second section, embodying Ald. Baxter's resolution regarding the specifications was then adopted on the following division.

Yeas—McGoldrick, Baxter, Hayes, Willett, Elkin, Lively, Smith, Russell, Sprout, Vanwart.

Nays—Potts, Scully, White, Wigmore, Holder.

Investigating "Impressions."

Ald. Jones' motion to appoint two investigators was then taken up.

Ald. Elkin:—"The two men will not have power to take evidence under oath. The investigation would be a farce."

Ald. Sprout:—"What are you investigating?"

The mayor:—"Impressions."

Ald. Potts moved in amendment that Ald. Elkin and Holder be appointed a committee to hold an investigation and with power to engage council and take evidence under oath.

Ald. Holder and Elkin begged to be excused.

There was some digression and hilarity, which evoked a lecture on decorum from the mayor.

Ald. Potts said his plan offered the only way of getting an investigation. After some discussion Ald. Potts' amendment was put and declared lost.

Ald. Jones' motion was then put but only Ald. Jones, Wigmore, Willett, Scully and White voted for it and it was lost.

The Read's Point Pontoon.

A report was received from the engineer stating that the pontoon at Read's Point, with passenger landing stage had been completed at a cost of \$5,000, and that the Eastern Steamship Company wanted a shed built at the head of the gangway for the shelter of passengers.

Ald. Jones said he understood that the E. S. S. Company were going to protest against the cost of the work. He moved that the Board of Works be given permission to erect a shed, provided the company would pay 10 per cent on the cost of the work.

This was adopted and the council adjourned.

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Boston, Aug. 8.—Ard: Strs "Memo" from Antwerp; Kabinga from Calcutta and Colombo; Schs S. A. Fowles, from St. John, N.B.; Fly-away, from do; Sid: Schs J L Colwell for Annapolis, N. S.; E. Potter for Clementsport, N.S.; Sid: Bradford, C. French for Bathurst, N.B., Sid 6th.

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Liverpool, Aug. 8.—Ard: Str Arabie from New York via Queenstown.

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