

blunder it made in sending Marchand to Fashoda; he has thrown upon the continental powers the responsibility for any changes that may take place in the African situation, and he has intimated that the first of these changes will be the declaration of a British Protectorate.

THE NEW CITY CHARTER.

Some more comments on Civic Affairs.

Whatever may be the diversity of opinions expressed regarding the various topics of discussion in connection with the administration of the civic affairs of Montreal, no open doubt is being expressed of the wisdom of conducting the business of the city more in accordance with the sound principles applied to the management of banks, insurance offices and large industrial enterprises. The most important question under discussion is that dealing with the appointment of an executive Board of Control. The principle or plan proposed has virtually been approved by the Board of Trade, and the members of this important body have also signified satisfaction with the appointment of commissioners by the City Council.

That the Board of Trade does not fully realize what such a method of appointment means is quite apparent. Surely, upon reflection, they will see the folly of hoping for any good result from reverting to a system so faulty and farcical, as the appointment of six aldermen as a Board of Control. If commissioners are to be appointed by a majority of the City Council, suitability for the position is almost certain to be lost sight of in the desire of members to secure the election of the candidate to whom their support has been promised. The men who will make the most promises, the men who know how to manipulate the vote and cajole or control the voter will be appointed. Under the best condition of things, if the appointment of commissioners be vested in the City Council, the men chosen will not be the most capable and deserving.

Suitable and efficient men cannot be expected to devote their time to civic administration for the remuneration now likely to be given. Numerous examples can be cited of the folly of trusting to the city council to select and vote for the best candidates for office. Are the most suitable chairmen selected for the various committees at present? Are the members best qualified to serve on said committees appointed thereto? Does the question of fitness ever seem to present itself to the minds of the council when voting on such matters? If at all, very seldom. Surely, this is apparent to every thoughtful past and present councillor. The great city of Montreal has a so-called Board of Health selected by the city council. Has experience of what this body can accomplish, not alone in the draughting of health regulations, but also in the simple routine of removing the refuse of the city, inspired confidence in the

system responsible for the appointment of the present Board of Health? The scavenging department was removed from the control of the Board at the beginning of the year, and transferred to the supervision of the Road Department; but the new Council in their wisdom again entrusted this necessary but simple work to the Health Department. The result is now known to many an exasperated householder.

There is, at present, what is known as a Board of Chairmen who are expected to consult and advise as to the various appropriations for the requirements of the different departments. What each chairman does at the meetings held for the purpose of ascertaining the best use to which the citizens' money can be placed is to clamour for as large an amount of the available funds as possible for his special committee, and to make his requirements in keeping with his demands regardless of the most pressing need of some more important department. The sooner the Board of Trade and all other representative citizens awake to a knowledge of what is contemplated the better for the future of Montreal. Nothing can be gained, no improvement in the existing state of things will be effected by appointing a Board of Control, a Cabinet, or anything of the sort, no matter by what name known, if the selection of members of said governing or controlling body be left to the City Council. Equally weak is the suggestion that two commissioners be elected by the Eastern Division, two by the western, and two by the central. If there is one thing more than another essential to the welfare of a Greater Montreal it is the abolition of all sectional ideas and prejudices in civic administration. The spectacle of councillors fighting in the interests of sections or wards is a sorry one for those who know aught of the evils resultant from such warfare. Men are wanted who will administer the affairs of the city of Montreal in as economic and advantageous a manner as possible; men who will have the hearty co-operation of the electorate in the work of keeping the city healthy, clean and beautiful; men who will earn the respect of the community by taking the same interest in the management of the city as does the banker, insurance manager, or head of a large trading concern in their respective corporations; men who by reason of being well paid will render good service and give their undivided time, close attention and untiring energy to the duties imposed upon them by their positions of trust and importance. Under existing conditions in Montreal, what is the best method of obtaining such men? It has been suggested in THE CHRONICLE that it would be desirable to appoint three commissioners who, with the Mayor for the time being, and the heads of the various departments, would form the Executive—one of these commissioners to be appointed by the City Council, one by the taxpayers generally, and one by the real estate owners. These men would be under the control of the council in manner stated hereafter, the latter to act in a legislative ca-

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