

## Affairs in Manitoba

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Winnipeg's city fathers have certainly a lengthy programme of civic reforms with which to deal—one which promises to keep all busy throughout the summer months, or even until the expiry of the present council's term in December next.

Prominent on the programme is the jitney question, of which more will be said anon. Another star performance on the programme is the civic wage boost in which heads of departments recommend large advances and no reductions; the 1918-1919 budget in which a boost of four to five mills in taxes is promised, bringing the tax rate up to about 22 mills, and sundry ticklish by-laws on various subjects.

In the civic wage-boost masterpiece the gentle art of camouflage is being developed with even greater perfections as the days roll by. The cleverly drafted schedule of salaries which the board of control now has under consideration, in the shape, or rather in the disguise, of an "adjustment" of salaries, seems nothing more or less than a recommendation for straight increases all along the line. The heads of departments had been instructed to "equalize" the salaries bringing up the lower paid men to the level of the average paid ones, but instead, in the majority of cases all those who are now on the lower rung of the ladder are hoisted to the very top step, no matter if it cost one dollar or twenty a month to bring them up to the best man in their class. The newly proposed equalization is, or at least seems to be, the application not only of an exaggerated principle of democracy, but even of the more advanced doctrine of the Bolsheviki—every man is as good as his neighbour and even better. In not a single case throughout the nine pages of names and figures submitted to the board of control is there a recommendation that any salaries should be cut, or that any member of the present civic staff could be dispensed with, despite the many recommendations from other quarters that fully one-fourth of the staff could be done without. This matter is under consideration, and what the recommendation of the board and decision of the council will be is looked forward to with much interest and not a little alarm.

### Taxes Due by Soldiers.

A by-law to deal with the matter of taxes due from soldiers will be drafted by the city solicitor and submitted to the board of control and city council at an early date. The by-law will give power to the city tax-collector to remit certain percentages on taxes on homes of soldiers and make it possible to pay arrears of taxes by instalments. The new by-law will be of interest to other municipalities contemplating like legislation and contains the following clauses:

(1) The tax collector to be given the power to remit percentages on taxes on homes of soldiers who have served or are serving overseas from date of enlistment.

(2) Percentages on taxes already paid by soldiers, or their dependents, or agents, on soldiers' homes, which accrued since date of enlistment, may be refunded to the party who paid or to the collector to apply to subsequent taxes.

(3) Application for remission or refund of percentages to be made by soldier or some person on his behalf who shall submit a declaration on prescribed form to be filed with the tax collector and the city solicitor to investigate and report on facts of the case when deemed expedient by the tax collector.

(4) In case of property redeemed by the city from the tax sale and placed on the tax roll of arrears, the same may be paid by instalments to be fixed by the tax collector, and such instalments must be sufficient to pay at least one year's taxes within one year from the date of redemption.

(5) Remission of percentages to continue for year from the date of termination of the war or the discharge or death of the applicant.

(6) The benefit of this provision for redemption of property and reduction of percentages chargeable shall apply to the homes of soldiers, whether they are the legal or equitable owners thereof and whether or not the property appears in the name of the said soldier on the records of the lands title office.

### Street Railway vs. Jitneys.

The question of the abolition of jitneys in the various cities of the continent, is also the question of the hour in Winnipeg. The question here has widened into so many other questions that the city council seems quite at sea. The desire of the majority of citizens is to see the street railway a fairly remunerative proposition, to the extent that a fair return should be received on the capital invested.

Several whole nights have been taken up by the city council in discussing the pros and cons of the situation—whether the jitneys should be abolished; whether they should be prohibited from running on routes already served by the street railway, or whether they should be allowed to run as hitherto. As stated before in these columns, the council decided that in face of the financial position of the railway there was no alternative, but to stop once and for all the jitney competition, but further decided that the time was opportune for an agreement with the street railway in which many outstanding points of contention might be solved.

This agreement of twenty-three clauses came before the council at a recent meeting which lasted well into the early hours of the morning, when deliberations came to a stop after the passing of fifteen clauses, the brick wall being a clause proposed by Controller Puttee binding the company not to make any increase in fares. This clause, several members said, would, if inserted, nullify the whole agreement, and if the agreement fell through it would probably mean that the whole question of electrolysis between the city and the company would be revived; the city would be sued for the one million dollars damages mentioned in connection with the jitney controversy; the company would apply to the Public Utilities Commissioner for permission to increase fares, and the city would get nothing in the way of promised transportation improvements such as were laid down in the agreement. At an adjourned meeting the city council decided to insert the contentious clause, and the city stood worse off than if the negotiations had never been started.

### ENGINES NAMED AFTER ENGINEERS.

No new policy undertaken of recent years by the C.P.R. has received such widespread expression of approval as that of naming passenger locomotives after the engineers, who by reason of their fine service or deeds of exceptional heroism have earned special distinction at the hands of their company.

If the engineers themselves are pleased, still more so is the general public, which realizes that an admirable system has been discovered for paying due tribute to a splendid race of men who have hitherto hid their lights under bushels. The C.P.R. is displaying these names in no niggardly fashion. The name are incorporated on the newly adopted insignia of the railway—a circular band enclosing a beaver mounted shield on which is painted the maple leaf. The name of the engineer is shown in letters of gold upon a blue ground; while the green leaf, the white shield and the brown beaver afford a color combination exceedingly striking and effective. This insignia is painted under the windows of the engineer's cab, the most conspicuous and at the same time, most appropriate position that could have been selected.

Jack Hartney, who runs the President's engine when the head of the great system leaves Montreal for the West, has such skill in starting a train that the passengers would not know it was in motion unless they looked out of the window.

Arthur Charlebois has been forty-two years in railway service, and comes of a family of engineers—his father, Pierre Charlebois, having been the eldest conductor in Canada when he died. The tradition is being kept up, for he has a son a fireman on the C.P.R. to-day. Arthur Charlebois was one of the founders of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in Montreal.

Tom Turner is well known and exceedingly popular at North Bay.