

# FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN

## THE IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE VERSUS SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

South End Delegation Asked School Board for Use of Assembly Room for Meetings—Delegation of Teachers Give Reasons Why Application Should Not be Granted—Janitors Want More Pay—Other Business Transacted

Shall the school buildings be used as social centres? This was the question which was discussed and regarded with two delegations appeared before the Board of School Trustees at their regular meeting held last evening.

There were present the following members of the Board: R. W. Emerson, Chairman; M. Colli, George E. Day, Thomas Nagle, E. H. Ingraham, H. Coby Smith, G. Horner, Green and Dr. Bridges, Superintendent of City Schools.

Representing the South End Improvement League, a delegation appeared formed of the following members: A. M. Belding, Commissioner; Fisher, C. M. Lingley, John M. Westmore, Albert Ellis, Thomas Keating, Rev. H. A. Cady, Rev. J. A. McKeighan, Rev. George Scott, Rev. George Morris, Alex. Wilson. There were also present a delegation of the Principals of the city schools, headed by W. J. S. Myles, with the following members, Principals Brown, Harrington, Owens, Steves, Shea, McDiarmid, Ricker, Cormier and Nelson.

A. M. Belding said it seemed to be a case where the School Board were asked to act as judge and jury between the superintendent and teachers on the one hand, and the people of St. John on the other. He would rather feel that the teachers were in harmony with the welfare work carried on and was sure it was only because they did not understand. The South End Improvement League had last year been granted the use of the Assembly Hall in the King Edward School. They had established a playground and this winter a rink, where from 100 to 200 people skated. They planned to enlarge the playground this summer, hoped to have a swimming pool, and gradually to do other community welfare work. There was no suitable hall, and though church halls would be granted to them they were not so satisfactory to work in. Mr. Belding said he understood that the Assembly Hall was used only once in the last six months, and only twice last year. He felt that a campaign had been undertaken by some against this movement as the Trades and Labor Council had received an anonymous letter asking them to take action against the plans. No notice was taken by the Council as one plank of their platform was the use of municipal buildings by the public.

Objected had been made to the use of the lavatories and the danger of the spread of disease, but all that would be necessary to do would be to lock up the lavatories and classrooms. If necessary the League would pay two policemen to stand and see that all had a safe conduct to the hall upstairs. The janitor is paid \$2 each night. The speaker stated that most of those present had boys of their own and would not expose them to danger. He was sure that it was boys from the school who used the building and he thought that it was better to improve such boys at once.

In regard to vaccination Mr. Belding asked if every pupil in the King Edward School was vaccinated, and on being told by Mr. Cormier that such was the case, asked if at public schools all present had to show vaccination certificates. He showed a book giving lists of places in the United States where the Community Centres had been successful and spoke of every school in Montreal and Halifax being used for public meetings.

Mr. Belding spoke of John Bradshaw now of Montreal, after his work in St. John, he had asked the Board to meet on Wednesday night with the League and Dr. Roberts, Dr. Melvin of the

Health Board, and the Teachers' Association, to talk the matter over and settle it once and for all. Revs. H. A. Cady, S. S. Poole, and E. J. MacMurray, who, unable to be present, were entirely in sympathy with the idea, Mr. Belding stated. H. A. Cady agreed with all that had been said by Mr. Belding.

Rev. Cormier, Principal of the King Edward School, on being asked to speak, said that he had studied the matter carefully and felt that if the School Board opened the buildings they would be making a serious mistake. He was strongly in favor of helping the fallen brother, but was opposed to using the school building as a social centre. He thought the work could be carried on in some church hall or a building erected for the purpose. As superintendent of the King Edward School since 1912 he and the ten teachers in charge had tried to keep the building as it should be kept, and he was speaking for the staff when he put up a strong objection to this use. Mr. Cormier then read a letter signed by all the teachers at the King Edward School, stating that they were not in favor of the use of the schools as a social centre.

Mr. Cormier told of boys smoking and throwing matches about after one meeting two handfuls of half-burnt matches had been collected from all over the building from the assembly hall to the basement. Chairs had been left against the radiators and the danger of fire was pointed out. At a large meeting two weeks ago the noise had been something frightful, and while he was engaged in teaching the night school he heard a constant passing up and down both stairways to the basement. He knew there would be damage to the school furnishings. At a time when the General Public Hospital was closed to visitors strangers should not be taken to school buildings. Mr. Cormier spoke of the care exercised by the teachers with the aid of the medical inspector and the nurse.

Asked by a member of the Board if the meetings interfered with the Night School, Mr. Cormier answered that it would practically mean the closing of the night schools.

Rev. George Scott asked if many of the scholars did not attend the movies and if on their return to school they were examined for contagious diseases. Mr. Cormier replied that pupils were looked over carefully two or three times a day.

W. J. S. Myles related the experience of the High School teachers when four years ago the use of the Assembly Hall was granted to welfare work among girls. Words which were not of the most decorous nature had been written on the blackboard. Books were defaced and the teachers' belongings pilfered. A clock was stolen, and the janitor's collection of noise, a great many public meetings had been held in the Assembly Hall with no cause for complaint, but the teachers were opposed as a unit to such community work.

Principal McDiarmid, of the Alberici school, had had no experience with social centres in that school, but could readily see what would happen. His teachers of Alberici School were opposed.

A. M. Belding here made objection to the expression "Our school, my building," as used by several of the teachers. The schools belonged to the city, he said. He stated that Dr. Carter, superintendent of education, was an advocate of schools for community work.

Dr. Bridges said that he was strongly interested in raising the standard in the city but he was not in favor of the use of school buildings in this way. The whole city was full of influenza, and the assembly halls should be closed. He had been told that the Alberici school at Amherst had never been quite the same since the work introduced by Mr. Bradford. Dr. Bridges told of his visit to the United States and his firm conviction that it was not in the best interests of the schools to thus open the buildings. Dr. Pearson of Philadelphia had advised him strongly against it. Dr. Bridges said that he had been teaching for nearly fifty years and he felt his opinion should stand against Dr. Carter's. He was in favor of night schools and vacation schools, but he urged the board not to authorize the use of the schools for community work as yet.

Principal Nelson, of Winter Street School told of his experience with

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE LOSES OUT IN U. S.

Senate Turns Down the Resolutions for Resubmission of the Amendment.

Washington, Feb. 10.—Woman suffrage, by federal constitutional amendments, was beaten again today in the Senate.

The House resolution for submission of the amendment failed of adoption, with fifty-five votes in favor of it and twenty-nine against, one less than the necessary two-thirds.

Thus ended what leading suffrage champions had said in advance would be the final test of this session of Congress. The suffrage advocates went into the test knowing that they lacked one vote, but hoping to the last that it would be won over.

Mr. Belding.

He told of the speech of Dr. Roberts at the last Teachers' Association on the dangers of disease, and felt that it was wrong to allow the use of school buildings when they could not be kept in a proper condition as the teachers would have no control. Mr. Belding said that Dr. Roberts had not expressed himself as against the movement.

Principal Ricker of the Centennial School related experiences of the MacDonald School at Kingston. Dr. Carter's home. He told of the danger of fire during the four years in which the building was used outside school hours, books lost, writing on the board, and all other objections.

C. M. Lingley stated the objects of the league and thought that where the boys and girls were the same ones who met every day some of the reasons given against the plan were not of much weight. Thomas Kilian thought Mr. Cormier exaggerated the noise made during the meeting.

M. D. Brown of the Dufferin School spoke against the use of the schools.

The delegation of janitors, Messrs. Thomas Hill, George Oldfield and John Black, appeared asking on behalf of the school janitors an increase of 20 per cent. instead of the 10 per cent. recently granted. Thomas Hill referred to his cost of living, increased price of materials used, and the fact that no one could live on the salaries granted unless they did extra work.

After this delegation had withdrawn on motion of M. Colli it was decided to leave the matter of the use of school buildings to the committee appointed for that purpose at a previous meeting. R. B. Emerson and Dr. Bridges moved to adjourn.

R. H. Green asked to have the motion authorizing Mr. Hill to do work at Centennial School rescinded as the work had not been done. Mr. Day moved this and Mr. Green seconded the motion which was passed.

A petition was read from Millville asking for a school there, where grades 7 and 8 would be taught. Only up to grade 5 is taught at present and children have to walk three miles a journey to town.

This was left for the visitor, M. Colli, and Dr. Bridges to report upon. A letter was read from Fred Magee stating that the application for \$200 for vocational training would have to go through the usual channels.

The request of the female teachers for more salary was referred to be taken up later on.

Miss Robinson's request for more salary was left to the teachers' committee. The matter of a supervisor for buildings was discussed.

Mr. Emerson spoke of his regret at leaving the board and the very pleasant associations he had with all its members during his eleven years' work. He named the members and with complimentary words paid a tribute to the painstaking efforts of the staff, especially Mr. Leavitt. Each member of the board present voiced their appreciation of the splendid way in which the chairman had performed his duties and the harmonious way in which the board had worked together.

Dr. Bridges said that the chairman enjoyed the respect and esteem of all.

Messrs. Day, Smith and Nagle were appointed as a committee to look into the matter of a supervisor and report later.

Mr. Day spoke of the Alberici School and this was referred to the building committee with power to act. Capt. Gale was granted leave of absence and half pay till the end of June.

Mrs. Welsh, a caretaker for twenty years, was given salary for three months. The matter of the janitors' salaries was left till the next meeting. Commissioner Fisher, who was present, spoke a few words, and on motion it was decided to adjourn till next Monday.

## MEETING AT STONE CHURCH YESTERDAY

Women's Auxiliary to Raise Large Amount for Canadian Missions.

A meeting was held at St. John's Stone Church yesterday afternoon in the interests of the Women's Auxiliary. Rev. G. A. Kuhring presided and after hymn and prayer spoke on the object of the meeting. Mrs. Heber Vroom read a paper giving reasons why every woman who is a church member should be also an auxiliary member. Mrs. Cortland Robinson gave a talk telling of the apportionment of \$25,000, which is to be raised by the W. A. for the work among the Eskimos and Indians. The share of the Diocese of Fredericton in this sum is \$1,654, and it is hoped that of this St. John women will raise a very large amount. Mrs. Kuhring followed with an explanation of the way in which Great Britain had taken charge of the mother country free to assist in other and newer fields. Mrs. George E. Smith spoke saying that some definite decision should be reached as to how to raise this money and that the energy which had been given to patriotic efforts could not be better used than in work for the spread of the Greater Kingdom.

Mrs. J. A. McAvity said that she felt that church work should be a matter for all and that social welfare should lead all back to the church. Miss Edith Skinner and Miss C. O. McGivern each pledged the help of the societies they represented, the Girls' branch and the Mothers' meeting.

The meeting closed with an informal discussion of the work of the auxiliary.

THE BEAVER HUT  
ENTERTAINMENT

Excellent Programme Last Evening for the Soldiers—Was Enjoyed Under Auspices of the Y. W. P. A.

The Beaver Hut entertainment last evening on Barrack square, under the auspices of the Y. W. P. A. was thoroughly enjoyed by all, as from a variety of same refreshments and musical programme, all that might lend enjoyment to the event was readily at hand.

Some of the participants in the musical and literary programme were: Reading, Miss Jean Teed; vocal solo, Miss Cohen; piano solo, Miss Peterman; reading, Miss Ross, and a step dance by Private McLaughlin of the Seventh Canadian Garrison Battalion. The work of the Y. W. P. A. starts the day before the ship docks, when a staff of nine workers changes 50 loaves of bread into sandwiches, and attends to all preparatory details in connection with the cook stove and pantry. On an average landing day over 400 gallons of coffee is consumed, 100 quarts of milk, immense quantities of cocoa, about 20 loaves of brown bread, biscuits and small cakes. Two girls are regularly assigned to the duty of looking after small children and assisting in other ways. Three bands of workers, of nine members each, are usually required for each boat, and work under the direction of Misses Perry and Wood of the Y. W. P. A.

The boy scouts are also "doing their bit." Three troops representing St. John's church, West Side, and the Centenary Methodist, and Waterloo street Baptist churches, report for duty before the docking of the ship. They carry apples, magazines and other comforts to the soldiers, procure water and run messages for the various relief organizations, and do anything they can to help along the work of welcoming the soldier and his dependents. Before the arrival of the vessels the boys also gather magazines from various sources, stamp and tie the bundles and have them all ready for distribution when the boat comes in. Over 8,000 magazines, so collected, were sent overseas on the S.S. Grampian, to cheer up the boys who may return on that vessel.

THE GOOD WORK  
AT SAND POINT

Voluntary Aid Department With Boy Scouts and Others Do Much to Make Happy the Arrival of Passengers from Overseas.

Not much has been said or written about the good work that the Voluntary Aid Detachment is doing in making the debarkation at the West Side docks a comfort and pleasure for the returning civilian and soldiers' dependents. The work of the V. A. D. starts the day before the ship docks, when a staff of nine workers changes 50 loaves of bread into sandwiches, and attends to all preparatory details in connection with the cook stove and pantry. On an average landing day over 400 gallons of coffee is consumed, 100 quarts of milk, immense quantities of cocoa, about 20 loaves of brown bread, biscuits and small cakes. Two girls are regularly assigned to the duty of looking after small children and assisting in other ways. Three bands of workers, of nine members each, are usually required for each boat, and work under the direction of Misses Perry and Wood of the Y. W. P. A.

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## HOW BELGIANS SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF GERMANS

P. A. N. Verbucke, Brussels' Business Man, Tells of Conditions in His Country During the War—Huns Were Cruel and Seized Food Sent by American Relief Committee—Huns Turn Machine Gun on Tram Car.

An interesting visitor arrived in the city yesterday on the Transatlantic, in the person of P. A. N. Verbucke, a business man of Brussels, Belgium, who was in that city all the time of the German occupation and is able to tell of first hand something of the hardships suffered by the inhabitants inflicted on them in the name of German "hunger."

All that has been told about German cruelty is true, in fact the whole truth has never been told," said Mr. Verbucke, "and although I have never seen any cases of child mutilation, I know it has been practiced by the Huns. While none of my immediate family were mistreated by the invaders, my brother-in-law, who was accused of spying spent two years and three months in prison. I was on the black list and my home was visited at frequent intervals and searched by Germans in an effort to find treasure."

He said the Germans seized everything in the way of foodstuffs they could lay their hands on and not only that but took at least half of the food sent over by the American relief committee, which they had pledged themselves not to touch, this once more showing how they regarded any promise made, when it suited their convenience to break it.

During the war butter sold in Brussels at 36 shillings a pound; potatoes 2 shillings a pound; bread 12 shillings a pound and beans 7 shillings a pound. Last December eggs sold at half a crown each, and clothing and other necessities were priced in proportion.

During the occupation the Huns had a playful habit of calling on business men and demanding money. If the proprietor of the establishment visited

ed did not at once comply with the demands, or if the total sum on hand was not sufficient to satisfy the greed of the visitors in many cases the man was shot dead or if not killed was given good cause to remember his callers.

Mr. Verbucke told of one incident which happened since the armistice. He was in a tram car, going to his place of business, and on arrival at the north station a machine gun was turned on the tram by some German soldiers. The passengers all lay down on the floor of the car and escaped injury with the exception of one who incautiously raised his head and was killed. This was done out of mere devilishness and to terrorize the people.

He leaves tonight for Boston and will later visit other American cities to interest the manufacturers of printing machinery and supplies in export business with Belgium. Before the war practically all his business was done in Germany, but now the Belgians wanted to do business with the Allied nations, and it was his mission to interest manufacturers on this side of the water in shipping goods to them. Machinery of all kinds was badly needed as the Germans had stripped the country bare and there was a promising field for those manufacturers who cared to place of the trade.

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