

The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, THURSDAY MORNING, JAN. 26, 1911

THE INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL.

It is a fact worth noting that in the daily contribution which the Times is providing in its advocacy of government by commission there is little or no argument from which an intelligent reader can deduce reasons why this new experiment in civic government should be adopted in St. John. There is plenty of abuse for The Standard. In no measured terms we are condemned as an enemy of civic reform, as an assassin who would huff this infant progeny of all the civic virtues and its foster parents can provide for it. And why? Because The Standard accepted the invitation of the Times to undertake the task of enlightening the public, but, to the ill-concealed annoyance of this narrow-minded journal, elected in so doing to take an independent attitude, and, while withholding a final judgment, to present for the consideration of the people facts and arguments on the negative side—to show the weaknesses and faults in this new system—and thus enable them to weigh carefully both sides of the question. That the action of The Standard has been appreciated may be gathered from a communication which appears in another column.

But the Times is not content. There are no two sides to this question in the opinion of the Times. It is commission rule for St. John or ruin and degradation for the city dire and complete. There is no middle course. Measures of reform, better men in the Council, more businesslike methods, none of these things can be accomplished without commission government. And the Times hugs to its bosom "The Detachment of the City Boss" and quotes copious extracts from its vade mecum to prove what the detachment of the boss means for Des Moines. "This is all very interesting, but it does not enlighten us as to why we should have commission government in St. John."

Here and there amid a vast amount of verbiage and little argument, we have detected commendatory references by the Times to certain features of government by commission, and have dealt with them from the negative side in previous articles. It has been shown that the system has grave defects. In Galveston we find the commissioners control the situation politically, and that graft is in evidence. In Des Moines, despite all the reforms which a new form of government might naturally be expected to create, the press of the city speak of bickerings, strife and political deals among the commissioners. An instance has been quoted showing how boss rule has been perpetuated by the autocratic powers given to the new rulers.

The Times, with the assistance of an article in Hampton's Magazine, made some extended reference yesterday to the initiative, referendum and recall, which we are told are special features in the Des Moines plan and "constitute the strength of Mr. Berryhill's theory." Mr. Berryhill, it should be explained, is a patriotic gentleman who has devoted much attention to providing a remedy for the graft, bossism and political dishonesty which are so prevalent among a certain class of cities in the United States, and is virtually the author of the Des Moines plan.

It is noteworthy in passing that this plan is described as "Mr. Berryhill's theory" which suggests at once the question: Are we in St. John to revolutionize our form of government to demonstrate the advantages of this man's theory—a system not yet three years old—to take a leap in the dark because in other places, where conditions are admittedly entirely different to our own, the experiment, it is claimed, has so far met with success? This, we submit, is a fair question without prejudice or bias, and, when we add the weight of evidence which is daily accumulating that there are many objectionable features in this plan, it becomes a vital question which the people of St. John will do well to ponder over.

The initiative, referendum and the right of recall we are told constitute the strength of the Des Moines plan, and are a safeguard in the hands of the people. Taking the negative side, let us first consider what the commission plan does. It reduces the representation of the people to five men in whose hands are placed a mighty power over the city. They appoint, suspend, or dismiss, all officials and employees of the city; they rule over everything the city possesses, or in future may possess; they are to control the order, morals, and progress of the city. Everything will depend on them. It is an enormous power that will rest in their hands.

Against this power of an oligarchy, as a protection to the people, are set up the initiative, referendum, and the right of recall. They are undoubtedly good provisions, but they will in no sense counter-balance the powers granted to the commission. In a community such as St. John the initiative, referendum and recall would be but a lame defense against the misconduct or inefficiency of autocratic commissioners with friends and connections scattered all over the city, and with every civic employee dependent upon their goodwill. Even if a petition signed by only ten per cent. of the voters is all that is necessary, who will undertake the work, and pay the expenses of securing such a petition?

One of the strongest arguments in support of this view presents itself in the situation today. If we are to believe the advocates of this new plan the system of civic government in St. John is so rotten that nothing less than an earthquake, a revolution, will suffice to set us on our feet. Has the public spirit of ten per cent. of the citizens led to this discovery? Has there been any concerted movement to abolish the Common Council as a useless machine? There was dissatisfaction, we admit, but it went no further. A small body of enthusiasts, the Advertising Committee of the Board of Trade

organized this movement. Will these gentlemen, if the commission plan carries, consent to remain in office as watch dogs of the commissioners, get up these petitions and see to it that these safeguards fulfil their purpose? St. John is not built that way.

If the initiative, the referendum and the recall will accomplish all that is claimed for them, they could easily be incorporated into the present system with other improvements which suggest themselves, such as a smaller council, more frequent meetings, and more systematic methods. It is not necessary in order to secure the benefits of these provisions to force upon the people the attendant dangers and imperfections of the commission plan.

THE STRUGGLE IN AUSTRALIA.

The Federal Parliament in Australia and the States are about to enter upon a keen and momentous struggle. It is officially a struggle concerning the amendments proposed to be made in the Constitution. The objects are:—

To give the federation unfettered powers to legislate with regard to all trade and commerce, internal and external, all industries, companies, corporations and trusts, and all kinds of employment.

To enable the federation to pass laws nationalizing anything which Parliament, by resolution, deems a monopoly.

Put briefly, all this means better wages and industrial conditions. Actually the issues go deeper, and involve what has been quite truthfully described as a struggle to the death between Centralization (the Commonwealth) and Home Rule (the States) as the principle of government. Some politicians go further, and say that the referenda which are to be taken will determine whether the Commonwealth is to cease to be a Federal Union at all and to become a unification like South Africa, or whether the State Parliaments, with all their home rule powers and petty sovereignty, are to be swept aside.

If the constitution be expanded in the directions indicated, and the Australian people say that they desire the supreme industrial legislator to be the Commonwealth, then the State Parliaments will become practically only provincial councils, and the advent of unification will be proclaimed. If the people say that Home Rule for the States is essential for the country's economic development, and that only in a limited number of purely national matters such as defence, customs and foreign policy shall the Federation be supreme, then the Commonwealth's course of steady expansion will be checked.

The Labor party in the Federation stands behind the constitutional alterations with the not too unanimous support of its State colleagues. On the other side stand two-thirds of the State Governments, four-fifths of the six State Parliaments, and the majority of the newspapers.

A GLIMPSE AHEAD.

A United States census bulletin recently issued contained the result of all United States census figures for one hundred and twenty years. An especially interesting part of the figures reveals the fact that the population of the United States in 1790 was just about equal to that of Canada in 1890. Also, the United States population of 1890 and 1810 respectively coincide with the Canadian figures for 1900 and 1910.

The various American census figures are as follows:—

1790	3,929,000	1860	31,443,000
1800	5,308,000	1870	38,558,000
1810	7,238,000	1880	50,155,000
1820	9,635,000	1890	62,622,000
1830	12,866,000	1900	76,603,000
1840	16,069,000	1910	91,920,000
1850	23,191,000		

However rapid the population increase of Canada is, it is not likely, says the Ottawa Journal, that this country will gain new citizens very much faster this century than the United States has gained in her century and a quarter of history. Therefore these figures are as intelligent an indication of Canada's future growth as may be obtained anywhere. And so Canadians who are now twenty years of age and who linger here to the Psalmist's further limit, will see a population of Canada of about 40,000,000.

Looking ahead with the eye of faith it should not be long before Canada will be as wealthy, as populous, as successful as the American Republic of today.

Current Comment

(Hamilton Spectator.)

As usual, Hon. Mr. Pugsley is the mark for the critics of the Opposition, on this occasion the cost of drill hall construction being the subject under discussion. It seems that since the Laurier government came into power there have been some thirty-three of these buildings constructed, at a total cost 28 per cent. higher than the estimates. Mr. Pugsley doesn't seem to think that 28 per cent. excess cost is anything to make trouble over, and, come to think, perhaps he is justified in his belief. Twenty-eight per cent. is really a small thing as the financiers of the Laurier government are in the habit of figuring.

(Vancouver World.)

The medical health officer of Toronto has given orders that all school books used by children in that city suffering from infectious diseases, must be destroyed, thereby preventing them from falling into the hands of other pupils. Previously, the books were disinfected, but it was found that the process did not render them entirely harmless and, accordingly, it has been decided to make absolutely sure that this means of conveying contagion shall be eliminated. The school board here might very well take example from the Toronto board in this matter.

(Montreal Herald.)

There's something very human, and not at all on the angel side of nature, in this story about paupers leaving English workhouses to collect their pensions, having a glorious weekend drunk, and then slipping back. It is very naughty of the old fellows, but they are undoubtedly having the time of their lives, while it lasts.

(Atchison Globe.)

Some young men complain that because they are young no one pays any attention to them. Nothing in it. A young man who does effective work attracts more attention than an older man, because it is more unusual. If you deserve to attract attention you'll get it.

(Bangor News.)

A Los Angeles newspaper is planning to have copies delivered by aeroplane to its subscribers. It is hoped the subscribers will not complain if the aviators do not at first get off and slip the papers under the door mats.

(London Free Press.)

The loss through "neglect or worse" of \$100,000 guarantee money on the Quebec bridge is not Tory campaign literature. The painful story is contained in a Government record.

CIVIC REFORM MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

Correspondent Does Not Believe in "Swallowing" Everything Said and Written About Commission Idea

To the Editor of The Standard.

Sir,—It is pleasing to note that The Standard shows independence enough not to "swallow" everything said and written about government by commission without investigation. There is no argument, or even common courtesy, in saying "The Standard is decidedly trying to prejudice the people of St. John against the commission plan by quoting from its enemies." If all debates in parliament were on the same lines the masses of the people would be very much in the dark as to the doings of parliaments.

Commission wants to be reasoned out as well as government policies. What is wanted is light and facts so that people can weigh matters and vote intelligently. The electors as a whole, and more especially many of the business men, have not the time or opportunity to study the workings of the commission in Des Moines. The writer spoke to several of our business men on the above subject and found them to be well informed. They were unacquainted with the rate of taxation of that city, how the taxes were levied, or even the number of population, or the extent of the manufacturing business carried on, the city debt, the amount of money expended on streets, schools, water, and other civic requirements, as compared with St. John. No reasonable person can find fault that many of the business people are not conversant with the conditions of other cities.

On the other hand the journals who find so much fault with those who do not agree with them and claim that the commission is going to cure all civic evils, ought to enter upon a campaign of enlightenment instead of abusing the paper that gives the people a glimpse of the weaknesses of commission rule. Let the Telegraph and Times take up the different departments of our own civic government, say first for instance the Board of Works, and show how much money was spent on the different requirements of that board outside of salaries, and show how many men are employed and their individual salaries, the number of hours they work per day. Then point out how much could be saved under commission as compared with the present method, either by reducing the staff or otherwise. Deal with all the other departments on the same plan.

Figures, authenticated facts, not generalities are what are wanted, and they should in all fairness be placed before the electors by the papers and men who are promoting commission. The perusal of books on the end of boss rule gives no comparison between St. John and other cities.

Yours,
SEEKER AFTER INFORMATION.
St. John, Jan. 25, 1911.

GRIM TRAGEDIES IN NOVA SCOTIA

Two Sons of Captain Lones Drowned While Skating—Farmer Instantly Killed by Team at Shubenacadie

Halifax, Jan. 25.—Two sons of Captain Lambert Lones, Middle Lehave, were drowned last night shortly after six o'clock while skating on the Lehave river. They were crossing to Cleversley's Point and skated over ice which they had been warned was not safe. The ice broke, and both were precipitated into the water. The swift current hurried the bodies beneath the ice and it is probable that they will never be recovered. The boys were only sons and were aged twelve and sixteen.

Instantly Killed.

Isaac McKay, resident of Mill Village settlement, a short distance from Shubenacadie, was instantly killed this morning by a freight train from Halifax for Truro at McKay's crossing. His wagon was broken to pieces and both horses he was driving at the time were instantly killed. McKay leaves a family of seven, also a widow. The freight left Halifax this morning for Truro in charge of Conductor Lutes. At McKay's crossing the accident took place. McKay was crossing the track with a span of horses attached to a load of hay, was thrown from the load and killed instantly.

FRANK B. CARVELL ILL WITH TYPHOID

Ottawa, Jan. 25.—The first member of parliament to fall a victim to the present alarming typhoid epidemic in Ottawa is Frank B. Carvell, member for Carleton Place. This morning his physician diagnosed his illness as an attack of typhoid.

There are at present 200 cases in the city. The epidemic is due to the pollution of the Ottawa water from which the capital gets its supply.

HUGH WARBURTON P.E.I. RHODES SCHOLAR

Charlottetown, Jan. 25.—Hugh Warburton, aged 22, fourth year arts student at McGill, has been appointed Rhodes scholar for Prince Edward Island. He had a brilliant record at Prince of Wales College and McGill has been editor of college papers at both institutions, and won a \$100 scholarship at McGill, also a prize for the essay on the Aborigines, Eastern Canada and other prizes. He had a high standing also in athletics.

The Standard's Old Reporter

"I've been trying to find out why my friend the New Reporter of the Times gets so excited every time he thinks or hears of Carl Marx," remarked Uncle Hiram as he fell down the steps of the Carnegie library.

"Have you succeeded," I asked. "I have that. I've been reading Hegel's Philosophy of History, and Das Kapital by his disciple Marx; and I've come to the conclusion that what troubles the New Reporter is the doctrine of economical determinism. Marx says that doctrine is the key to history. And the New Reporter knows that his angel and protector Pugsley is up against that doctrine pretty hard, and he knows Pugsley is going to swat his editor because he can't puncture that doctrine. Marx did not discover the doctrine. Every man in the street recognizes it and applies it when he expresses the opinion that a government in a country like Canada, where there are no foreign questions to influence opinion, can not be defeated so long as the country is prosperous."

"Isn't the country prosperous now?" I asked. "Not at all. It's merely progressive, and as everybody knows the more progress the greater poverty you have. The trouble is the Laurier-Pugsley crew have not had sense enough to put a stop to the general activities of the combines and prices have recently advanced much faster than wages. At the next election the people will say to themselves, 'We are worse off than we were 6 or a dozen years ago. They'll say we'll have to kick out the government that has been in power so long and increased taxes so much.'"

"That's what Marx means by economic determinism, or the materialistic conception of history. And that is why the name Marx, or any reference to his fellows, so excites the New Reporter of the Times."

SEATS SOLD FOR 10 GAMES AT MONTREAL

Montreal, Jan. 25.—A peculiar situation confronts lovers of hockey in Montreal. Ten games remain to be played in the league series, and every reserved seat has been sold for the entire ten, so that the man who wants to see a game once in a while will have to take his chances with the mob in the rush seats in the north end of the rink, or buy standing room, if he can get it.

This peculiar situation was brought about in response to the demand for seats for next Saturday night's game between Ottawa and Wanderers. The management opened a sale for subscribers, each subscriber agreeing to take the seats he wanted, and he could not have more than four, for the ten games remaining to be played during the season.

About half of the reserved seats were sold on Tuesday in this way, and the remaining half went before eleven o'clock this morning, each purchaser signing a contract by which he agreed to take the same number of seats for each of the games to be played. Russell Bowie will referee the game on Saturday night.

BOTH GUILTY VERDICT IN KETCHEL TRIAL

Marshfield, Mo., Jan. 25.—Guilty of murder in the first degree was the verdict returned by the jury in the case of Walter A. Dingley and Gode Smith charged with the murder of Stanley Ketchel, pugilist.

Sentences of life imprisonment were recommended for both defendants. The jury was out 17 hours.

Attorneys for the defendants announced that an appeal to the supreme court would be taken. They will allege prejudice and that the verdict was not according to the evidence. Both defendants were in the court room when the verdict was read. Neither seemed disturbed.

HARVESTER, JOAN, UHLAN IN ONE RACE

Cleveland, Jan. 25.—One of the greatest races in the history of light harness sport may be a feature at the grand circuit meeting at the North Randall track next August. At the Cleveland athletic club yesterday Capt. David Shaw declared his willingness to match Joan, his champion four-year-old trotting mare, 2:04 3/4, against Uhlán, the world's champion trotter, with a record of 1:58 3/4, and the champion stallion of the world, The Harvester, 2:01. Uhlán is owned by C. K. G. Billings, and The Harvester is owned by August Uhlén of Milwaukee.

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supposed to be Almerian from Halifax, N. S. Blacksmith, Mass. Jan. 25.—Sir Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm, from Southampton for New York, 353 miles east of Sandy Hook at 4:30 p.m. Dock about 4 p.m. Thursday.

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