

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"There is a set of men in the city of London who are known to live in riot and luxury upon the plunder of the ignorant, the innocent, and the helpless—upon that part of the community which stands most in need of, and best deserves the care and protection of the legislature. To me, my lords, whether they may be miserable jobbers of 'Change alley, or the lofty Asiatic plunderers of Leadenhall street, they are equally detestable. I care but little whether a man walks on foot, or is drawn by eight horses, or by six horses; if his luxury be supported by the plunder of his country, I despise and abhor him. My lords, while I had the honor of serving his majesty, I never ventured to look at the treasury but from a distance; it is a business I am unfit for, and to which I never could have submitted. The little I know of it has not served to raise my opinion of what is vulgarly called the monied interest; I mean that blood sucker, that muckworm which calls himself the friend of government; which pretends to serve this or that administration. Under this description I include the whole race of commissioners, jobbers, contractors, clothiers and remitters."

"These are the words of Lord Chatham in reference to the pig-headed government of George the Third and its satellites," said Brown, "but they apply with equal force to all the governments of Canada at the present day. If there is any difference it lies in the fact that whereas in Lord Chatham's time the blood suckers and muckworms were mere hangers-on, this tribe now practically form the majority of those who govern us. During the investigation of the Rykert raid this individual stated publicly that he had only done that what all the rest of his colleagues did whenever opportunity offered, and the recent disclosures of the McGreevy raid prove that he spoke the truth. Sir John and his government did not dare to throw Rykert overboard because he threatened to expose the whole gang, and Sir John will have to stick to the member for Quebec for the self same reason. If Mr. Tarte publishes all he knows of the wholesale brigandage of the 'inner ring' the next election will prove a bigger surprise to the corruptionists than the last election in the States was to their brothers across the line. Sir John will find that old Abe Lincoln was right in saying: 'You can fool some of the people all the time, and you can fool all the people for some time, but you can't fool all the time.'"

"That may be," said Gaskill, "but he referred to Americans, to men whose ideas keep up with the times and who would not be content to march in the hindmost section of the rearward of progress, the same as we do. These intrigues and falsehoods, this corruption and moral depravity of the government, this wholesale brigandage of its supporters is neither of to-day or yesterday; it has existed for years, and the masses have borne it patiently and without a murmur. For less than half of what can rightfully be laid to the doors of our government a king of France was hurled from his throne and decapitated by the ancestors of the very men who, to-day, quietly submit to a government more venal, more oppressive and corrupt by far than that of Louis Capet. Our English ancestors lopped off the head of a Stuart king, and some of us feel quite proud of it yet, but can anybody tell me in what respect the government of Charles I. was more oppressive on the workers of his day than our government is on us. George III. lost the fairest jewel in England's crown by taxing the American colonies beyond what they considered the point of human submissiveness and endurance. Yet the cost of the thirteen lieutenant-governors, their courts and hangers-on was nothing compared to the cost of our governments, where one successful raid on the treasury often amounts to more than the cost of the thirteen second-hand governments with the state chareh thrown in, amounted to in a year, and yet we stand it."

"Not only that," said Sharkey, "but you actually elect such governments to power again and again. Your rulers, with the power of money at their back, and on one side the guns and bayonets of constituted authority and on the other a subservient church ready to anathematize you in case you asserted your rights, rob you with impunity and defy you to do your worst to thwart them. How far the so-called free press can be relied on is shown in this McGreevy scandal to perfection. The papers are as silent about it as the grave, but had a striking laborer but hurled a stone through the window of his employer's office it would have been heralded through the length and breadth of the land. Then these same public moralists would have had leaders by the column, descanting upon the sacred rights of property, the danger to society and democratic institutions, and with one accord called upon the proper authorities to rightly enforce the law and

make an example of the culprit, so that this class would understand once and for all that justice cannot be outraged with impunity in Canada, at all events."

"That the 'free press,' said Garlic, "is in the pay of these corruptionists is plainly demonstrated in this same affair. 'Instruct your newspaper friend at Esquimault to agitate for the enlarging of the graving dock in his paper,' were the written instructions of McGreevy to his partner in iniquity, and presto, the editor becomes patriotic, and after enumerating the great resources of the country and the necessity of developing them, shows distinctly that this can only be done by having the graving dock enlarged so as to accommodate the largest ships afloat, which would undoubtedly come to the port. Public meetings are held, petitions are circulated, and extras of the paper appear advocating the improvement and nobody knows who pays for it, unless it be the editor, who is looked upon as the most public spirited man in the town; and if a grateful people have not, before now, placed him in their civic chair they ought to be ashamed of themselves, for it may reasonably be supposed that the people of Esquimault are as big fools as the people in other parts of Canada. The politicians have captured the country by dividing the people on national and religious questions, and actually imagine they have a mortgage on our life. There are not a few such in Montreal, and if the people will but assert their rights to elect the men of their own choice, these gentry will be taught such a salutary lesson that they will not forget as long as they live."

BILL BLADES.

THE WATER TAX.

EVIDENCE OF TENANTS BEFORE THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

The special civic committee held another meeting on Thursday evening to take evidence from workmen who were in a position to testify on the water tax question. There were present Ald. Rolland (chairman), Stephens, Martineau, Thompson, Gauthier and Conroy. The examination of witnesses was conducted by Ald. Stephens. The first called was Mr. Poutry, who stated that the average rental of the workingman's house was from \$8 to \$9 per month. The collection of the rate, in his opinion, should be made twice a year, and the office should be open at night for the benefit of the working classes to enable them to pay their taxes. All discounts should be abolished. It was considered a good principle in the States to put the rate on the rental. As far as he understood it the present system was unjust, but proportionate on the lower rentals.

Mr. L. Jehu corroborated Mr. Poutry about average rentals. The present system of levying the tax leaves room for fraudulent prac-

tices among proprietors and tenants; and landlords, for their own interests, desire their property to be assessed as low as possible, and to obtain this they undervalue in a fraudulent manner. There must be collusion between proprietors and tenants, one to evade property tax and the other the water tax. He was of opinion that the water rate should be abolished and raised on real estate as the only just way in which it can be levied. He did not think any alteration of the tax should deprive the workingman of his franchise. He considered the present tax unjust as the lower rentals were taxed at a greater percentage than the higher. Witness was decidedly in favor of having vacant land contribute its quota to the water rates. With reference to the objections about the water and special rates, a law might be enacted whereby all those who occupy dwelling houses of \$150 and over rental per annum could have their rates paid as per an agreement with the landlord, but upon all houses under that rental the rate should be paid by the landlord. If the present system was to be continued the rates should be collected quarterly.

To Ald. Thompson, he said it would be a great convenience to workmen to have places for collection open, say, from 7 to 9 at night in various sections of the city.

Mr. William Darlington followed. He read at some length from papers in his possession. Previous to his examination he desired to know if the committee as constituted could be termed a representative one, seeing that there were no tenants on it.

Ald. Stephens was of the opinion that they were as competent as the tenants to deal with the question, and that was borne out by the fact that the people sent them to Council.

Mr. Darlington still maintained that they were not sure of even getting justice after they had given their evidence. He said it was acknowledged that rents consumed about one-fourth of a man's wages without taxes. At some length he stated that the present system inflicted a hardship not only on tenants paying low rentals, but upon small proprietors. He advocated placing the tax on all lands along which water pipes were laid excepting public schools, free public hospitals, free institutions for the deaf, the dumb, the blind and the insane. If the present system was to be continued the percentage charged on the rental should be the same on all rental values. On being shown the Minneapolis tariff he disapproved of it, but considered the rates fairer than our own.

Mr. J. P. Clark considered the water rate too high from the fact that the lower rentals paid a higher percentage than the higher. His opinion was that by an economical administration the water could be supplied at half its present price by levying the tax on all real estate with other taxes, excepting, of course, schools and hospitals. Churches, he contended, were just as well able to pay as he was. He included in his exemptions all charitable institutions. He was for placing the tax on vacant and unimproved land and properties, but believed it should be a real estate one. He also favored quarterly payments. In answer to questions put by the City Treasurer, witness said in his opinion the house of \$200 rental paying a \$10 tax, as against a house paying \$100 rental and paying \$5 taxes, the former uses more water than the latter, even in the case of an equal number in the family. On being shown the present tariff, and noticing that a house of \$200 rental is charged \$17.75 for water, and one of \$400 is charged \$32.75, the witness thought the proportion reasonable.

This is the last meeting for taking evidence and the committee will now consider the testimony given prior to making up their report.

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