A SWEEPING REFORM

About to be Initiated in Housing the Working Classes.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PROMOTER OF THE ENTERPRISE

The Principle May Strike at the System of Yearly Tenure and Monthly Payments—The Landlord will Assume all Taxes and Inaugurate a System of Rent Insurance—The First Steps Already Taken to Carry out the Project—Full Text of the Prospectus

GEORGE PEABODY, the philanthropist, will perhaps be remembered, in the ages to come, by his generosity and far-sightedness in endeavoring to provide comfortable homes for the worthy poor. His benefactions to meritorious works were munificent, but his workingmen's dwellings gave vent to an idea, crude, perpaps, at first, but one which has been followed out and improved upon to the advantage of the wage-earner. Some of the large cities and towns in the United States and England, where the workingmen's living districts had become congested from over-population, had followed in the foot-steps of the generous American, and now, in Montreal, a similar scheme is in the experimental stage, with every prospect of success.

The readers of the TRUE WITNESS will be particularly interested in the present undertaking, as the experiment is being made in the heart of the Irish colony. Mr. Herbert B. Ames, who has made the sociological question a life study, has given particular attention to this portion of the city, and the progress of several new blocks of workingmen's homes, at present in course of erection, will be watched with considerable interest. It is setting an example to other Canadians, and is not at all anomalous with the system of exceedingly cheap rents which has prevailed in certain quarters. No one, acquainted with the facts, will deny, for a moment, that, under present conditions, certain so-called dwellings are an absolute menace to public health. Yards and alley-ways, to classify which as unsanitary is very mild, abound in numbers much greater than the average citizen ever dreams of in Montreal, and sometimes so close to a healthy well built thoroughfare that their existence would be unknown to all except those who are compelled to live in then were it not that nature has gifted man with the sense of smell.

The following prospectus, for which there has been a great demand, succinctly explains the objects and the proposed methods of work of the Improved Dwellings of workmen in Montreal:

Improved Dwellings for Working People.

These dwellings are intended for sober, industrious workingmen, who wish to live near their work and desire comfortable homes at moderate cost.

As the houses have eight-inch solid brick walls, double floors and an air space in the roof, they will be warm in winter and cool in summer.

All the tenements (except two) comprise a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and water closet. The floors of the kitchen are to be of concrete, so as to prevent dampness.

Each family will also have a separate balcony, stationary wash tub, cooking range, sink, cupboard and closets, clothes drying apparatus, coal bin and other modern conveniences.

The space between the back, of parallel blocks, will probably be paved with asphalt, so that it can be kept clean and wholesome for the children to play in.

Garbage bins will be provided, beneath the pavement, where such refuse as cannot be burned may be out of sight and smell.

The rental will include all municipal taxes, water taxes, cost of lighting the entry ways with gas, care of courts, etc Prices will be as follows:—

For the two flats in large corner house, $2.25 per week.

For the sixteen flats in ordinary houses, $2 00 per week.

For the two flats in small corner house (with one bedroom only), $1.75 per week

Rents must be paid *in advance*, and will be collected every Monday morning. Prompt payment will be insisted upon. Tenants in arrears must expect to be made to vacate without delay. The management will also claim the right to evict any tenant who may make himself objectionable to his neighbors.

Repairs caused through a tenant's neglect will be made at the tenant's expense. Any tenant remaining for one year in the same premises, paying rent promptly, and having incurred no charges for repairs during that period, will be entitled to two weeks occupation *rent free.*

It is expected that the dwellings will be ready for occupation on or about January 1st, 1897.

Application forms can be obtained, after November 1st, at No. 5 Metcalfe street, and apartments will be assigned in the order of application. References will be required from each applicant.

A TRUE WITNESS reporter called on Mr. Ames, with the idea of being able to lay before our readers the real facts in connection with the case. That gentleman, who is already well known in Montreal as in the front rank of those who advocate and strive for social reform, was only too happy to give all the desired information. To begin with, he explained that at the present time the matter was one of private enterprise and largely experimental. He had great confidence in the ultimate success of the enterprise, similar ones having exceeded expectations in other cities where the possibilities were less favorable, Birmingham (England), for instance, being used as a particularly striking example. In Birmingham there were almost stupendous difficulties to overcome, but they were overcome with the aid of the Corporation, and now one of the most disreputable sink holes in the Black Country has been turned into a section of cleanly, comfortable homes, at rentals within the reach of the poorest artizan. The Experimental Blocks in Montreal are situated from numbers 160 to 170 William street, or, rather, are bounded by Ann and Shannon streets. The first block fronts on Shannon street: the second faces the other way, into a wide private court, which will be made as attractive as possible. These two blocks would practically cover about half the ground set apart for this purpose, the intention being to further build next year, or as soon as the enterprise proves itself to be self-sustaining. Under the present idea there will be accommodation for twenty families, and, if the rest of the ground is covered, room for as many more. The Birmingham plan has been followed, blocks of houses being built so as to stand at right angles to the street. This enables the architect to practically abolish the tenement or barrack plan, and by giving one entrance to only four families, enables each to enjoy privacy that is at least partially home-like.

The reason why this particular part of the city was selected is, that, within a radius of half a mile, a great deal of employment is given to steady, sober and industrious working men. Their early hours absolutely necessitate their being near their work, while the paucity of wages precludes the possibility of paying more than a very moderate rental, the result of which is that landlords, who, in a large percentage of cases, are not over particular about the condition of their property so long as a paying interest on their outlay is returnable, neglect the sanitary precautions that are now recognized as necessary in all civilized communities. The rapid increase of population, and the convergence of the working classes to central points, has thus necessarily congested the residential districts, and it is with the object of, in some measure, remedying this evil that the present movement is being followed. Its success at the present moment is beyond peradventure, for its objects are good and the details of its working, as has been already proven, very practical. Mr. Ames' idea is, that should the present movement prove the success he expects, the investment will pay five per cent. With this inducement offered the capitalists, there seems no reason for doubt whatever that in a short time it would become very much more extensive. There are many rich men who really have the good of their fellow-citizens at heart, and who would be willing to enter an enterprise if a reasonable assurance against absolute loss could be given. In this connection it may be well to remember that the most successful movements of this kind have been carried out on the five per cent basis. In fact, in many instances, it is made a *sine qua non* that this percentage shall be the limit, any surplus being turned into property improvement.

The new scheme is not at all intended to compete with landlords who collect ten dollars or upwards per month; it is for the amelioration of the condition of the wage-earner who can afford to pay no more than seven or eight dollars, and who is obliged to live in the district where such rents are obtainable. The natural result has been that the oldest style of houses have been kept in scant repair enough to be sometimes mere places of shelter, populated as thickly as a warren, without any idea whatsoever as to modern conveniences. Instead of the lofty tenement plan, the present idea is to make little homes only two stories high: there is no necessity yet for building in the air. In the meantime, it is proposed to make the renting contract for the shortest time possible, as the success of a scheme like this depends altogether on the promptitude with which obligations are met. A good instance of this perhaps would be the Riverside dwellings in Brooklyn, or the new Boston buildings recently erected by Mr. Tufts, which latter have been so remarkably successful that already a reduction in rent has been made possible. There is no doubt that occasionally worthless or disreputable characters will find their way into dwellings of the proposed sort, and occasionally it might be found difficult to get them out if rent was paid promptly. Under the proposed system, which looks, in the first place, to honesty and respectability, a tenant objectionable to his neighbors may be removed in a very short space of time.

Another feature of the improved dwellings idea is one that will commend itself to all who have made even a partial study of sociology. The weekly rent system, and the condition of weekly payments in advance, may seem somewhat harsh at first sight, but there is another advantage of the system which should not be forgotten,—it is the intention to originate a system of accident assurance, so that in case of a tenant being debarred from work, through serious accidents or certain specified diseases, the rent would be forthcoming from the company insured with. This would protect the landlord and avoid the necessity of evicting worthy people through inability to pay rent from no fault of their own.

As to the effect the project will have on real estate values in the neighborhood, Mr. Ames thinks that it will be practically *nil*. One thing, however, he does hope for, and that is, that it will indirectly be the means of influencing, if not forcing, landlords in the vicinity to provide better accommodation and healthier homes for the people who are obliged to live where rents are cheap. From a public point of view, and not from a mere humanitarian one, the erection of decent homes would seem to be a question of sufficient importance to be designated public.

Another point, that will commend itself to the ordinary tenant, is the fact that in the new scheme the landlord assumes all the taxes. How difficult it frequently is for the average workingman to pay his water tax is only too well known, whereas had an opportunity been given of paying the tax little by little in his rent, it would have been a comparatively easy matter. The improvident class is not the one the promoters have any sympathy for, or wish to cater to, and the encouragement of honesty, industry and respectability is the motto of this semi-philanthropic movement.

CATHOLIC SOCIETIES.

There has been a good deal of energy in the ranks of the prominent figures in American Catholic societies in bringing about an affiliation of the various parish organizations under one government. The Catholic Mirror in a recent issue refers to the fact that in some cases there has been a desire to ignore ecclesiastical supervision. We give the article in full:—

The Rev. B. M Bogan, of Rahway, N.J., has just succeeded in carrying out a project that has been in his mind and the object of steadfast effort on his part for some time: namely, the amalgamation of all the Catholic young men's associations of the diocese to which he belongs into one common union. There are about twenty of these associations belonging to the principal cities and towns of the diocese and these have now all been associated, with Father Bogan as the general spiritual director of them all. Bishop Wigger has approved the formation of this diocesan combine, and, as in unity of effort and purpose there is always strength, it is expected that the work accomplished by the various societies will be more valuable than ever before.

Catholic societies are a most important adjunct of religious, moral and intellectual work, and there can hardly be too many of them. They should be multiplied in every parish; for one of the best evidences of their value is displayed in the warmth with which they are encouraged in the Protestant churches. Without them many Protestant congregations would probably go to pieces. Among our Protestant friends, however, they seem to be esteemed mostly on account of their usefulness in a social sense. They unite the younger people and cultivate among them the greatest good feeling; and thousands of persons attach themselves to certain Protestant congregations, because of the vivacity and charm of the social atmosphere, the friendships, the visiting, the pleasant entertainments all through the winter and the many agreeable diversions nearly always going forward.

With our Catholic societies there is generally something of more solid purpose, although recreation and pleasure are an object also. And these organizations are, for the most part, flourishing very encouragingly. Many of them are of literary character; some cultivate athletics and a few have even ventured into the turbulent and uncertain domain of politics. The distinctive intention in all cases, however, is that they should be recognized as Catholic societies, and they are very careful to use the name of Catholic.

Still, we have heard of one or two of such organizations which objected to any supervision or control over its proceedings being exercised by the Catholic clergy—nay, even to receiving counsel from such a source, the societies preferring to go forward and conduct their affairs upon their own hook. Some of the members have even resented manifestations of good will from ecclesiastical sources and have indulged in thoughtless talk about the freedom of laymen in the management of social affairs and the absence of any necessity for the interference of the clergy. There have been several foolish and scandalous disputes of this character in the very State to which we have just alluded, New Jersey. The pastor in each instance naturally withdrew, having no desire to push himself.

Any society wishing to operate upon this basis has a perfect right to do so, but it has no right to adopt the name of the parish in which it is located nor even to assume the distinctive name of Catholic. When the society takes the name of Catholic it assumes to be connected with the Catholic Church, to conduct its work under her auspices and with her sanction, to claim her good wishes and protection, and to carry in the presence of the world the prestige which belongs to her. Yet for a society to demand all this and at the same time repudiate ecclesiastical approval and supervision will appear to disinterested minds a little audacious.

For it is very well known that while these societies are well meaning and worthy of encouragement, there are among the members youthful and thoughtless spirits who, on occasion, might betray themselves or the whole body into some extravagance. Indeed, we can conceive how mistakes might be made very deplorable, and hence, perhaps, great shame and scandal, as they bear the name of Catholic, be brought upon the Catholic Church. Individual Catholics have, of course, the right of organizing any sort of society and of conducting its affairs in a Catholic way; but, unless they have obtained clerical authority to do so, they have no right whatever to call it distinctively Catholic. There are several societies in Baltimore, the members of which are Catholics, but, the Catholic clergy not having any official relations with them, do not call themselves distinctively Catholic societies. When the name of the Catholic Church is adopted it is necessary and proper that the clergy representing her should exercise some supervision and control over the body, otherwise very mischievous results might follow; and any Protestant congregation would exact as much. Imagine an association formed in the parish of Mount Calvary Episcopal Church and calling itself the Mount Calvary Club; at the same time declining to allow the clergy attached to the church any control over its affairs or even to know what was going on. Such a club might be nothing more than a convivial society for the promotion of good fellowship on Sunday or other enjoyment. We can imagine how quickly the authorities of Mount Calvary Church would repudiate such a body and declare that it had adopted the name of the congregation without any right whatever.

HON. M. F. HACKETT.

Grand President of the C.M.B.A., to be tendered a Public Reception.

Ever since the elevation of the Hon. M. F. Hackett to the office of Grand President of the C.M.B.A., the members of the various executives of the branches of that organization have expressed a very earnest wish to tender them with a public reception.

A meeting was held on Thursday last, and the following committees were appointed to carry out the design

Reception Committee—Grand Chancellor [illegible] Dr Germain and Presidents H. J. Ward, [illegible]; W. J. McEnroy, [illegible]; M. J. Phalen, 50; J. Cahill, 54; J. Fenodl, 74; S. Gaudry, 82; J. Courtois, 87; A. H. Spedding, 150; J. Girard, [illegible]; Gaspard Keiffer, 183; J. Olivier, 190; N. Racine, 191; F. Riel, 196; A. A Lariviere, 207; A. T. Martin, 226; G. A. Carpenter, 232; F. X. Lenoir, 240; J. Fournier, 95; F. X. Lacavalier, 171.

Invitation Committee—The Joint Chairmen and Brothers P. Reynolds, A. B. Potvin, W. J. Rafferty, T. P. Tansey, J. Fournier and P. C. Shannon; L. Beland, ex M.L.A.

Hall Committee—Brothers C. O'Brien, C. Dandurand, A. H. Spedding, B. Charbonneau, A. T. Martin, J. Kieffer, T. Cahill.

Musical Committee—Brothers G. A. Carpenter, J. A. Deniger, A. St Germain, J. Gunning, Dr. Rivet, S. Gaudry, F. X. Payette, F. Riel.

Refreshment Committee—Brothers H. J. Ward, T. M. Ireland, J. Olivier, J. Cullen, J. Beaulieu, J. Clement, S. Lecourneau, N. W. Racine.

Printing Committee—Brothers J. Coffey, Thos. Styles, N. Lemoreau, J. Beardon, Geo. Paquette.

Treasurer—Brother F. X. Lenoir.

Secretary—Brother J. J. Costigan.

Assistant-Secretary—Brother J. A. Deniger.

The reception will likely take place at the Seminary Hall, at the end of the month. Much interest is being taken by all of the Branches and the event promises to be a most successful affair.

WHERE SHIPS WILL TRAVEL BY LAND.

An English magazine contains the following:—

One of the great wonders of modern engineering is the ship-railway, now almost completed, in Canada. It will be the first of its kind of any size in modern times, although the idea is as old as the hills, and ships were hauled over the Isthmus of Corinth 2,000 years ago. In Cornwall, too, there has been a ship-railway on a small scale since 1826. Instead of locks in the Bude Canal—which runs between Bude and Launceston—they have inclined planes, and the boats, which are provided with small iron wheels, are drawn out of the water, up the plain, and into the higher level canal.

But the railway across the Chignecto Isthmus, over which ships will be carried from the Bay of Fundy to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, will surpass anything of this kind ever constructed before. Ships laden with one thousand tons of cargo will be lifted out of the water, placed on the railway, transported seventeen miles overland, and safely deposited in their own element again.

The railway is necessarily constructed of great strength. There are four lines, in two pairs, each pair being 18ft. apart; and the tracks run in a perfectly straight line from one end to the other, over a moderately rolling country. Only two engines will be required to haul the biggest ship, and it is expected that the journey will occupy two hours. The cost of this great undertaking will be £1,100,000, and it is now nearly completed, having been begun in 1888.

But even this is going to be surpassed by a railway to connect Georgia Bay with Lake Ontario in Toronto. This will be sixty-six miles long, so that the curious sight will be witnessed on it of ships thirty miles away from water. The grade in some places will be as much as 22ft. Probably it will be worked by electricity, as there is water power to the amount of 100,000 horse-power available. It will cost £3,000,000, or more; and yet all it will do for the ships is to save them a journey of 300 miles round by Detroit.

The United States, however, has a project which will put even these in the shade, if it ever comes to anything actual. Already half a million dollars have been spent on Parliamentary, surveying, and other preliminaries, and when completed it will have cost £10,000,000. This is no less than a ship railway joining the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans at Tehuantepec, on the narrow neck between North and South America. It will carry the ship to a height of 726ft. above the sea level, and there will be one grade of 52ft. The heaviest weight that will be carried—including ship and cargo—is 7,000 tons. The rails will be six in number, and of immense thickness and strength. The distance from sea to sea will be 134 miles, and the time occupied 18 hours. Fancy a ship, almost as large as an Atlantic liner, travelling at the rate of ten miles an hour at a level of 726ft above the sea!

THE COST OF TUNNELS.

In comparing the four great tunnels of the world there is seen to be a very remarkable decrease in time and cost of the successive works. The Hoosac tunnel, the oldest of the four, cost £400 a foot; the Mont Cenis, the next in date, cost £95 a foot; the St. Gothard cost £73 a foot; and the Arlberg, the latest in date, cost only £40 a foot. This rapid decrease in cost, within comparatively few years, is a marked indication of the great progress in mechanical methods and improvement in rock excavating tools. A still more striking result exists in the case of a tunnel through the Cascade Mountains, on the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad. This unlike those named which were excavated in old settled countries, the terminal easy of access, was in a peculiarly difficult location, so much so that it took six months to convey the machinery to the spot. Rivers had to be [illegible] aside, bridges built, and material transported over improvised roads [illegible] hundred miles of forest [illegible] fields, yet the tunnel [illegible] wide, 22 feet high, and [illegible] was bored through [illegible] twenty-two months, [illegible] feet a month [illegible] ed tunnel of only [illegible] a foot.

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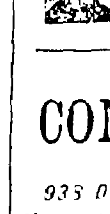

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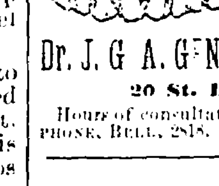

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Awards, from $5 to $5,000 each.

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7-13

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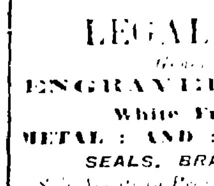

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Legal Notices.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, } District of Montreal. }

SUPERIOR COURT.

Dame Marie Louise Lucie Olivine Pellerin, of the City and District of Montreal, wife common as to property of Napoleon Lesage, civic employer, of the same place, Plaintiff; vs. the said Napoleon Lesage, Defendant. An action in separation as to property has been this day instituted against the said Defendant.

Montreal, 26th September, 1896.

AUGE, GLOBENSKY & LAMARRE,

11-5 Attorneys for Plaintiff.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, } District of Montreal, } No. 2378.

Dame Albina alias Malvina Demers, of the City and District of Montreal, has, this day, instituted an action in separation as to property against her husband, Ferdinand Bouchard dit Lavallée, joiner, of the same place.

Montreal, 20th August, 1896.

SAINT-PIERRE, PELISSIER & WILSON,

11-5 Attorneys for Plaintiff

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, } District of Montreal, } No. 1557. SUPERIOR COURT.

Dame Julie Lalonde, of the City and District of Montreal, has, this day, taken an action, for separation as to property, against her husband, Hermenegilde Laniel *dit* Desrosiers, trader, of the same place.

Montreal, 9th September, 1896.

GEOFFRION & MONET,

10-5 Attorneys for Plaintiff.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, } District of Montreal, }

SUPERIOR COURT.

Agnes Spalding, of the Town of St. Louis, in the District of Montreal, has, this day, taken an action in separation as to property, against her husband, Charles Lavallée, trader, of the same place.

Montreal, September 24th, 1896.

ANGERS, DeLORIMIER & GODIN.

12-5 Attorneys for Plaintiff.