

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1921.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Before this faddish scheme of vocational training obtains a stranglehold upon our civic finances, it may be well for those in charge of our revenues to look closely into what is going on and compare results to date with what we were promised by the promoters of the plan. Apart from helping to provide a provincial position for Mr. Fletcher Peacock, acquiescing in the desire of Mr. Fred Magee of Westmorland, and almost enabling the owners of the old Oddfellows Hall to unload that property on the City, it appears that we have done little besides provide entertainment, and some sort of instruction for the wives and daughters of professional men and wealthy merchants, and also, in many cases, for those professional men and wealthy merchants themselves.

We were told when this scheme was first proposed that there were hundreds, possibly thousands, of young men and women in this city who had been deprived of the opportunity of properly equipping themselves for their life's work, and who would be only too glad of the chance which a well equipped vocational school would afford. This is not the way it works out. Take the motor mechanics course, for instance. It is found that the persons whose occupation in life is the repair or sale of motor cars, or anything connected with the motor industry, put on their coats and make a "bee line" for home when the clock strikes six, that they spend their evenings going to the movies or with their friends, and that a steam roller could not drive them to the vocational schools. They get quite enough of that sort of thing in their daily work. Their places in those classes are filled by professional men and by their wives and daughters, who are thus at public expense receiving the education which a technical college would ordinarily provide at the expense of the students themselves. The cooking class is not attended by stenographers contemplating marriage, or by maids who desire to command higher wages, but by women in charge of their own homes—wealthy people, for the most part, who have ample time at their disposal. And what is true of the cooking class is true of the other domestic courses, including sewing, millinery, etc.

When a boy or girl is about to enter one of our public schools, a permit is demanded on application made by parent or guardian, and the conditions implied are that the child is in need of education. But although the City treasury is paying for the maintenance of the vocational schools, any one who so desires may appear at these classes and attend regularly without any conditions, without a permit, without the need of such education being shown. And indeed the vocational schools have lavishly advertised for a greater enrollment, glad to get anyone at all to fill up the classes.

When an applicant for the position of teacher in one of our public schools appears, all sorts of qualifications are required. There is a standard enforced by the Department of Education and rigidly adhered to, but practically anyone who so desires may claim to be a vocational teacher. The local director of Vocational Education in St. John was placed here so the Standard has been assured not only without the consent of the St. John Board which provides the money, but without that Board ever having been asked to consider this teacher's claims. And the Standard is also credibly informed that the Chairman of the Vocational Board has objected to this appointment, but has objected in vain. Yet we are asked to put up thousands of dollars to carry on. We want vocational training properly conducted as a part of our common school system, but we do not want the absurd pretense of a tenth rate technical school masquerading under the guise of a vocational system, failing to reach the people it should reach, and rapidly destroying whatever sentiment may have existed in favor of the proper system of this matter. Before the thing goes too far let it be carefully examined.

PILFERING AT THE DOCKS

"That the U. P. E. police should be equipped with revolvers, as is the case with the regular police, was remarked this morning by a police expert, in commenting on the widespread pilfering of liquor and other goods at the West St. John docks. "Someone will be shot if the tactics continue," he concluded. Pilfering on board ship and in the sheds at Sand Point is practically out of hand. Bottle snatching and even the carrying off of cases of liquor is done quite openly," The Globe.

The so-called "police expert" who made the foregoing statement thereby

showed his utter ineptness for the position. Men who cannot cope with thieves without taking their lives, or otherwise injuring them, have no business on a police force. We do not want Spracklinism introduced in this part of the country; we are civilized down here. In the East End of London, where desperadoes from all parts of the world are to be found in greater numbers than in any other place in the Universe, the London police are not allowed revolvers, or any other protection than their batons, and yet they manage to keep order, and yet seldom get hurt themselves. We have no hand in this country to equal the five-foot that is to be found around the London docks, but the police there do not allow the situation to get "out of hand." What a confession of weakness to come from a police expert that their job is too big for them!

"Some one will get shot if the tactics continue." Then the man who does the shooting should "swing" for it. Better, far better, that every bottle of liquor in the sheds should be stolen, if there is no other way to prevent it, than that any man should lose his life for so trivial an offence. There is altogether too much disregard for the value of human life in some quarters in this country. Civilized peoples do not whip out a revolver at every little provocation they receive; this sort of thing is left for the barbarians in some of the Western States, and the Greasers of Mexico. The idea that the various laws may be enforced at the point of a gun, should be driven out of the minds of those who have the task of enforcing them; a gun may only be used in self defence, and then only in the last resource.

If thieving is going on at the docks, it should undoubtedly be stopped, and the thieves severely punished. If the situation is getting "out of hand," the remedy is to increase the police force; but the adoption of the Sinn Féin tactics advocated by the "police expert," will not do at any price.

THE "NON-POLITICAL" BOARD OF HEALTH

The Times declares, "It would be most unfortunate if partisan politics entered into the consideration of any thing relating to Public Health in any of the counties of the Province."

The Times is a constant source of delight, and the mixture of charming naivete and fearsome anxiety with which it makes this solemn declaration is not the least of its charms. It was most unfortunate when politics was injected into matters relating to the public health of this Province; when the Foster Government, desperate for funds and without policy, conceived the idea of making the municipalities pay the bills of a Provincial department. The whole Public Health Act as it stands today is the result of Dr. W. F. Roberts' insistence on a job for himself, and represents the last feeble effort of a party devoid of a policy to start something new. Even Mr. Veniot, with all his originality, has never attempted to make the municipalities pay for his so-called "durable roads." Nor does the Provincial Treasurer exact from each parish a portion of the amount necessary to provide salaries of his office staff. It is not on record that the Secretary for Agriculture has ever gone on a barn-storming tour through the various county councils to persuade them for the maintenance of a department. The Department of Public Health stands alone in this respect. It has the unique position of being a political institution from start to finish, and consists very largely of an ingenious method of direct taxation for the purpose of bolstering up the falling finances of the Foster Government.

THE DOG TAX

The imposition of the Dog Tax has caused a considerable amount of discussion in various County Councils at their recent annual meetings, and it does not appear to be at all popular with most of them. The contention is put forward in most instances that in each county there is a considerable balance in hand to the credit of the fund, so it is folly to go on adding to it. This argument is not without reason. In view of the fact that the money cannot be used for any other purpose. At the same time, it would be the height of folly to discard the tax at this time, for the immediate and only result would be an enormous increase in the number of mongrel curs which would be found roaming about the province. As long as a man is called upon to pay a tax for every dog he keeps or harbors, he is not going to keep a lot of worthless brutes around his place; but take the tax off, and he won't care. The simplest way out

of the difficulty would seem to be to keep the tax in force and put it into the general funds of the municipality, and let the municipality pay the sheep-bills. There is often a good deal of maudlin sentiment expressed when any mention is made of taxing the poor man's dog; but the tax does more good than harm, and it is difficult to understand why any man should object to pay so small a sum as one dollar to be able to keep a dog that he values.

Apparently when asked to get down to brass tacks and state specifically just what reductions should be made in the proposed budget for the coming year, some little difficulty was experienced by those taxpayers who accepted the Council's invitation to discuss the matter. This is not altogether to be wondered at, for there are many reasons why individual citizens might prefer not to object to particular appropriations. The feeling, however, is none the less strong that expenditures as a whole are increasing at too great a rate, and that the Council should itself have courage enough to take an axe and chop off some of the excrescences growing upon the civic financial tree. The public services must of course be maintained in a reasonable state of efficiency; but any expenditure that is not absolutely necessary to maintain this, might well be left till some future time, when money is easier.

It is altogether characteristic of St. John that at the first meeting arranged by Mayor Schofield for the presentation of views on the reduction of civic expenditures the principal speakers were a group of delegates asking a very largely increased grant for the Free Kindergarten Association. Now the Free Kindergarten is an excellent institution and has been most efficiently and most economically managed for a number of years by the group of ladies who have so earnestly devoted themselves to this work. But as a matter of fact St. John City has no more business to vote money for the support of the Free Kindergarten than it has to provide long boots and playing cards for the P. M. Islanders. The Free Kindergarten and every other kindergarten with the exception of those established for the few should be under the control of the Board of School Trustees and form a part of our public school system.

The Telegraph says that "there is no cause to worry about the ability of the local government party to carry out." Nobody is worrying, dear friend; for all realize that the Foster Government is absolutely incapable of doing any damage. It is in a minority in the House, and cannot carry on at all except by the grace of other parties. It will have to keep in the straight and narrow way, and even at that, it cannot get along without the support of either the opposition or the farmer group.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Electoral Ignorance.
 After an election campaign in North Oxford, not many years ago, the story was told that several electors were induced to go to the polls to vote against the Fenians, and that one man travelled several miles to give a plumper against Oliver Cromwell. The story was probably exaggerated, though it may have had some foundation in fact. But any man who goes to the polls at a few days ago a member declared that in his own constituency, within 25 miles from London there were country villages which went to the polls at the last election to vote for Gladstone, and where public meetings had never heard of Lloyd George. Vox populi vox Dei, etc.—Woodstock Sentinel-Review.

Sir Sam on the League.
 Sir Sam Hughes, one of the best known and probably one of the last of our Canadian belted knights, has been in London and stirring things up a bit there in accordance with his custom. He has been interviewed and has said something that is at least interesting. The most striking remark Sir Sam yet has made is that the League of Nations is practically a dead thing; that it will cease to exist within a period of three years; that it is a useless thing anyway and might as well be dead; that its place ought to be taken by an organization that is capable of performing real functions; that it is based upon hypocrisy, inasmuch as when a man talks peace, "look out for him; he will wallop you on the first opportunity."—Western Paper.

Scepticism.
 Senator Knox was recently compelled by financial affairs to visit a boom town in the West. In the evening, as he sat in the office of the corrugated iron hotel trying to digest a dinner of salt pork and beans, the landlord thrust a three-cent cigar into his hand and said, "I certainly am proud of Broomville. Would you believe it, sir, that two years ago there wasn't a town here at all!" "Humph," said Senator Knox. "And what makes you think there is one here now?"—Detroit Free Press.

Reducing His Library.
 Maurice Hewlett has reduced his library to twelve toms, devotes an effort to have fewer and better books about him. This reminds us of the story told of an Australian miner who had made a fortune in the gold fields of that country. When our present King, then Duke of York, visited Australia, he was to be entertained at the millionaire's home, which had just been completed. Someone told the millionaire that no home was complete without a library, whereupon he sent down to Sydney and ordered ten toms of books. It was a new way of selecting books. Mr. Hewlett has adopted the same method of getting rid of his.—Farmers Sun.

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

THE PARK AVE. NEWS.
 Weather. Girls wishing they had pockets to put their hands in.
 Sports. Skinny Martin and Skinny Mullin had a argument last Sunday about which one could eat the most hard-boiled eggs, both saying they didn't know how many they could eat on account of nobody never having offered them that many. The argument ending in a tie.
 Sleazy. Mr. Beany Pota, Mr. Ardie Alexander, Mr. Charles (Puda) Simkins, Mr. Sid Hunt and others had a meeting last Saturday to try to get up their annual minstrel show, which they try to get it up every year but haven't ever got it up yet so far.
 Pome By Shihay Martin.
 EQUALITY.
 No matter if you're a man or a bird
 Or a fish or a fowl or a camel,
 You will never cease to regret it
 If your teeth start to lose their enamel.
 Intriguing Facks About Intriguing People. Puda Simkins wants to say he can tell wenever its going to rain by a funny pain in the elbo, nobody ever saw him start to feel it till it was almost starting to rain already and nobody would need a pain in the elbo.
 Lost and Found. Nona. Avarisements. Nona.

Aye, Aye!
 The woman who told the optician's clerk she wanted a pair of their "vocal lenses" probably had speaking eyes.—Boston Transcript.

So long as you have brains enough not to fall out with your neighbor over politics or religion, you will probably get by if you are willing to work.—Houston Post.

Advertising His Want.
 She—And how is your bachelor friend?
 He—When I saw him last he was mending slowly.
 She—Indeed, I didn't know he had been ill.
 He—He hasn't been; he was sewing some buttons on his clothes.—Detroit Free Press.

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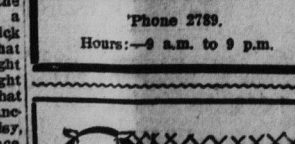
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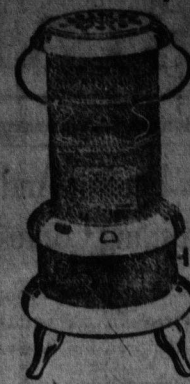
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A REAL CHANCE

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MORE ABOUT

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What Department Says

Ottawa, 30th Decem

McLean Kennedy, Ltd.

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Boys Won't Stay P

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all boys in position at all

example, the Superintendent

Lewis, reporting on these

says: "We have always

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The Blood Rock buoy is in

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Admiralty test chain, but i

breaks from its moorings

four times a year. We have

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their proper positions?"

Other Aids.

I am enclosing a stat