The Toronto World

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MONDAY MORNING, JAN. 17.

Party Municipal Government

It is expected that the municipal government of Montreal will be brought under the party system, replacing the alleged non-party system which at present exists there, as also in Toronto and other places. One of the curious and rather absurd assumptions of municipal government in Toronto is that it is entirely non-partisan. Nominally it may be so, but actually the provincial and the Dominion elections are not fought out on more bitterly partisan principles.

We do not need to go back a year when Mayor Church was elected merely because Mr. McCarthy was not a Conservative, and the local party men considered it was impossible to have any other kind of a mayor in a year when a general election might be brought on. Had the party been responsible outwardly for the nomination of a mayor for Toronto it is probable that another than Mr. Church would have been selected, for a party nomination in Toronto practically means election.

Montreal has monkeyed with the "non-partisan" system until the affairs of the city have fallen into such a rotten condition that any way out seems to be an improvement. Those who prefer the party system with all its disadvantages must have had a deep sense of the failure of the present method, if nothing else. It may be that Toronto must have a similar degrading experience before any radical change occurs in the nature of city government.

At all events the trend of opinion at present, so far as there is any opinion in the city, is not away from the party system, but it is not the open but the hidden party system that is followed. We hope beyond hope and trust beyond the evidence of the facts that the recent developments in the fire department situation indicate emancipation from the petty Tammany methods which brought on the investigation of the year before last. It will take a very strong man to stand up against the overt influences which have surrounded the fire department for years. If the new chief can stand up and tell everybody to stand aside and let him mind his own business, and if he shows himself capable of dominating the department outside party influences, then he will be worth the ten or twelve thousand a year which we think it is worth to Toronto to have a fire department which would reduce the fire losses and the insurance premiums paid in the city to a minimum, saving millions a year to the citizens.

We desire to see the new fire chief having every opportunity to make good, and any influence The World can exert will be at his disposal to uphold him in restoring discipline and maintaining efficiency.

Montreal remains an object lesson of affairs going from bad to worse under such a system as Toronto still hopes to get results from. In the United States such hope has entirely disappeared, altho the open and not the concealed party system has been there in use. Commission government in name but not in fact has been tried in many places across the border and has not been successful. The manager plan has also been tried, but we do not see that this can be any more effective.

There are several variations on the so-called commission plan, but they all fail in not providing the necessary selective machinery. Under the so-called commission method anybody can run for the commissionerships, and the manager plan is much the same. Direct election is the obstacle over which they come to grief. The best man for an executive position cannot be elected by popular ballot. Almost any body of men elected to choose a good executive officer can choose a better man, and probably the best man, when the general body of the electors would utterly fail to do so.

We regard the matter as on the same basis as in the case of the shareholders of a company, who elect directors, who appoint officials. The electors are the shareholders. They could elect a council or selecting body, who would then proceed to choose the officials who would be responsible for the real work of government.

The mistake of city government is in treating it in any other way than as a big business. Any merchant who mixed his business up with politics would go bankrupt in a little while. This is the real flaw in the present Ontario system of municipal government. Until the provincial government take a hand in regulating it and insist that it be treated as business, it will probably never be remedied.

Grading Ontario Butter

An unpleasant jog has been given to the Ontario Department of Agriculture by a Dominion official, who has pointed out that the prairie provinces are excelling the Ontario standards in dairy products by better regulations. Butter is graded according to quality in the west, while in Ontario all butter looks alike to the government. As a consequence a premium is placed upon inferior products, and this inevitably tends to lower the standard and the reputation of the province in this class of merchandise. Good butter is paid for at a lower rate, while poor butter gets a higher rate than it should.

Quebec has adopted the plan of grading as well as the western provinces, and we think it is clearly up to Farmer Duff to establish a grading department in the butter business.

The Compulsion Bill

A great deal of misconception is abroad about the so-called conscription in England. One correspondent of The World complains that it was a class measure intended to compel the poor to fight instead of the rich. Stories of this kind are circulated by Germans and pro-Germans. Canadians ought to be careful about believing anything that seems to impugn the justice and fairness of any steps taken by the British Government. There is no doubt that the intention in all cases is to be just and fair, and while occasionally it may happen that some individual suffers, in almost all cases only what is fair and right has resulted.

The Compulsion Act is certainly not intended to operate unfairly upon any one, and most of the complaints are to the effect that it is too lenient and affords too many loop-holes for those to slip thru who ought to share the burdens of the war. The measure was the result of an undertaking on the part of Premier Asquith that if the married men assumed their responsibilities in enlisting the single men would not be permitted to shirk. The married men appear to have a keener sense of their responsibilities than the bachelors, possibly because they have their homes and their wives and children to defend, and they know what a horror it would be in England if the Germans defeated the allies and succeeded in sacking Great Britain, as they desire to do.

At any rate the married men made good and the bachelors proved themselves slackers. The measure now passing thru parliament calls up the corresponding classes among the unmarried men to join the colors. It is estimated that the bill will add a million men to the ranks. Many of these have declared that they would go if needed, and others have boasted that they would not go till they were sent for. At any rate, they are all getting the chance to serve the empire in its need, and if the records of the past in Britain and of the present in other lands goes for anything, these impressed men will make as good fighters as any others.

It takes a good while for some people to realize their duty, but scarcely anything helps the citizen to understand his military duty to his country so well as getting into uniform and having his drill hammered into him.

There is of course no class distinction in the measure. All who are of eligible age and who do not come under the disqualifying clauses must serve, whether gentle or simple, rich or poor. It is rather a blow to some people who have regarded the patriotism of the British citizens as unparalleled in any other nation to think that such a large number of the population had to be driven to their duty. But it ought to console such thinkers to reflect that the number who are lacking in national spirit is not any greater probably in proportion than it is in other nations. There are always shirkers.

The people who do not pay their taxes in full, either by refusing correct information or by side-stepping the assessor, are just as unpatriotic as the slacker who does not enlist. There are thousands of citizens in Toronto who were not sufficiently patriotic to do the simple duty of casting a ballot on election day, and they are probably quite keen in their criticisms of those who decline to fire a bullet. The slacker on the ballot is full brother to the slacker on the bullet.

The man who is too old to go to the front and who stays at home to look after his property without any thought of giving generously to the various war funds, is quite as culpable as the man who tries to save his skin by refusing to drill.

A correspondent who talks about the "government" wanting the people to do this, that and the other in the war, evidently forgets what the government is. He is a part of the government, for the government is the people, and represents the people according to the people's wish. If the people wanted a different method of representation or a better way of balloting, such as the Hare-Spence system, they would have it, but they don't, and the government is their own.

The government is not land nor property, altho some people may imagine so. Nor is the government money, altho some people allow themselves to be persuaded that it is so at election times. The nation is made up of men and nothing else, and the government, poor or commendable represents the manhood of the nation. The nation consists of its men, even if there were no land and no property and no money besides. Belgium without her territory is a greater nation than before she lost it. Serbia is a nation of heroes altho they are homeless and penniless.

We should hope that the British nation and all her independencies similarly consist of men and not tracts of land, nor accumulations of property, nor of hoardings of money.

Men of this stamp do not ask other men to go and fight for them and their comfort or their property, without being willing to share the danger or the toil or the expense. And if manhood be the standard which is to be recognized in the life of a nation, the men who have been slacking ought to rejoice that the compulsion bill has been the means of injecting a little manly blood into their veins, and a little manly spirit into their hearts.

BLIND AND HALT

ITALIAN TRENCH NEAR TOLMINO WAS TAKEN

BERLIN, Jan. 16.—(Via wireless to Sayville, N. Y.)—Austro-Hungarian troops took an Italian trench near Tolmino yesterday, according to an official statement issued by the Austro-Hungarian headquarters under date of Jan. 16. The Austrian statement adds that Italian artillery activity was increased yesterday at Mount San Michele and against the Tolmino-Gorizia and Mrzlivrh bridgeheads.

HYDRO'S GOOD SHOWING.

Special to The Toronto World.

ST. THOMAS, Jan. 16.—The annual report of the Hydro-Electric Co. has been handed out, which shows the total revenue for last year was $89,904.48, and the expenditure was $71,765.72, leaving a surplus of $18,138.76. From this was deducted depreciation charges of $8735, leaving a surplus of $9403.

The number of customers at the close of the year was 2,438 and the average cost was 2.8 cents per K. W. hour. The tenders for the erection of a new addition to the power station will be opened on the 17th and construction will be started soon.

A Line o' Cheer Each Day o' the Year

By John Kendrick Bangs.

THE PASSWORD.

(Copyright, 1916.)

WHAT is the password of
the day?
Cheer, be it sunny, dark
of gray.
If cloud or sunshine, cold or hot;
If bleak or smiling—matters
not,
For all is fair along the way
When Cheer's the password of
the day.

FIRE DESTROYED THIRD OF HISTORIC BERGEN

Loss of Fifteen Millions Caused in Noorwegian Maritime City.

CHRISTIANIA, Norway, Jan. 16, via London—A third of the City of Bergen, a thriving Norwegian maritime city, with a population of 90,000, was destroyed last night by fire. The damage is estimated at $15,000,000. Two lives are reported lost. The conflagration is said to have been the worst ever recorded in Norway.

The business section, with its old wholesale houses, several of the largest of the hotels, a number of schools, the electric plant and banks and newspaper buildings, was the burned part.

The difficulties of the 2000 persons now without homes were increased by the fact that the largest storage houses, filled with provisions for supplying the surrounding country, were burned down. It is harder to obtain groceries today than at any time since the outbreak of the war.

Bergen never was so flourishing as at the beginning of the present year, these conditions being due largely to the increased merchant marine.

Ancient and Picturesque.

Bergen is one of the oldest and most picturesque towns in Norway, and it ranks first of the Norwegian shipping centres. It is well built on a hilly peninsula, and is situated at the end of a deep bay of the Atlantic 190 miles northwest of Christiania. Thru Bergen passes a large part of the foreign trade of Norway. Fleets of vessels bring the produce of the northern fisheries to the seaport.

John Sharkey, as Inspector Garvie, in "Kick In," at the Grand Opera House.

FIVE CHOIRS COMPETED AT ANNUAL EISTEDDFOD

High Standard of Musical Talent Demonstrated in Annual Welsh Competition.

At the Toronto Welsh Eisteddfod, held in Foresters' Hall Saturday afternoon and evening, competitions in vocal and instrumental music and elocution were held for the prizes offered at this annual musical festival, conducted by the Welsh Church of Toronto. The competition which aroused most interest was that in which the school choirs of from 40 to 50 voices entered. Five schools were represented, and each showed musical ability that was most remarkable. The soprano soloists who entered the contest were each deserving of the silver medal which was given. There were originally ten contestants, and after the elimination in the afternoon three were chosen to compete for the prizes.

In the children's section, talent of a very high grade was shown at the afternoon concert. The results were: Solo competition in Welsh, Olwin Pritchard 1, Blodwin Hughes 2.

Essay, G. Parry.

Recitation, Ivor Madley.

Solo competition for girls under 15: Jean Walker 1, Jean Rose 2.

Pianoforte solo for girls under 15: Lillian Hess 1, Olwin Pritchard 2.

Solo competition for boys: W. Bennett 1, Arthur Harvey 2, Stewart Buckley 3.

Prize for Welsh translation: G Parry.

The prizes at the evening concert were awarded as follows:

Soprano solo: Miss Adie 1, Miss Mabel Cameron 2, Miss Phillis Morgan 3.

Welsh recitation (gold medal): G. T. Pritchard.

Baritone solo: H. B. Kilgour.

Contralto solo: Miss C. Conyers.

English recitation: Miss Hazel Bulmer 1, Miss Dorothy Vurtis 2.

Choir competition: Perth Avenue School 1, Earl Grey School 2, Davisville School 3.

Hymn translation: David Pritchard.

HALIFAX SCHOOL BURNED.

HALIFAX, N.S., Jan. 15.—Young street school was burned to the ground at an early hour this morning. The loss is estimated at $60,000.

GREAT BARRIER RAISED BY FRENCH AT VERDUN

Wonderful System of Defences Block Advance of Crown Prince.

CONSTANTLY IMPROVED

French Taking All Precautions to Make Position Absolutely Impregnable.

(Continued From Page 1.)

front, shouts and bursts of song showing there is no lack of gaiety among the departing soldiers. Continuing eastward, past the historic battlefield of Valmy, one of the early results of the present war is to be noted in the ruins of Clermont en Argonne, where today the children of the few remaining residents play at war games within the sound of the cannon at Vauquois.

At Notre Dame de L'Epine, the Church of Notre Dame, built in the fourteenth century, and in many respects similar to the cathedral at Rheims, stands out prominently from the ruins. Unlike the Rheims Cathedral, it is undamaged.

Verdun Position Important.

The Verdun forts are most important strategically. Observers on constant guard have a view of the plain of the Woevre and of little villages dotting the territory separating them from the enemy positions. Entering a tunnel lighted by candles, one reaches the place where the guns are manipulated. A storeroom adjoining is filled with melinite shells, giving some idea of the damage which could be inflicted. Namur and Liege have demonstrated what reliance can be placed on fortified defences against the heaviest modern guns.

Barbed wire trenches here, as elsewhere, play a prominent part. This region is well garnished with these protective devices. There has been comparatively little firing from the large guns of the forts, but their moral effect has been considerable.

Enemy's Flags Hoisted.

Proceeding almost due south from Verdun ,there is direct contact with the German line, as the frequent firing indicates. The Germans are in possession of St. Mihiel, and on Hill 277, where they are entrenched, they have hoisted the German, Austrian, Bulgarian and Turkish flags, which can be seen fluttering in the wind.

"Bad taste," was the comment of a captain attached to headquarters when his attention was called to this.

Tho the Germans possess St. Mihiel, the French believe that by their control of the strongly fortified natural positions in this neighborhood they have the upper hand. The first line trenches in this district are very close, but the French have an advantage in possessing positions in the rear of their second and third line trenches, which are on high ground and dominate those of their adversaries. An advance by the Germans would seem to be impossible against the natural obstacles and the defences, which have been improved unceasingly for six months. A retreat by the Germans is considered equally as difficult as a forward movement, for, it is pointed out, should they attempt to retreat they would risk the fire of the French forces which surround them.

SUB. DISASTER NOT DUE TO EDISON BATTERIES

Four Workmen Killed and Ten Others Hurt at New York Yards.

NEW YORK, Jan. 16.—A statement indicating that the new Edison storage battery was not in any way responsible for the explosion on the submarine E2 at the New York navy yard yesterday was made tonight by Miller Reese Hutchinson, chief engineer for Thomas A. Edison, and a member of the naval consulting board. The preliminary inquiry into the explosion was held in secret today by the board of inquiry appointed by Rear Admiral Nathaniel P. Usher, commandant of the navy yard. Neither Admiral Usher nor any of those present would discuss what transpired.

Secretary of Navy Josephus Daniels, who is expected to name tomorrow a board of inquiry to conduct a formal investigation, left for Washington this afternoon without making any statement regarding the explosion.

Nothing approximating an official theory as to the cause of the explosion which resulted in the death of four workmen and the injury of ten others was obtainable.

At the hospital where the injured were taken it was said several of them were in a serious condition, and one is expected to die.

PREACHER DECRIES TRADE RIVALRY AFTER THE WAR

Competition Only One Step Removed From Force Conflict, Declares Prof. Johnston.

ADDRESSES STUDENTS

Right Motive Should Actuate Trade and Commerce, Declares University Speaker.

The responsibility of knowledge was the subject dealt with by Prof. A. J. Johnston of Victoria College, in his sermon yesterday morning, to officers training in the P. S. I., and students at the Convocation Hall service. The increased part which reason should play in a man's religious life was, the preacher declared, a lesson which history had taught. "The fervor with which we are pushing our cause in this war, is because we have certain knowledge that it is a just cause. Jesus always based conduct on the reason of God. Men should do the thing they know; that is the only guarantee for life."

Christianity in its essence was declared to be a leaven for humanity and not a law for humanity. Referring to the responsibilities which men had as a result of the privileges they enjoyed, Prof. Johnston said that all these were bestages from previous generations, and that every liberty people enjoyed was bought with blood.

The positions of leaders of thought would be momentous after the war, he declared. Out of the conflict there would issue a bruised and battered world, but it would not be a worse world, he asserted. This would be because people would make it better. He decried a gigantic trade rivalry such as was prophesied to take place after the war, and said that this was just one step removed from a great force rivalry. Trade and commerce were declared to be the course of civilization only when they had the right motive lying behind.

TEN GERMAN CHILDREN WERE KILLED BY BOMB

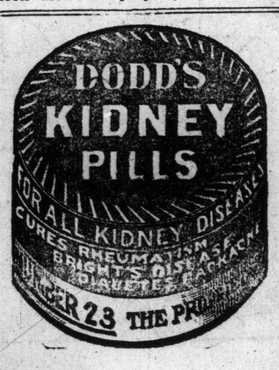
COLOGNE, Jan. 15, via London Jan. 16.—Ten children who were playing in a gravel pit near the local aviation grounds were killed today by an air bomb. The children found the unexploded bomb and were playing with it when it exploded. The district in the vicinity of the aviation field has been repeatedly searched after bombs have been dropped by aviators. It is probable that the bomb found by the children had buried itself in the ground and only became exposed by the heavy rains of the last few days.

$2.25 Niagara Falls, Ont., and Return —$2.70 Buffalo and Return From Toronto, Jan. 22.

The Toronto Bowling Club is running an excursion to Niagara Falls and Buffalo, on Saturday, Jan. 22, leaving Toronto 8.10 a.m. via Grand Trunk Railway. Return fare to Niagara Falls, Ont., $2.25, and Buffalo $2.70. Tickets are valid returning on all regular trains up to and including Monday, Jan. 24.

Secure your tickets at city ticket office, northwest corner King and Yonge streets, phone Main 4209. ed

Morgan Kingston, world-famous English tenor, who sings with the National Chorus, at Massey Hall tomorrow night.



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