

# CIVIC ELECTION FIGHT OPENS WITH TWO MEETINGS

## Mayor and Candidates For the Public Utilities Inject Pep Into Meetings

Tallant and Vining Clash, and Debate Carried Into Corridors—Wilson Proves To Be Lone Heckler—Prospective Aldermen Present Case To Ward One Ratepayers.

The booming of municipal artillery through Ward One last night indicated that the battle was on again for the "seats in high places"—the second and third floors of the old city hall.

Mayor Wenige and candidates for the public utilities commission and school board injected the real "1923 pep" into two mass meetings; one at the Simcoe street school, and the second at the Wortley road school.

Mayor Wenige carried the "new city hall" issue into the ward, delivering characteristic fighting addresses at both sessions. He was warmly applauded.

Ald. W. A. Wilson is again "mentioned in dispatches," enjoying the unique distinction, in that he was the mayor's lone heckler at Simcoe street.

"I dispute the mayor's statement regarding the votes on the city hall," announced Ald. Wilson (Free Press candidate for mayor until qualification night). "The people were never asked to vote on the McCormick site."

"Sit down. We've heard enough from you all year," was the encouragement from the audience.

The Free Press selection for the mayor's chair "ran true to form." "You can't make me sit down," he retorted.

**Ends In Corridors.** Dennis J. Tallant, Labor candidate for the utilities commission, and Jared Vining, chairman of the commission, now seeking re-election, carried their debates into the corridors at the Wortley road school, at the instigation of the former.

Sharp words followed, and Commissioner Vining informed Candidate Tallant in effect that "he could form what ever opinion he cared to choose."

Candidate Tallant replied in kind, and pursuing his adversary to the door challenged, "I suppose it is considered an insult if any person dares to run against you or Philip Pocock?"

Ald. John T. May, seeking re-election, was narrowly questioned at both meetings by Mayor Wenige, who requested that "Ald. May tell the people of London why he voted against the pure milk bylaw."

One of Ald. May's reasons was that the enforcement of legislation compelling pasteurization of milk or government testing of cattle was chiefly responsible for placing the milk supply of this district in the hands of a combine.

Mayor Wenige couldn't grasp this point of view, however, and persisted that Ald. May voted to deprive the people of their right to pure milk.

**Mayor Reviews Question.** Concisely, but briefly, Mayor Wenige reviewed the city hall question, and it was evident from his applause that the majority of the ratepayers are ready and even eager to vote for the early construction of new offices on the McCormick site.

His worship pointed out that since 1912 the city had lost about \$124,000 interest, and so forth, by the reason that the hall had not been built as originally intended when the land was purchased.

Ald. John Greer who, with Ald. John May and the "Free Press" selection for mayor, Ald. Wilson, had consistently opposed Mayor Wenige since the first of the year in this regard, stated that he had heard a number of arguments from the mayor last night that he had never heard before. He felt that the time was not opportune for an expenditure of

\$500,000 or more as proposed, in view of the high tax rates.

"If we have not the pride to build a real civic center we ought to decay," warned Mayor Wenige, also pointing out that while the council was asking for \$500,000, this amount would not be required; and that about \$239,000 would revert back into the city treasury following the sale of the remainder of the so-called federal square.

Mayor Wenige related that it was his impression that the city hall opponents, Aldermen May, Greer and others, had fixed the price at \$500,000 to insure the defeat of the bylaw.

His worship also contended the remainder of the council that "he was preparing an aldermanic slate."

"I am not here to tell you how to vote," stated the mayor, "I am in the position to dictate. You're the boss. I'm merely carrying out your orders. I have no slate, and never will have one."

**Presents Case.** Ald. John T. May was allowed to present his case first. He explained that he had not supported the proposal to build a city hall on the McCormick site because it could not be done this year without a debenture issue and that would have meant upsetting the council's "pay-as-you-go" policy. He charged further that the council's procedure had been illegal.

Explaining why he voted against the third reading of the city hall salary bylaw, Ald. May stated that \$4,700 was available for this purpose and that he did not care to increase this amount. He had supported increases aggregating about \$4,100, he related, exclusive of the assessment department readjustment.

Ald. May also claimed that while he had moved to save the city another \$15,000 or so by having a less expensive front to the new registry office, none of his colleagues had seen fit to support him.

Ald. John Greer stated that in all likelihood he had made mistakes during the year. That would only be natural. He had no doubt been guilty of snap judgment occasionally, he explained, when forced to a quick decision by the circumstances, and when he would like to have had more information than seemed available at the time.

He thought that a new city hall would cost in the neighborhood of \$800,000, as ample provision must be made for interior decorations and fixtures. He questioned the need of a "palace," however, and did not think that the construction would be advisable during a period of depression.

The three newcomers in the aldermanic field were well received. John Andersson spoke briefly, explaining that he was acting strictly upon his own initiative and "had no axe to grind," or "favors to ask or give."

He urged a lower tax-rate as a safe inducement for outside industries to establish branches in the community.

**Allan Towse.** Allan Towse, member of the industrial area commission, stated that he was at a disadvantage by being known to but few residents of the ward. Recalling his opposition to the proposed improvements in the industrial area during his present term of office, he explained that while he favored the project, he felt that such an undertaking would not be advisable until a better system was in vogue for securing new industries for the district in question.

"I do not wish to criticize the chamber of commerce," he said, "but the system under which they work is wrong."

Mr. Towse advocated the inauguration of a committee to seek industries, with a commissioner who would visit outside municipalities, near and far; the committee to comprise entirely of men other than manufacturers. This idea seemed to meet with general approval in the audience. He pictured a bright future for London if firms could be induced to locate here, and believed many American firms would if the proposition was "sold" to them in a proper manner.



IT'S WARMING UP EARLY.

The civic election contest is warming up early. Last evening's meetings were featured by spirited clashes between Ed. Smith (left), formerly of the board of education, now an aldermanic candidate in ward four, and Adam Palmer (right), who is offering this year for the board of education. Alleged favoritism in school building contracts was the subject of lively passages between these gentlemen.

**CAMPAIGN ADDRESSES START AT "Y" MEETING**

**Candidates For Boys' Parliament Upheld by Henchmen at C. S. E. T. Session.**

The Gordons, Pointers and Senecas, Trail Ranger groups met at the Y. M. C. A. last night for their regular weekly meeting.

After supper, election of Grand Camp officers took place. Douglas Maxwell of the Senecas was elected grand chief ranger; Clark Smith of the Gordons, deputy grand chief ranger; Brian Branson of the Pointers, grand tally; and Ken Wanless of the Senecas, grand casher.

Frank Adams made a campaign speech and Allan Kay and Earl Cadwallader spoke on behalf of Bob Ferguson and Hartley Upshall, respectively.

W. H. Spearman, boys' secretary of the Y. M. C. A., presented the following badges to members of the Pointers group: Harold Darch, team games, cyclist, bird life; Walter Jenkins, safety first, team games; Leonard Campbell, safety first; Alvin Gurney, team games; Frank Shanahan, school, bird life.

**NATIONALISTS WIN VOLKSTAG ELECTIONS**

Associated Press Despatch. Danzig, Nov. 21.—In the Volkstag elections, in which 120 seats were contested, the Nationalists won 33, the United Socialists 30, the Centre 15, the Communists 11, and the Poles 5. Candidates of half a dozen other parties secured 26 seats. It is significant that the Poles lost two of their seven seats to German candidates, while both the left and right wings gained at the expense of the Liberals, Bourgeois and Center parties.

**PRINCIPAL IMPROVING.** Latest reports received by G. L. MacDonald, B.A., acting principal of the Collegiate Institute, from Mr. Miller, principal, are that he is progressing very well. Mr. Miller was seriously ill in a local hospital some time ago and was ordered to take a complete rest.

**KYRO TRAIL RANGERS PICK GRAND CAMP OFFICERS**

The Kyro Trail Rangers met at the Y. M. C. A. last night for supper, the following groups being in attendance: Night Riders, Sioux, Coyotes, Hot Dogs, and Mohawks. Following a splendid supper, served by the Ladies' Auxiliary under the leadership of Mr. Henderson, campaign speeches for the Boys' Parliament were made by Frank Adams, and by Milburn Brady on behalf of Ben Foulkes.

Election of grand camp officers took place, and resulted as follows: Grand chief ranger, Fred Clark; deputy grand chief ranger, Paddy Haines; grand tally, Lorne Fitzgerald.

**NEW CHALMERS GROUP HOLDS LIVELY MEETING**

Chalmers' Presbyterian Trail Rangers held a reorganization meeting last night, when about ten boys, with their fathers, sat down to a splendid supper, served by the ladies of the church. Mr. Spratt, mentor of the group, conducted a lively singing.

F. G. McAllister, chairman of the London Boys' Work Board, was the speaker of the evening, and outlined the C. S. E. T. program. This group of Trail Rangers will be known as the Alerts. They are registered in the Boys' Work Board, and will compete with all the Trail Ranger groups of the city.

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## Candidates In Ward One For Board of Education and Utilities Start Fight

Address Gatherings At Simcoe and Wortley Road Schools—Lively Arguments Ensnare Candidates and Citizens—Tallant Attacks Utilities Attitude Towards City Council.

Candidates for the public utilities commission and board of education launched their campaigns in Ward 1 last night, when they addressed meetings at Simcoe school and Wortley road school.

The former meeting was quiet and peaceful, none of the speakers being heckled, and no questions being asked, but at the second gathering, the war clouds gathered and lively arguments between candidates and citizens ensued, winding up in a spectacular debate between Adam Palmer, candidate for the board of education, and Edwin Smith, retiring trustee, which ended only after Mr. Palmer had been called out of order by Chairman T. S. F. Graham, leaving the honors of the engagement with Mr. Smith.

Ald. Peter Watt, seeking a seat on the utilities commission, speaking at Simcoe school, stated that he had been pressed by several businessmen to enter the field, these men stating that a change was needed in the personnel of that body. With new life and blood, harmony between the commission and the city council could probably be restored. This was lacking at the present time, and the citizens were suffering, he stated.

**Commission Autocratic.** Dissatisfaction with the attitude of the commission towards the city council was expressed by D. J. Tallant, also seeking election to that body. He declared the commission was autocratic, rather than democratic. He mentioned that the mayor does not sign the checks as formerly, and that if elected he would remedy this. He went over his record as a member of the housing commission, of which he is chairman, stating that through his endeavor the city had saved some \$10,000. He was not finding fault with the members of the commission, but thought it was time for a change. He mentioned that if elected he would not be a wallflower, but would fight on all questions.

Bryden N. Campbell, the first of the candidates for the school board, to speak, thanked the electors for his return two years ago. He said his motto was economy with efficiency, and had always endeavored to work along these lines. He mentioned his work on the various committees.

Adam W. Palmer, a defeated candidate of last year, expressed the opinion, later endorsed by A. R. Kennedy, that it was unfortunate that the citizens were not asked to vote till the last before speaking. He said he was glad he was not a member of last year's board, as the members had a lot to answer for. He said his slogan was to knock the "high" out of the high cost of education, which was costing far too much. No reasonable citizen would complain of ordinary expenditures wisely spent, but facts must be considered.

**Shows Decrease.** From year to year the board was spending much money in new buildings, and maintenance, while the enrollment showed a decrease of 1,203 over 1918. The claim was made however, that the schools were still overcrowded. If this was true, there were some mighty lax officials on the board. The cost of teachers had also increased enormously. Mr. Palmer then dealt with the officials of the board, stating that in 1918 these consisted of one inspector, secretary, attendance officer and stenographer, drawing salaries totalling \$5,700. This year, however, there were two inspectors, one secretary, attendance officer and assistant, and two stenographers, drawing salary totals of \$17,000.

As R. Kennedy next took the floor, he said it was a mistake that educational matters trailed after everything else when the board was the largest spending body in the city. In 1914 expenditures were \$270,000, and estimates for 1924 were \$1,000,000. He wondered whether the citizens' earning power or ability to pay had increased as much as the cost of education. He mentioned that the cost of what he would do, but would endeavor to see that the people had full knowledge of all expenditures. Buildings were excellent, but something more than these were needed for the boys and girls. This was a desire to learn and around this must be built the system.

**Wortley Road School.** At Wortley road school Jared Vining, chairman of the utilities commission first spoke. He said that if the citizens thought others could serve them better than the present body it was their duty to vote for them. He had been on the commission for six years and had endeavored to give the best he could, as had the commission, in the supplying of water and power to the citizens. He mentioned the water supply of the city, going into detail on the question, and pointing out that for \$101,500 the commission had secured as much water as could have been gotten at Kilworth for one million. Asked whether he was in favor of supplying the city with water, he said he was not, and had always voted against it. The questioner, however, insisted that this had been done, and that the city was a result lost taxes. He suggested that these non-residents should move into the city and build up the vacant property.

D. J. Tallant, speaking in the same strain as at Simcoe school, repeated his statements of lack of harmony between the council and commission. "I have always been a water drinker," declared Ald. Watt, "and I am a strong supporter of spring water in preference to the well system."

He went on to say that there was no method of shutting off surface water in the wells, and that he had been told by Engineer Glaubitz, of the commission, that water would gravitate from the Kilworth springs, at Komoka, to Springbank, and that

it would be good water. He also declared that wells petered out in time.

"Mr. Watt does not know what he is talking about," interjected Mr. Vining. "The wells are not petering out; there is no surface water and no bacteria has ever been found in the water supply of the city. To get water from Kilworth would mean pumping it about 200 feet, while at present we are getting a sufficient supply from the wells at far less cost."

Mr. Watt said that the water could be pumped from Springbank, but for the fact that no one except the commission could establish a power plant on the river, the commission owning the franchise.

"Vote for the dam at the election, but that does not mean a power plant, because you must have permission from the commission to build one," continued the alderman, "and I would ask that it be taken back."

Mr. Palmer is hiding something under cloak," declared Mr. Palmer, "I do not like that statement, and I would ask that it be taken back."

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and was followed by Adam Palmer, who had a stormy passage. He stated that he might have been a little strong in his statements at Simcoe street, but wanted the press to record the fact that he was not referring to Trustees Campbell, whom he regarded as one of the best members of the board.

**Challenges Edwin Smith.** Referring back to Mr. Burke's question of Harry Hayman and school contracts, Mr. Palmer challenged Edwin Smith to come forward and tell the whole truth of the matter, because he knew that what had been stated was true.

"Mr. Palmer does not know what he is talking about," replied Mr. Smith. "I have told the truth. So far as I can remember Harry Hayman has not been given a contract on schools. As to other contractors buying their material from him, that may be so, as the board cannot tell a contractor where or when he is to buy or sublet. Anyway, the people are getting personal, and I have nothing to hide. If Mr. Palmer is so sure of himself, why let him lift the cloak and discover to the citizens just what is hidden."

"Yes, I will lift it, and it does not require any bright man to do so. The collegiate is an instance of this," said Mr. Palmer.

**The High School Contract.** "Harry Hayman did not tender on the high school," replied Mr. Smith, "and, as far as the Kingston Construction Company was concerned, they were at liberty to buy where they pleased. We do not dictate to contractors. No businessman would think of ordering a person to buy some place, when he could purchase the same materials cheaper elsewhere."

"But your Conservative Association assured me this was the case," said Mr. Burke, "and I wanted to find out. I am quite satisfied with Mr. Smith's answer."

"In the six years that I was on the board, no contract was let to a member, or anything of that nature," again repeated Mr. Smith. "You can't force contractors to buy. This year six are to be elected, and I hope the citizens will select the right persons. Mr. Palmer was told last year that he was not wanted. I don't know whether he is this time or not. The board will select a clear and open for inspection at any time."

"Mr. Smith is one of the men who built the high school," began Mr. Palmer, "and I am sure that he is not speaking in reply to Mr. Smith. You are out of order," declared Chairman Graham.

"Appearing as the chairman has something to do with the board," replied the candidate.

"The only thing I am concerned with is keeping the speakers in order and to their limit. You are out of order," said Mr. Graham closing the meeting.

**Not the Case.** Edwin Smith, retiring trustee, stated that this was not the case and that Mr. Burke had been misinformed. Mr. Campbell was then asked about Principal E. H. McKone's salary, who was overpaid by about eight days, and the interrogator wanted to know why he had been allowed to keep the money. He replied that that was a matter between the secretary and the inspector of the board. The citizens then stated that if this was the case and these officials had been responsible for it, it showed inefficiency.

"If we send you back this time," said the citizen, "we want you to curb this inefficiency. There are too many incompetents on both the board and the city council."

A. R. Kennedy spoke in much the same manner as at Simcoe street.

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