

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by
the Boarders.

"In all civilized countries," said Brown, "Governments have provided a medium which is commonly called money, to enable the people to exchange the products of their labor with each other. Not only have we in Canada such a medium of exchange called a dollar, but we actually have two kinds of dollars, one the rich man's dollar and the other the poor man's dollar."

"This is certainly news to me," said Sinnett, "and I have lived in this country, man and boy, for upwards of forty years."

"It's a fact, for all that," replied Brown, "as I will prove to your satisfaction before I am done with you. Take, for instance, our last loan; it was floated at 95 cents on the dollar. That means that \$950 of the rich man was equal to \$1,000 of the money which you receive. The interest on these bonds, if I remember rightly, was four per cent., which, in plain English, means that the rich man actually bought one hundred and four cents of your money for ninety-five cents, or a difference in his favor of a little over nine cents on every dollar. If the security of the bond was not as good as that of my dollar, which is nothing more than a bond, I wouldn't say anything about it, but it is. Behind both of these promises to pay stands the Government and the people of Canada; why, then, should the rich be allowed to buy an interest-bearing dollar for ninety-five cents and the poor compelled to accept a non-interest-bearing one for a hundred. Why should interest-bearing bonds be issued at all? If the government can't redeem its greenback dollar it can't redeem its bond, and both become useless; on the other hand, if it can redeem its bond what is to prevent it redeeming its greenback dollar, and thus save both discount and interest to the country."

"Another thing," said Garlick, "which is against the interests of the people is the adoption of gold as the base value of the dollar. This act of our lawmakers makes the medium of exchange an article of trade, for gold is not only a limited quantity but is not even found in paying quantities in Canada at all. The minute that you allow your medium of exchange to be made an article of trade its utility as a measure of value is gone, because by making it scarce or plentiful you increase or decrease the value of your dollar. As Canada does not produce gold we are actually at the mercy of those who control it, and in case of emergency could be made bankrupt in spite of all our natural wealth by men who never saw Canada and have no interest in the welfare of its people. The very fact of this Dominion promising to redeem its money with something that Canada does not produce stamps our whole currency system as a fraud and a delusion. If you want to give honest money you must stop producing gold and give both, because Canada has neither the one nor the other. It is time to reduce your currency to the products of Canada, the only thing which we really can

curity but also pay interest. Now, I maintain that, inasmuch as money was created to facilitate exchange and that it cannot in equity be turned into an article of trade, it becomes the duty of the Government to issue it direct to the people without the intervention of private banks. As it has been created for the benefit of the people and not for the enrichment of the Government or its friends it should be issued on security without the payment of interest, and thus, by circulating freely among the people, fulfil its mission. To see a large city like Montreal hawking its debentures around the world and be glad to finally sell them at 84 cents on the dollar must convince every thinking man that there is something radically wrong in our currency system; and when you consider that this difference between the face value and selling price, together with the interest on the whole of this federal, provincial and municipal money, must eventually be paid by those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, you will realize the importance of money reform and its connection with the labor question. In Canada and the United States there are thousands of abandoned farms. Some people say this is the result of protection, while others claim that it is want of energy, or downright laziness on the part of our farmers. The first is as wide of the mark as the second is a libel and a slander upon industrious men. The real cause of these farms being abandoned is that the interest on capital has increased at a greater rate than the productiveness of the country; in other words, interest has foolishly swallowed the seed corn of the farmer instead of waiting until he had raised a crop. But give us a free, honest dollar and your abandoned farms will again be cultivated, your industries thrive and your people become prosperous. As in our individual, so in our national existence, we will find honesty the best policy."

BILL BLADES.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE ECHO.

DEAR SIR,—I would ask you to kindly publish the following in answer to the letter which appeared in your paper of Saturday last, signed "Subscriber."

It would have been well had "Subscriber" ascertained the facts before making statements that were not true concerning myself. I may state that the \$750 advance of salary given to the Superintendent was done before I took my seat on the "Board"; further, I did not know of it until I saw a letter in the Herald of the 19th inst., and was as much surprised as any other man at the enormous increase; and would undoubtedly have opposed the same had it come before the "Board" while I was sitting.

"Subscriber" misjudges my motive when he states that I merely opposed the advance of salary to well paid officials in the city's employ because the press would give it publicity. It is much against my own wishes that the press is excluded from "Board" meetings of the "School Commissioners" and hope that in the near future it will be admitted.

Yours truly,

EDWIN THOMPSON.

STREET SCAVENGING AND THE ELECTRIC RAILWAY.

To the Editor of THE ECHO.

SIR,—Your correspondent, "W. D." in last week's issue outlined a combination scheme for utilizing the proposed electric railway for scavenging purposes which is worthy the consideration of our city fathers. I believe the idea could be advantageously worked with advantage to the city, but, at the same time, I think the talk about the city doing its own scavenging will all end in talk, notwithstanding their recent resolution on the subject. In this city the interests of contractors have to be looked at first, the city's is a secondary consideration. You will notice that an estimate of the first cost of the plant necessary to carry on the scheme has just been published, the figures of which are intended to frighten the taxpayers; this is opportunely accompanied by the statement that the present contractor, Mr. [Name], has put in a reduced offer to do the work. Of course all this is done to

pave the way for a reconsideration of the question, so that the old order of things may continue.

Yours &c.,
WIDE AWAKE.

SATURDAY EVENING CONCERTS.

To the Editor of THE ECHO.

SIR,—I have often wondered why, in a large city like Montreal where there is so much good amateur musical talent, that no effort has ever been made to establish Saturday evening concerts where workingmen could spend a couple of hours in a rational way, free from the debasing influence of liquor. In most cities of Scotland these concerts are a regular feature of the winter months and their success has been remarkable. What is to hinder some of our benefit societies from attempting the experiment here during the coming winter? I am satisfied myself that, provided a good selection of talent is made, the largest hall in the city would be packed every Saturday evening. The charge for admission should not, to make the entertainments popular, exceed ten cents, and that should be uniform, which would clear all expenses and leave a surplus for the treasury of the society undertaking the experiment. At present there is no form of amusement whatever, outside of the theatres and these are too expensive for the pockets of the average workingman to patronise, if he takes his wife and family along with him, which he ought to do. You see, Mr. Editor, I could not with any respect to my wife ask her to sit among the "gods," so that at the least it would cost me one dollar, what I am not able to afford; but I would willingly take her to a Saturday evening concert, along with one of the children, if I could do it for a quarter. If this should meet with the approval of any of your readers who belong to the Odd-fellows or other benefit order let them broach the matter at the first lodge meeting and try to get them to act in the matter.

Yours,

A WORKINGMAN.

K. OF L.

There has lately been a steady increase in the membership of the K. of L. Maple Leaf Assembly admitted eight new members last Wednesday evening.

At the last meeting of Dominion Assembly, 2436, it was decided to hold a gala night on Friday next. Several new members will be admitted. A fine programme of songs, readings, etc., has been prepared, and everything is expected to pass off pleasantly. A cordial invitation is extended to members of sister Assemblies.

The Marbleworkers' Assembly is doing good work, and now that the cold weather has set in, expect a large attendance at their meetings and, as a result, greater interest and progress.

The River Front Assembly, notwithstanding the set-back received last fall, continues to hold the fort. The members who have remained faithful to the Assembly intend to do considerable hustling this winter, being determined that 7623 will recover its prestige and power in the spring.

The banner Assembly of the Order, Black Diamond, has just ended a most successful season. From a membership of 25 or 30 in the spring, its good standing roll now goes up to between 350 and 400. This is undoubtedly the best Assembly in the city. Its members take an active interest in the affairs of their local, its officers are painstaking and active, and there is every possibility of a brilliant future for 1711.

MONTREAL NEWS.

We beg to acknowledge receipt of \$1 from "J. H." for the Widow Flynn fund.

The wharves have now a deserted look about them and workmen are engaged in clearing up the ramps. The shipping sheds are also being removed.

The collapse of a large stone building in course of construction, corner of Inspector and Notre Dame streets, has given rise to much speculation as to the cause. The Building Inspector is of opinion that a defective iron pillar had to do with it. Fortunately the walls fell during the night and was unaccompanied by loss of life.

The little four-year-old son of Joseph Charbonneau, joiner, of 48 Couvillier street, was so fearfully burned on Thursday afternoon that he afterwards died. It appears that while playing along with several children older than himself on a vacant lot some of them lighted a fire and amused themselves by seeing how near they could go to it. The little fellow emulated the example of his companions, and, getting too near, his clothes caught fire with the result as stated.

Another public meeting will be held in the Knights of Labor Hall, Chaboillez street, on Tuesday evening next, at eight o'clock, for the purpose of discussing the City Council's neglect of the Water Tax question. The meeting will be conducted by the special committee of the Central Trades and Labor Council, and will be addressed by a number of prominent labor speakers.

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