

## ALL CITY DOINGS

News of the Day in the Commercial  
Metropolis of Western Ontario.

## PROBE NATURAL GAS MATTERS

200 Delegates From Municipalities Effected Meet  
Minister of Mines.

FEW WERE CONSULTED

Conference Finds Legislation  
Pushed Through Without  
Consumers' Views  
Expressed.

J. M. McEvoy, K.C., who with Warren John Cousins of Middlesex, and representatives of Belmont and Lambeth attended the conference to discuss natural gas matters with the minister of mines, Hon. Harry Mills, at the parliament buildings in Toronto Thursday afternoon, returned to London Thursday night. Mr. McEvoy also looked after the interests of the township of Dorchester.

Over 200 delegates attended the meeting, representing practically every county in Ontario where natural gas is distributed.

"The gas legislation, which was passed last year, and which resulted in employing Referee Henderson to set aside the contracts, franchises and agreements which had been in existence between the people and the gas companies or between the gas companies and the municipalities, has worked so badly that there is a general rebellion against the whole matter," said Mr. McEvoy Friday morning.

"Early in the meeting it was also pointed out that the 1921 gas legislation was strictly legislation demanded by the municipalities last year. After a little discussion it became plain that very few of the municipalities had been consulted or expressed any view in the matter. It was quite plain that the Drury Government were only too ready to stand from under the work of administering the natural gas fields.

"No one, perhaps of the whole of the delegates present were in favor of repealing all the features of what is called in the questionnaire 'The Natural Gas Conservation Act,' but everybody was in favor of repealing that part of the act, which enabled an officer of the government to disregard the contracts, franchises and agreements and fix an arbitrary rate.

The following is a sample of the answers given by some municipalities:

1. Are you in favor of repealing the Natural Gas Conservation Act?

A. Yes, but we wish the government to see to it that the gas is not wasted and that the gas companies are not allowed to coerce the consumers by shutting off or improperly diminishing the gas supply pending any dispute as to franchises, contracts and agreements.

2. Are you in favor of the present act with an amendment abolishing the position of the gas referee?

A. We don't want any gas referee and we want no one to have power to abolish or disregard contracts, franchises or agreements.

3. Are you in favor of a tribunal of three or more members to fix the rates for natural gas?

A. We want no tribunal to fix rates where the same are fixed by contracts or franchises, but where there are no contracts or franchises we desire a tribunal to determine the terms and conditions and rates upon which gas companies must supply gas.

4. Are you in favor of the government maintaining control of the gas fields and the distribution of gas?

A. In so far as it is necessary to carry out the answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3.

From a consideration of the questions it is quite plain that a "yes" or "no" answer to those questions simply means putting the government in a position to say that the municipalities are in favor of the government act in the gas fields in any degree.

"There seemed to be a general effort to have the questions answered in a Yes or No fashion which would not convey to the government the views of the delegates to a reasonable degree," concluded Mr. McEvoy.

"And it was intimated in the course of the meeting that questionnaires would be sent to those municipalities interested who were not represented at the meeting."

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STORM AND CIDER PROVE UNLUCKY

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Mr. Mitchell, who occupied the bench in the absence of Magistrate Graydon, who is in Toronto on business, "I was working for a farmer Thursday putting in posts, but had to cut on account of the storm. I was walking into London when I met a fellow who gave me a few drinks of hard cider. I don't know what it was."

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Thus while the citizens will benefit by the reduction of \$41,000, the employees of the city are not going to be forced to shoulder the cut.

In this connection, the motion as presented to the council and other facts, evidence the council's change of heart.

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Mr. Bell was asked what this meant for the different city hall departments, and he said that his staff would have to divide a reduction of \$1,400; City Clerk Baker's office, \$1,500; and City Engineer Brazier's staff, about \$3,000.

However, during the storm Thursday night, the board of health had the hard cider, and the storm and the cider proved unlucky.

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