

The Chronicle



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MONTREAL STREET LIGHTING. **T**HE Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company has been awarded the street lighting contract for the entire city for ten years. The price for the larger arc lamps is \$72.70, for the smaller arcs \$63.15, for 80 power incandescent lamps \$23, and for 40-power incandescent lamps \$16. In **THE CHRONICLE** we have continually advocated that when valuable franchises are being given by the city, it should receive some adequate return. This, we believe to be the true basis upon which to give such franchises; then there need be no question of enlarged capitalization. It would be equitable from every standpoint. After paying five per cent. to the shareholders, and making all necessary provision for fixed charges, the city would receive one-half of the extra net earnings, which could be applied either to the reduction of the prices of light and power, or to the reduction of the general taxation. And the partnership, so to say, of the city in the enterprise, would make the shareholders' stock more valuable and more than compensate for a lower rate of interest.

FIVE MILLIONS FOR CONDUITS. **N**OTICE of motion has been given in the Montreal City Council for the adoption of a by-law to borrow \$5,000,000 for the construction and administration of a system of underground conduits. The Council already has the necessary legislative powers. Isn't it just like Montreal to lay down permanent paving in a great number of streets, and then rip it up again to construct conduits? No wonder we have to go shopping in the money market rather often.

We would recommend that before any money is borrowed, or any construction is commenced, a careful study of the whole question should be made. It would seem unbusinesslike to borrow \$5,000,000 when \$20,000,000 may be required, or \$4,000,000 may be more than enough. In Boston and some other cities of the United States, the public utility companies lay down their own conduits, and for that privilege they

keep certain portions of the roadway in repair for a number of years. Might not this system be applied in Montreal to the great advantage of Civic Finances?

PROVINCIAL TAXES ON OUTSIDE CORPORATIONS.

THE Council of the Montreal Board of Trade, on Wednesday afternoon, discussed the question of the taxes imposed by Provincial Governments upon corporations holding charters from other Provinces or from the Dominion. These taxes were characterized as annoying and totally opposed to the spirit of Confederation. The Council has been trying to get the various Boards of Trade in all the Provinces to co-operate for the abolition of these taxes, and particularly by bringing pressure to bear upon their respective governments. No practical results having been achieved, the matter has been referred by the Council to its Provincial legislation committee for further consideration.

PROVINCIAL FRONTIERS IN BUSINESS.

THE Council of the Board of Trade might also well attempt to get many of the laws of the various Provinces affecting corporations assimilated. Insurance policy conditions should be made uniform throughout the Dominion. So far as fire insurance is concerned, there ought to be a standard policy adopted by the Dominion, and approved by the Provincial Governments. In some western Provinces there are serious handicaps placed upon the agents of outside merchants trying to do business in them. The main object presumably is to raise revenue; but surely there are better methods than by preventing competition and making the people pay more for what they consume. Quebec tried this taxation of outside business, but abolished it, and much to its credit. At the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, held in London a few years ago, the language by some of the English representatives on this subject was very pronounced.