The Toronto World

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FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 13.

The Fire Department Head

Deeper and deeper becomes the fire department muddle. It would appear impossible for the board of control to procrastinate any further, but the resources of the board of control have never been exhausted in the way of delay. The impression held about the city hall is that nothing will be done till after next civic election.

The board of control said the other day that departmental heads should be responsible for all appointments under them. This is the reason for all the delay in the fire department. It has been a political machine for so long that it is inconceivable to the political workers that the city hall departments should be freed from political influence. Hence the great difficulty in nominating a fire chief or a fire commissioner who would be subservient to the political authorities, and who would be satisfactory to the public as an efficient oofficer.

Various political hacks have been suggested and for one reason or another turned down. The idea of looking for an efficient officer apart from politics altogether, who would carry out an independent policy in the fire halls, having efficiency as its only object, has not yet come home to the board of control as a body. The result of having our system of alleged freedom from political rule while at the same time the authority of a political system is always felt, is to deprive the service of the more capable men which direct responsibility by the politicians for appointments would entail.

There are many in politics who favor this view, but it is distasteful to the people as a whole, and would work out as it does in the United States, in all kinds of gang rule and manipulation.

The civic services are gradually being freed from political influences, and it is because the fire department is the last stronghold of this kind that such great difficulty has been met with in appointing a head. The various factions are unwilling to unite on a strong man to end their control, and none of them can carry any weak man in the face of the opposition from other factions.

The interests of the city and the taxpayers ought to be the first consideration. If this were made the principle of the appointment that ought to be made forthwith the controllers would find it to be good politics too. There is no good politics which does not consider the best interests of the people, first, last and all the time.

No private corporation would make such a delay in appointing an official upon whose skill and experience millions of dollars of property are hazarded, as the board of control and the city council has made for a year past. We may hope not to have another ten million dollar fire in the business section, but no one can tell. Yonge street might be swept from one end to the other under conceivable conditions.

These things would be considered by a foresighted city government. It is likely that nothing will be done until the fire insurance underwriters take a hand in the game, and insist that their risks be abated by the appointment of a proper official.

Refusing Millions

A local paper sneers at the refusal of Father William Graham of Pittsburg to accept a legacy of $12,000,000. He had no need for the burden of riches and desired that his relatives, who needed assistance, should get whatever benefit might be derived from the vast sum.

It is not true, fortunately, that human nature is entirely given over to the worship of wealth. Wealth is a great opportunity for service, but usually it is regarded by those who have it as a great opportunity for indulgence. Many who have it not take this view as the standard. The happy man is he who has just enough and is content. The man who has a contented nature can get along on surprisingly little.

A great deal depends on the training to which people have been subjected. In America, generally, the worship of the dollar is widespread. It is seldom the custom here that a man will retire on a modest competence, as the custom is in Great Britain. When he gets a few thousands he wants more, or his family does, and he keeps on at the mill-grind, often because he has no other way to occupy his mind. When he has accumulated $100,000 he tries for a million, and if he gets that much before he is dead, he tries for five or ten.

It is a mad ambition, and only those who know the wealthy are aware of how unsatisfactory mere wealth is apart from a right use of it. The working classes generally regard wealth as the road to happiness, and find it hard to understand such actions as that of the Italian railway employes who refused $600,000 offered by the government for extra work done by them during the mobilization of the army. This was at Milan. The men at Rome followed suit and issued a statement declaring "We would feel humiliated if we were not willing to give our toil while others give their lives to their country."

This is the spirit which makes a country great, and where freedom must flourish because freedom is understood as a privilege and a responsibility. Life, not money, is the golden sacred gift.

Porcupine Special Supplement

Tomorrow's issue of The World will include a special illustrated supplement, describing the gold district of Porcupine and calling attention to the important position it now holds in the mining industry of Ontario. Porcupine is no longer a prospect. It has made good its claim to rank as the most promising of the more recent gold-bearing discoveries, and today it is only at the beginning of its real development. Last year gold exceeding in value about five and a quarter million dollars came from Porcupine, and the reserve ores in the larger mines are greater than the reserves at the end of 1913.

In his notable review of the national position, made on the occasion of the adjournment of the British Parliament, Mr. Asquith, the imperial prime minister, went out of his way in order to direct the attention of the whole country—indeed, of the empire—to the importance of increasing the stock of gold. He urged the necessity of establishing such a reserve of gold as would enable the United Kingdom to face, without hesitation of any kind, whatever drafts may be made upon it. That necessity is all the more urgent since Britain is financing her allies and is also concerned in maintaining her position as the centre of international exchange.

Canada can do no better service at the present crisis than by developing her gold producing districts to the greatest extent possible. In the latest report, issued by the commissioners of the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railroad, the remark is made that while the effect of the war has been to stimulate production from the already producing mines, work has been curtailed where capital was required for prospecting and early development. Some effort should be made to ensure an increase in gold production, and The World's special supplement has principally in view the stimulation of public interest in the valuable and profitable district of Porcupine.

Progress of Spelling Reform

Little is known by the general public about the progress of the movement for the reform of English spelling. Yet it proceeds without ostentation, but none the less steadily. Every year interest in the work increases among educational institutions, and the list of newspapers actually using simplified spelling continually grows. The ninth annual meeting of the Simplified Spelling Board, held in New York, was the most successful ever held in its spirit of enthusiasm and encouragement over the reports of progress made. This has to be said, too, that the reform advocated so commends itself that whatever ground is gained is never lost.

During the summer of last year the Modern Language Association took a referendum on the question of the use of simplified spelling in its official publications. Out of the total number of votes cast, 619, about 55 per cent. of the total membership, 253 favored the use of simplified spelling to the full extent and 101 to a less extent—the remainder, 265, favored its abandonment. The 45 per cent. of the membership that did not respond may be fairly assumed to have no definite objection to the use of simplified spelling in official publications.

In a reform propaganda of this kind progress is necessarily slow in its earlier stages. Custom and prejudice are always difficult to overcome, and it is a curious fact that those who have acquired facility by dint of close application are usually unwilling to make easy the path of those who follow in their footsteps. Some of those heroes of the past indeed go so far as to claim that the present complications of English spelling are invaluable in the training of young minds. Other and better methods of training can easily be found, and many hours now wasted could be devoted to pursuits much more valuable in later life. Germany's logical system of spelling has not been the least efficient element in the success of its schools.

The Harbor Mystery Still Unsolved!

Rain prevented work being resumed yesterday on the Toronto harbor. When the weather clears up the sub-contractors are to replace some of the piling. Hon. Mr. Rogers, interviewed at Ottawa, said: "The defects will all be made good, they are not very serious, and the renewal of a certain amount of piling is about all that is necessary."

That is quite satisfactory, and all should rejoice to know that the majority of the Toronto Harbor Commission apparently wrought themselves up to a high state of excitement over nothing at all. The few piles, as we understand it, were not placed quite close enough together, but as soon as that fact was drawn to the attention of the contractor he promptly arranged to make everything right.

The question will arise, however, how did the harbor commissioners know that the piling was not fitting snug 60 feet under water?

The government inspectors did not discovered the fact, and it was not patent enough to attract the attention of two of the best engineers in the country who were sent here to make an examination by the public works department. Did the commissioners themselves put on diving suits and go down to look at the work or did they, growing suspicious, employ divers to overlook the work being done by the government?

Altho there is so little wrong with the Toronto harbor work that a whole corps of engineers and divers after weeks of investigation can only find a few defects, not at all serious, which need attention the public interest is still aroused as to the harbor situation. A good many people have called at The World office and have sent in communications respecting the harbor mystery.

The Toronto Telegram last night paid a glowing tribute to the harbor commissioners, or at least the majority of them, as follows:

HARBOR COMMISSION DID WELL TO FIGHT.

Toronto Harbor Commission would have been a traitor to the trust received from the city and to the confidence reposed in it by Hon. Robert Rogers, minister of public works, if the commission had not backed up E. L. Cousins, engineer and designer of the harbor works.

Inadequacies and imperfections disclosed in certain portions of the completed undertakings have their origin elsewhere than in the defective specifications prepared by Mr. Cousins. The Cousins specifications are not defective. The immediate duty is to secure the progress of the work according to these specifications.

Independence, integrity and strength have been revealed in Hon. Robert Rogers' dealing with the harbor commission's demand for strict compliance with the Cousins specifications. That demand was a credit to R. S. Gourlay, L. H. Clarke and R. Home Smith, who led in the good work of emphasizing that demand. Toronto believes that Mayor Church and John Laxton are at one with their associates on the commission in a fight for the fair and just observance of public contracts. Thanks to Hon. Robert Rogers, that fight has been crowned with a victory that provides no material for misunderstanding in the future.

What is puzzling a good many people is this—what was all the fuss about? What had The Telegram in view in its first exposure?

We are told that the three commissioners above named went to Ottawa, threatened to resign and involve the Borden government in a scandal, unless certain demands were acceded to. These demands apparently included the removal of the resident engineer, the immediate discharge of all the government inspectors, the stopping of the work and, perhaps, ordering the contractor and sub-contractors off the work. Apparently one man who stood his ground was Mr. J. C. Stewart of the Canadian Stewart Company, Limited. He demanded to be shown. Finally after three weeks he has been shown a few defects in the work so trifling that the sub-contractors are brought back entrusted with their rectification and peace once more reigns in Warsaw. We would not be surprised if the inspectors got back before long.

We are therefore not surprised that a good many people do not think that all the facts have come out. They say the few mistakes of the sub-contractors about a few feet of piling here and there do not explain the mystery.

Since The World ventured to speak on the subject of the harbor a great deal has been accomplished. The working men have been paid their wages, and are to get more employment in the near future. The work is to be resumed, the Canadian Stewart Company, Limited, gets a good conduct medal, the sub-contractors sail their scows thru the canal and best of all the harbor commissioners are acclaimed for having talked like a Dutch uncle to the Dominion Government. The Hon. Mr. Rogers is complimented upon his devotion to the public service.

It is a good deal to have accomplished in three days, and we might well rest satisfied with our labors. We would be better satisfied, however, if we were more certain in our mind as to what was the real issue at stake between the Toronto Harbor Commission and the Dominion Government. There was an issue of some account if one of the most active of the commission is to be believed!

There is a big issue at stake which no one likes to speak about. It explains the friction between the harbor engineers and the government engineers; it explains why the harbor commissioners threatened to resign; it explains why work was stopped. Men on the work have done a great deal of talking and so have some officials. It is unnecessary to quote them. We reserve the right to discuss this matter fully and frankly in the public interest. It may not be necessary to tell the public everything, but we think they should be given some better explanation of the harbor situation than has been fed out to them up to date by the papers professing to speak authoritatively for the government and the harbor commission.

North Toronto Deputations

Editor World: I have just read Mr. E. V. Donnelly's letter and also the letter of Mr. John Gaw of the Moore Park Ratepayers' Association, which were in your paper this morning. I quite agree with these gentlemen, but must say I am very much surprised at Mr. Donnelly allowing himself to get worked up over nothing. If he had waited yesterday morning with the rest of the deputation he would have then seen the matter in an entirely different light, and I think you will agree with me that it is pretty nearly time he knew that he must not take everything he may read in The Telegram for gospel. In reply to these gentlemen I wish to place myself on record as being first, last and always in favor of the Mount Pleasant avenue car line. I did not reply to Controller Foster's query, "Would you be willing to forego the road on Mount Pleasant avenue?" in the affirmative, but I did say, "We, as a deputation, were not here to discuss Mount Pleasant road, but purely and simply the matter of the Metropolitan franchise on Yonge street," following up a resolution which was passed at a North Toronto ratepayers' meeting on Thursday evening last, which was as follows:

"That the city council be memorialized to at once take the necessary steps to secure legislation enabling the corporation of the City of Toronto to expropriate any and all rights that the Metropolitan Railway may have within the limits of the City of Toronto."

It was on this resolution that I headed a deputation before the board of control, and in view of the fact that his worship the mayor has been quoted in the press as being in favor of entering into an agreement with the Metropolitan Railway, giving them running rights south of Farnham avenue until 1921, I feel that we were justified in our action. Let me here emphasize the fact that I will not leave a stone unturned as president of the North Toronto Ratepayers' Association until I see the construction of Mount Pleasant civic line an assured fact, but at the same time we must not forget the abominable situation that exists on Yonge street today and allow the Metropolitan Railway Company to obtain further privileges than those they now enjoy.

Trusting you will give this communication the same prominence in your paper as allowed to the letters of Messrs. Donnelly and Gaw, and assuring the ratepayers of North Toronto that during the balance of my term as president of their association I shall endeavor to further their interests to the best of my ability.

G. A. Hodgson,
President North Toronto Ratepayers' Association.

Toronto, Aug. 12.

FAIRBANK SCHOOL DRAINS.

Editor World: I have read with astonishment the remarks of a supposed resident of Fairbank in an evening paper regarding the washing back of the drains at the new Fairbank School, which they cannot expect otherwise, owing to the excessive storms of late, which have washed many houses in Toronto with up-to-date drains, and with regard to the drains falling into the building, I emphatically deny that statement, as the drains are laid perfectly and away from the school, with a big fall.

I should much like the name of the "Fellow Ratepayer" who put the statement in the paper.

Fellow Ratepayer.

MAN WHO CAN SHOOT IS GOOD RECRUIT.

Editor World: While not saying "Amen" to the letter in Saturday's World from "An Old Acquaintance," would like to say: There are quite a few young men that would make excellent soldiers if given a chance.

In Scotland during the Boer War recruits were instructed to go to the nearest rifle range. There they were given a rifle and a certain amount of ammunition. The officer at the range marked the recruit's application card "good," "fair" or "bad," whether the recruit shot right-handed or left-handed.

There are quite a number of the "unfit and useless" that can shoot straight, but have been rejected by the doctor because one of their eyes was defective.

Surely, Mr. Editor, if a man is "fit" and can shoot straight with one eye I believe he ought to be given a chance.

The writer does not want to tell the militia department how to run their business, but simply suggest a way whereby they can get quite a few good and willing recruits and thus find a way for the "enlistment of those who are less necessary for the ordinary business" in the community.

Britisher.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELERS' BIT.

Editor World: An evening paper of Aug. 10 contained a letter from the treasurer of the Commercial Travelers' Association of Canada, Mr. E. Fielding, giving the public the information that the association is doing its bit.

I fully admit much has been done, but a very small bit for such an association as the C.T.A., with its large reserve fund, and so just a cause as freedom, thought and action under the law of British institutions as against military despotism.

The treasurer gives us to understand that the association numbers 12,000, and out of that 100 men enlist. The writer would be pleased to learn what amount has been given to the Canadian hospital to comfort those 100 men if wounded in defence of the empire, and as the association members are largely young men coming under the first call of military precedence, I am surprised at so few answering the call. Illustrate what our Canadian born of German parents have done: One prominent gentleman has given time, money, etc., at his own expense; small and large towns populated by Germans and German descent, have given much larger than most other nationalities towards patriotic and Red Cross funds, and the writer believes if the majority of members on the board of directors of the C.T.A. were of German descent, the hospital fund would not be overlooked.

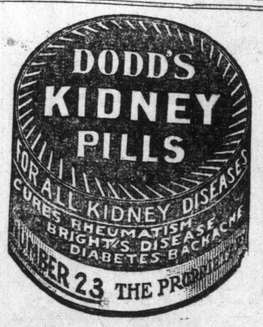
J. H. Kenney.

CORNWALL ENGINEER FOR FRONT.

Special to The Toronto World.

CORNWALL, Ont., Aug. 12.—The council has passed a bylaw appointing Frank Stilwill, C. E., as engineer during the absence of Capt. W. H. Magwood, who has been given command of D. company, 77 Battalion.

It is proposed to have three officers of the 59th Stormont and Glengarry Regiment connected with the 77th Battalion, as follows: Lieut. G. F. MacDonald, son of Col. A. G. F. MacDonald of Alexandria; Lieut. A. L. McLachlan and Lieut. Frank Hunter of Cornwall.



ACTING CHIEF SMITH GIVES UP HIS JOB

Failure of Board of Control to Back Him, Results in Resignation.

SITUATION THICKENS

Lacking Official Head, Fire Department is Disorganized.

Acting Chief William Smith of the fire department has tendered his resignation to the board of control, to take effect on August 16, with a request that the same be accepted. He has been 39 years in the department, having entered the service in 1876 at the age of 19, and from a position in the hook and ladder section at Court street station he climbed up until in 1911 he was made district chief. His salary is now $2200 and should his resignation go into effect he will receive a pension of $1100 per annum.

Makes Problem Difficult.

This latest development in the affairs of the department, the reorganization of which has been a subject for debate at nearly every meeting of council this year, makes the solution of the problem that has confronted the board of control and the city council more urgent than ever, and may possibly be the means of bringing about a settlement of the whole affair within a short time.

A special meeting of the controllers was called for yesterday afternoon, but as Controller Thompson was out of town the meeting was postponed until this morning, when all the members will be present. In speaking of the matter yesterday afternoon Mayor Church stated that he was not in favor of accepting the acting chief's resignation as he was a valuable man and one that the department could ill afford to lose.

Has No Remedy.

The resignation has been brought about largely thru the action of the board of control, and more especially of Mayor Church, who advised Smith that he had complete jurisdiction over the department in the matter of discipline. Acting on this advice the acting chief saw fit to dismiss District Chief Alex. Gunn. In this the board of control failed to support him, nor did they support him in his second recommendation that Gunn be reduced in rank, and as he has since found that he could not legally take such action his resignation has been the result.

As the aldermen have been unable to come to an agreement in the matter of a fire commissioner, the controllers had decided to let the appointment stand for awhile until such time as it appeared that a name could be agreed upon, but now that another bomb has been exploded it would appear that something will have to be done immediately to put the fire department on its feet.

The result of this latest development is that the organization of the fire department is in a worse condition than ever as there are now practically no senior officers and no one in the department has sufficient authority to maintain its discipline.

Men Are Disgruntled.

The way in which the fire department situation has been handled by this year's council and the board of control is no credit to either body. To date much valuable time has been wasted in discussing reorganization and the appointment of a commissioner; nothing has been done and the whole department is in a disgruntled state by reason of the ineffective gruelling it has been put thru at the hands of the city fathers.

Acting Chief Smith has been caused much unnecessary humiliation on account of his action toward District Chief Gunn because no one on the board of control would take the responsibility of having advised him that he had the necessary power to act, and more especially because his appointment to the position was not ratified by a bylaw, which may be considered a gross oversight on the part of the city council.

This latest resignation is the third of importance in the department this year, the others being those of Chief John Thompson and Deputy Chief Noble.

Address for the Duke.

During the salute at the review stand at the Exhibition grounds on military day, September 2, His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught will be presented with a civic address by Mayor Church.

The mayor has received no intimation from Fred Dane of the Provincial License Commission as to whether he is prepared to accept the position of fire commissioner or not.

According to Mayor Church the Hydro Commission is to erect electric signs thruout the city for the purpose of stimulating recruiting. They will be much the same as the one already in place in front of the city hall.

Inspected Vegetable Crops.

The mayor, several aldermen and others yesterday morning visited the garden plots of the Rotary Club at the corner of King and Dunn, Carlaw and Eastern, and on Bathgate, Woodycrest and Langford avenues, off Danforth. A luncheon was served at the Board of Trade Building, the vegetables for same being grown by members of the club, and a basket of vegetables has been sent to each member of the city council and board of control. The club has under cultivation 120 lots, comprising in all 21 acres.

HAND-MADE LACE.

Editor World: Referring to an article in your paper of recent issue, on the possibilities in the manufacture of Belgian and French hand-made laces in this country and the locating of persons interested and educated in the work—I would like very much to communicate with persons interested in the subject, and would be glad to come to Toronto to show my work.

I am from Belfort, France, one of the world centres of hand lace manufacture, and am a designer and originator of hand lace, especially filet lace, gowns, hats, parasols, bedspreads, curtains, etc.

I would be much obliged if you would refer this correspondence to the interested parties or publish the substance of my letter.

Lucile Boucher,
Dominion Apartment Suite 7, Hamilton Ont.

WILLS PROBATED

George Robert Tyler has filed for ancillary probate in the surrogate court, the wills of his parents, Charles David Tyler and Martha Halton Tyler of St. Therese, Quebec, who perished in the Empress of Ireland disaster on the St. Lawrence, on May 29, 1914. By a will made February 6, 1911, Charles D. Tyler left all the property to his wife. A will made on Feb. 4, 1901 by Mrs. Tyler, left her estate to her husband, or in the event of his death before her, to his son G. R. Tyler. By civil code of Quebec Province the husband is supposed to have died before his wife and both estates pass to the son. The estate of Charles D. Tyler, inventoried at $11,063, is made up of $5,562 in life insurance, $446 in cash and the remainder in stocks in various Canadian companies.

Mrs. Tyler left an estate worth $35,536, consisting of $20,000 in Montreal property, $6,750 in four lots in St. Therese, and the balance in stocks and household goods and cash.

Application has been made by Mrs. M. E. Sinclair for administration of the estate of her infant son Samuel Clifford Sinclair, who had $5,629 standing to his credit in the supreme court at the time of his death in Toronto on April 26. The mother will receive the entire estate.

Mrs. Millie M Gorringer who died in Toronto on August 6, 1910, left an estate valued at $3,500. Some money in the bank and a life interest in the estate is left to her husband Thomas Gorringer. On his death the property will be equally divided between the two daughters Marjory and Pearl Gorringer.

Mrs. Ada Sharpe is sole beneficiary under the will of her husband Albert Sharpe, who died July 14, leaving an estate of $1,675.

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