

OIL BORINGS IN ATHABASCA AND IN GASPE.

When, some years ago, the Senators at Ottawa were accustomed to be told by one of their number, Dr. Schultz, now Lieut.-Governor of Manitoba, about the vast fields of petroleum existing in the Athabasca region of the North-West, they were not greatly impressed with the importance of the prospect. But the Doctor never lost an opportunity of exploiting the claims of that territory to public attention for other reasons as well as that of its wealth in oil. The present Minister of the Interior, Mr. Daly, some months ago instructed an expert at oil-boring, Mr. A. Fraser, to make some trial borings. Mr. Fraser was set to work 250 miles north of Edmonton, by Dr. Selwyn, of the Geological Survey, who said that when he bored 600 feet through the shale the oil stream would be reached. He has now bored 1,000 feet and has not yet got through the shale, but he thinks he is close on it now. He, however, ran out of pipe and had to go east to get a supply. When through boring where he has now started, he will experiment at other places. He declares that there are vast fields of petroleum in Athabasca.

Twenty-eight or thirty years ago much interest was aroused in the petroleum fields of Gaspé, in the Province of Quebec. Members of Parliament, which in those days sat alternately in Quebec and Toronto, visited the district, and some of them invested money in borings for oil. Whether it was that the methods employed were crude, or that the proper places were not tried, the results were not satisfactory, and the enterprise, to use a phrase of that day, "got a black eye." Interest in the subject has re-awakened of late. News comes from Gaspé to the *Montreal Star* that the lands of the International Land Company, purchased about six years ago for \$800, and consisting of four hundred acres, were sold on the 8th instant at public auction for \$2,500 cash, to the Petroleum Oil Trust, of London. This, in the opinion of the sender of the despatch, means that oil has been struck, but as all the employes are warned to secrecy, nothing has been made public.

MUNICIPAL MEMORANDA.

The good town of Waterloo, Ont., has some Old Country notions. It has just laid \$500 worth of cement sidewalks instead of wooden ones.

The St. Johns corporation is pressing ratepayers in arrears for taxes to some purpose. Since the first of January over \$7,000 in arrears have been collected.

The Berlin waterworks have now 514 water takers, which shows a liberal consumption. The waterworks of the city of Belleville are owned by the same company.

The Chatham Waterworks Company, which it appears has not been a financial success, offers to sell out to the town for \$132,000, and the people of the town will vote on the question in a few weeks.

According to an admission made at a meeting of its townspeople last week, the village of Bedford, Que., has the poorest streets in that province. Now that they realize this, the inhabitants will probably take steps to have the streets improved.

Last week the town council of Amherstburg was empowered by Ontario Order-in-Council to pass a by-law authorizing the issue of debentures to the amount of \$9,000, bearing 5 per cent. interest, for the payment of some \$5,300 already expended on extensions of the waterworks, for the expenditure of \$1,000 in placing a second boiler in the waterworks, and for \$2,700 to pay for extensions to the waterworks to be hereafter made.

An undertaking to improve the character of the town's water supply has been given by the water company of Coaticook. And not before it was needed, judging by the following extract from the report of the provincial health inspector: "I must say that the water supplied to the town of Coaticook from the three intakes near the Grand Trunk crossing on Riendeau and McKee's farms, is in such a condition as to be unhealthy and unfit to drink."

While, according to the municipal census, the population of St. Thomas, 10,563, has not increased during the last twelve months, some addition has been made to the wealth of the place. The assessors find the value of real estate there to be \$8,771,579, as compared with \$8,672,044 a year ago. There is, however, these officers say, no increase in other forms of wealth there, but the contrary. The value this year of personal property is \$255,450, a decrease of \$35,685; of income assessment, \$225,750, a decrease of \$21,200.

It is declared likely that a by-law will be submitted to the ratepayers of Brockville in January next, asking their votes on the question whether they shall have a street railway, and, if so, whether it shall be run on Sunday. A Boston man, Mr. Wilgus, representing American capitalists, offers to build an electric street railway in Brockville. They ask for a twenty-year franchise, an acre of ground for buildings, exemption from taxation and permission to run the cars on Sunday. In re-

turn they offer a complete and well-equipped electric car service with a five-cent fare.

The city of Halifax having advertised that it desired to borrow \$52,000 for sewerage purposes, received offers from Montreal, Toronto and Halifax. The tenders for 4½ per cent. stock were as under: Imperial Trust Company, Toronto, premium, \$4.38; G. A. Stimson, Toronto, premium, \$4.26; J. C. Mackintosh, Halifax, premium, \$3.33; Hanson Bros., Montreal, \$3.25. The following were the offers for 4 per cent. stock: Imperial Trust Company, Toronto, per \$100, \$96.84; G. A. Stimson, Toronto, per \$100, \$96.75; J. C. Mackintosh, Halifax, per \$100, \$96.50; Hanson Bros., Montreal, per \$100, \$96.26. The *Herald* states that the tender of the Imperial Trust Company, of Toronto, will be accepted.

The council of Lachute, Que., proposes to repeal the taxes on business and rental values, and raise the town revenue mainly by means of a real estate levy. Now here is a proposal to give a demonstration of the practicability of single tax. Let us hear how the municipal councillors of Lachute succeed in this venture. If there are any residents of that place who are bloated capitalists and coupon-clippers, but who own no real estate, they of course will approve the single tax movement, because the town will collect nothing from them. Then the merchant who does his business in a rented shop, and lives in a rented house, will pay nothing towards the town revenues, for business tax and tax on rental value are to be repealed. But the Lord help the fellows who own the land within the town borders; they must pay all the taxes. Wonder how the good land-owners of Lachute like the prospect.

FOR DRY GOODS RETAILERS.

Christmas is but thirty-nine days distant.

The tendency is towards smaller knots in neckties.

British importations of American Axminsters are on the decrease.

A knitted wool glove for men to retail at 25 to 50 cents is selling well.

In men's gloves tans and assorted browns are the all-prevailing shades.

G. A. Dixon & Co. are removing their clothing store from New Glasgow, N.S.

White dress bows are narrower in width and smaller in size than they were last season.

Manchester, Eng., merchants have decided to found a local cotton market and association of cotton brokers.

Messrs. Thos. Hickey and H. Scott are starting a knitting business in Berlin. There specialty will be bicycle hose.

English Derby walking gloves in all the new shades of red and tan will be the glove for street wear this season.—*Economist*.

The Corticelli Silk Co., St. Johns, Que., will light their factory with gas and electric light supplied on their own premises.

Some Sarnia merchants are agitating to have the early closing by-law amended so as to allow stores to open on Monday nights.

The clothing establishments of New Westminster, B.C., are to be closed every night at 7 o'clock except on Saturday and days before holidays.

Father—"Why is it that you have no money the day after you receive your salary?" Son—"It is not my fault, daddy—it is all owing to other people."—*Truth*.

"Yes," said Mrs. Shopper, "I bought this dress at the bargain counter, but I am not sure that it was not the shopkeeper who made the bargain."—*Boston Transcript*.

Checks and stripes appear to have lost caste in neckwear, although some very pretty ties are being shown in both these designs. The general tendency appears to favor floral and neat object designs.

Merchants in Leeds report that trade with Canada is beginning to brighten up somewhat and orders on Canadian account are being placed more freely. This applies more particularly to the better class of goods.

Both city and country retailers find a good demand for a men's glove which can be retailed at \$1. Can you not push this? A Toronto house reports that a line of two-ball fasteners, kid-lined gloves is among their best selling stock.

"For one month scarcely anything was seen on the streets of London in the shape of neckwear that had not a tinge of green about it," so remarked the English buyer of a Toronto dry goods firm. "But the style was too pronounced to take here. You will see a fair sprinkling of green in the windows of Notre Dame or King street gentlemen's furnishings' stores, but the country merchant wants none or little of it."