

Public Meeting Shows Enthusiasm for Civic Distribution of Hydro

References to Popular Policy and Declarations in Favor of It Greeted With Enthusiastic Applause at Meeting Held to Enable Candidates for Civic Offices to Show Where They Stand.

The intense interest of the citizens of St. John in the question of the distribution of the hydro-electric energy to be generated at the Musquash development, which has been offered to the city, was strikingly manifested at the meeting in the Pythian Castle last evening held under the auspices of the united organizations.

Civic Distribution Applauded.

The ringing, unequivocal declarations in favor of civic distribution made by Hon. R. W. Wigmore, E. J. Hillyard, H. B. McLellan and Alexander Corbett, evoked intense applause. Mayor Schofield and Commissioner Jones both advocating municipal control, declared the benefits to the consumer they would gladly support civic distribution.

Roy Willet, president of the united organizations, who acted as chairman, in opening the meeting, explained that the united organizations favored the distribution of the hydro-electric energy to be developed at Musquash. They regarded the subject as vitally important to the city that they had arranged the meeting in order to afford an opportunity to the candidates to give their views.

Mayor Schofield, who was the first candidate to speak, complimented the association on its lively interest in civic affairs. He regretted that limitations of time and business constrained him to give but a partial treatment of the question which, to be dealt with in anything like adequate fullness, would require about one and a half or two hours.

Expanding his attitude regarding the disposition of the power, Mayor Schofield declared that neither he nor, so far as he knew, any member of his family was in any way, shape or form a stockholder in the New Brunswick Power Company. His sole interest in the question was the best interests of the taxpayers.

He said that already concessions had been secured from the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission and he regretted that the issue was being forced as it was, for the city might not be able to get further concessions.

Nothing could be further from his mind than leaning towards the Power Company and if, as had been said, he seemed to have an "unconscious" leaning towards the company that impression must have been created through some of the reports which had been made public through his office.

"It is in the interest of the citizens to own the power municipally then that is what I and the other members of the council stand for," said His Worship. It might be possible to effect a saving only through civic ownership of both plant and distribution and, if it were so, that was what the council wanted and no one was more eager than himself.

Such a question involving such a large expenditure of the taxpayers' money should not be left to the decision of any five men who might happen to constitute the city council, the mayor said. There should be a plebiscite on the question and it should be no ordinary plebiscite where only about 3,000 or 4,000 of the 18,000 voters on the list cast a ballot.

In conclusion, the mayor said he entertained the view that, had the council been permitted to carry on longer negotiations with the New Brunswick Power Commission, a better bargain might have been effected but, since it seemed to be the will of the people that the question should be made an issue in the forthcoming civic elections, he was ready to present all the information so far secured by him to the people and he would do so at the public meeting next week.

In announcing that he would again be a candidate Mayor Schofield said that he had nothing to offer but the record of his two years' of service. He was generously applauded when he concluded.

Commissioner Bullock.

Commissioner T. H. Bullock followed Mayor Schofield. He said that the ques-

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and are squeezing the wind out of us," he declared amid great applause. A clique and a ring held the citizens and were squeezing the life out of them.

He declared unequivocally that he was for city ownership and that if elected that would be the policy that he would support.

Edward Sears, former mayor and a candidate for the mayoralty in the next elections, said the question, as he viewed it in the light of the partial information on the subject that he had been able to accumulate, was whether the Power Company should exploit the power or whether the city should exploit it as a public utility solely for the benefit of the public.

He quoted a list of figures showing the relatively low cost of current for domestic uses in other cities of Canada, including several outside the range of the Niagara and the St. Lawrence power projects.

A private company, he said, was more interested in high dividends than in low costs that was high natural for it was in business for profit and not for philanthropy.

If, he asked, Ontario towns under municipal ownership can have satisfactory service, cheap light and power, they should have less confidence in their fellow citizens of St. John and of New Brunswick to carry on a publicly owned enterprise here?

Being his stand upon the reports that he already had seen, Mr. Sears declared that he was strongly in favor of municipal control of electric light and power, after he had a chance to study the question further he felt that he could submit a plan that would be acceptable to the citizens generally.

The Evening Times, he felt, had summed up the situation in a nutshell when it said that the increase had reached 10.17 cents per k.w.h. and no hope for the future or 6.08 cents per k.w.h. with the assurance of a later reduction to about four cents.

Mr. Sears said that one of the shareholders in the old gas company had a clause inserted in the agreement covering the sale of the gas plant to the street railway company to the effect that the price of gas in St. John should never be more than \$1.85 per thousand. He regarded it as a breach of faith that the price should have been raised up to what it now was even if that increase had been made by a company which bore a different name from that of the company with which the agreement had been made.

Mr. Sears was heartily applauded at the conclusion of his speech.

Hon. Rupert W. Wigmore, former commissioner of water and sewerage, declared that the increase had reached 10.17 cents per k.w.h. and no hope for the future or 6.08 cents per k.w.h. with the assurance of a later reduction to about four cents.

Mr. Wigmore said that he had studied the question so far as he had been able in view of the articles and reports available. He was absolutely in favor of cheaper power for the city of St. John, for he felt that through cheaper power alone could the city prosper.

The provincial government had guaranteed the availability of the energy to be developed at Musquash and it was now a matter of getting down to the cost of distribution. Power could be distributed more cheaply than it was being distributed by the Power Company, he said. For that reason he was in favor of public ownership and, if elected, it would be his duty and privilege to see that the hydro-electric energy was so distributed.

Mr. McLellan, a former commissioner and now a candidate for the mayoralty, said that he had a full appreciation of the rights of both the New Brunswick Power Company and of the people. He thought that there was no right to interfere with a public utility corporation that was providing good service at reasonable cost but there was a right to reform a corporation that was exploiting a city and creating false values.

The citizens could no longer go on permitting the Power Company to maintain its position of privilege and monopoly; it was the duty of the citizens to decide whether the New Brunswick Power Company was giving fair service at reasonable cost. A general overhauling of the whole situation was the only way of avoiding disaster, he said.

He criticized the length of time it had taken the city council to arrive at a decision in the matter of the distribution of the Musquash energy. He maintained that all the information on the subject should have been made public by the mayor.

He said that on November 24, 1920, the N. B. Electric Power Commission had written to the city council to say that about the end of 1921 there would be available about 5,000 horse power from the Musquash development and that the price of it should not exceed two cents a kilowatt hour. In May, 1921, the commission again wrote to say that they estimated the cost would be about one and one-half cents per kilowatt hour. In reply to a letter from the city asking about the cost of a distribution system the commission had replied that it would cost about \$750,000. This, said Mr. McLellan, was a pretty fair estimate in view of the fact that the \$900,000 Phillips Kirby estimate contemplated among other things about four miles of underground system at a cost of \$187,000. He referred to later correspondence between the commission and the city, the fixing of 1.2 cents as a maximum cost and the three-year concession made by the city by the commission. He said that the Power Commission had been willing to meet the city more than half way. He referred to the mayor's statement that he had put in a great amount of work on the subject. The city wanted results, Mr. McLellan said.

He warned his audience not to be deceived by the statement that the commission could only dispose of its energy to the city.

Mr. McLellan declared that he had gone as far as he could with a process of fair and sincere analysis of the situation and in conclusion declared "in favor of municipal control and municipal distribution and my slogan is, 'No truck or trade with the Power Company.'" Ringing applause marked the conclusion of Mr. McLellan's speech.

Before the addresses on the subject of hydro-electric distribution, Miss Ingils, tuberculosis expert, who has come to the city to assist in the case-finding campaign, spoke in the interests of the campaign.

The singing of the National Anthem brought the meeting to a close.

LORD CARSON MAY RESIGN HIS OFFICE

(Canadian Press Despatch) London, March 27.—Viscount Birkenhead's severe rebuke to Lord Carson for delivering political speeches from the public platform was the sensation of the parliamentary day.

Viscount Birkenhead spoke with intense feeling and vehemence and his sentiments of censure poured in torrents from his lips. Lord Carson was absent through illness and Viscount Birkenhead intimated that had the subject of his remarks been present he would have been more outspoken.

A rejoinder is expected from Lord Carson but it is thought that after this course from the head of the British Judiciary, Lord Carson will resign his position as a law lord.

FINE PICTURE AT THE QUEEN SQUARE

When the words were flashed to the thousands of moving picture exhibitors throughout the country that Lois Weber had produced her masterpiece, there was a scramble for prints with comparative few questions asked about the title or theme of the picture.

Such interest in Lois Weber's productions in the part of exhibitors strongly indicates what a wealth of genuine screen entertainment was in store for picture fans when "What Do Men Want?" the great American drama of the hunt for happiness was shown in Queen Square Theatre yesterday.

Lois Weber has woven into this powerful drama of life a theme so universal as to virtually say to every man who sees it, "This means you." It is a gripping narrative that makes men see and understand the things they really do want, and supplies wives and mothers and sweethearts with knowledge of what makes for happiness and contentment among men.

Movie fans who were fortunate enough to see "Where Are My Children?" "The Epic of a Good Time" or any of Lois Weber's productions which attained national popularity in the past, will pronounce "What Do Men Want?" one of the few really notable screen achievements.

This picture will be shown again tonight for the last three times.

TRINITY CLUB ENTERTAINS

Trinity Club entertained its members and friends very pleasantly last night. Miss M. E. Travis gave an illustrated travelogue descriptive of a tour through England, Scotland, Sweden and Denmark which she had made in the summer of 1914, just before the outbreak of war.

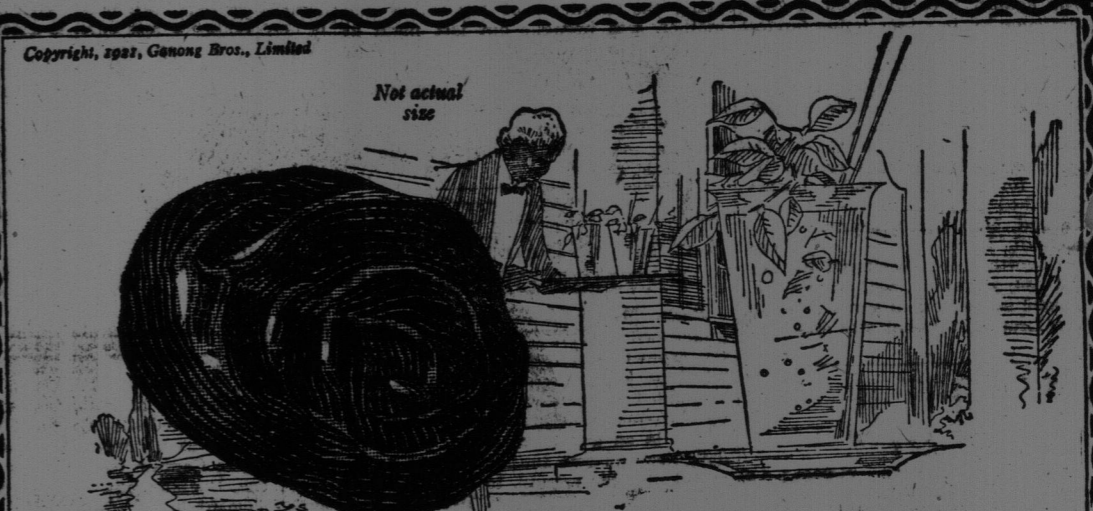
Rev. Canon R. A. Armstrong extended the thanks of all present to Miss Travis.

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Rev. A. E. Gabriel, the president of the club was the chairman and in a short musical programme at the commencement by the social service committee of the ment of the evening Miss I. Stephenson gave piano selections and Miss Elsie gave vocal selections. The social service committee were served by the social service committee of the ment of the evening Miss I. Stephenson club and a social half hour enjoyed.

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In 1910 St. John's death rate from tuberculosis was 26 per 1,000; in 1921 it was 13 per 1,000.

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