

Affairs in Manitoba

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Numerous matters of import are occupying the attention of the Winnipeg City Council just now. One of the largest and most important is the jitney question; then there is the revised city charter, matters connected with the big \$13,000,000 project of the Greater Winnipeg Water district, to which Winnipeg and the surrounding municipalities are contributors; a proposal to municipalize all the city hospitals, the new city charter passed by the Manitoba legislature, the civic pensions scheme framed by Professor Mackenzie, of Toronto University, a proposal for a municipal income tax, and last, but not least, a renewed request by the 1,500 civic employees for a new wage schedule, will, if granted, add approximately ten per cent to the civic salaries list.

Dealing with the first-named, the jitney question—the City Council have been granted full powers by the legislature and is now in a position to abolish the jitney service should it see its way to do so. Their fate is, so to speak, in the balance. The Council at its last meeting accepted a report made by the transportation committee which had been dealing with the subject for some time previous. The aldermen, however, considered they should be given some time to study the report which was very voluminous and it was decided that the matter should stand in abeyance until special meeting was called by the mayor.

From the figures given out by the street railway company following its meeting of March 20, it was shown that a comparative small amount, or to be exact, \$92,579.65 remained as net profits for the year 1917, which would be about sufficient to pay one per cent dividend on the capital invested. From the figures also it was learned that the gross earnings of the company for 1917 were higher than in 1916, but that the operating costs were very much higher. In the operating costs as set forth, there was included for the year 1917 the sum of \$201,050 for depreciation. It was shown that if the process which has been going on for the past five years in depreciation, operating cost, increase in wages and jitney competition, is continued for one year more, there would not be near enough money to pay the fixed charges, and that the apparent result would be that the concern would be obliged to go into liquidation. No dividend has been paid since 1915 and, of course, there is no prospect of any dividend in the future unless some changes are made. Directors of the company state that an increase in the fares is inevitable if present conditions with reference to costs of material, etc., continues, and quite apart from the jitney question. It seems therefore, that, in the interests of the city, the Council will even stretch a point, and issue the ultimatum that jitneys must go.

Aqueduct May Cost \$16,000,000.

As the big aqueduct from the Lake of the Woods to Winnipeg nears completion, property owners are commencing to ask themselves whether, after all, the big project was a wise one. The surrounding municipalities are the most involved. Several of these are sparsely populated, and the cost of the undertaking based as it will be on the value of the land, will, it is feared, prove a burden too heavy to bear. Assiniboine, one of the largest of these, threatens to assert itself within a short while either by applying to the legislature for permission to pull out, or by asking for a radical change in its assessment. To this one municipality the cost of tapping the main supply will cost approximately \$240,000. Only those citizens living close to the centre of the municipality, or in other words, the more thickly populated portion, and that part nearer Winnipeg will benefit, for farmers living in the farther out portions will have to pay the piper as well as the urbanites. It will be interesting to watch developments on the part of these municipalities towards this big undertaking, which so far as can be estimated at present, will cost in the neighbourhood of \$16,000,000.

Municipal Income Tax Favored.

The application of an income tax, preferably of a provincial nature and extent to supply the necessary revenue for the administration of the affairs of the city of Winnipeg is favored by the majority of citizens. The main object of the proposed change is to be able to raise more

revenue and at the same time to more evenly distribute the burden of taxation. The changing of assessment values would obviously not accomplish this object, as the tax would correspondingly be raised or lowered to meet any alteration in the assessment. The only remedy seems therefore to open up some new source of revenue, and the question now is, would not profits on business, personal income tax, and tax on profits derived from mortgages produce the desired results? The adoption of these would, it would seem, give the city a system of taxation on land and buildings, business tax on net profits, personal income tax, licenses and profits from mortgage. "Are we all paying our proportionate share of taxes." This is the question being asked and this is the question which should be asked by all right-minded and fair citizens, be they of whatever city they may.

Taxes by Instalments.

Under an amendment to the city charter, Winnipeg citizens are to be given the right to pay their arrears of taxes in instalments, instead of as hitherto in a lump sum. As the city charter stands at present, no ratepayer can make any payment on account of his arrears of taxes; he must either pay the entire amount or nothing. The proposed amendment will enable any person in arrears to the extent of one year's taxes, to pay up by five instalments; if the taxes are three years in arrears, they may be paid in fifteen instalments.

No Hospital Municipalization.

Winnipeg is proud of its municipal hospitals, possessing as it does two of the finest and best managed institutions in the Dominion. It is, however, opposed to further municipalization, and the City Council at a recent meeting turned down what amounted to such a proposal made by Controller Puttee. The Winnipeg General Hospital, at present supported by provincial and municipal grants and private contributions, was the institution around which interest centred, the board of this hospital having recently petitioned for a special grant of \$60,000 to meet increased expenditure to the end of the present fiscal year. The Council authorized the grant almost without discussion, following elaborate arguments on the advantages and disadvantages of municipalizing hospitals in Scotland, England, France, Canada, and the United States, advanced by both men and women speakers. The decision of the Council not to further tax ratepayers by imposing upon them a cost to a great extent at present carried by public and private subscriptions, was generally commended.

KEEP A PIG.

It Will Help Keep You, or Pay For a Victory Bond.

During the summer of 1917, a number of conferences were held at various points in Canada for the purpose of discussing increased bacon production. Farmers and breeders were everywhere urged to keep and breed extra sows. As a result, the Live Stock Commissioner reports that we may confidently expect the number of hogs to be increased by 25 to 30 per cent during 1918. The first step towards an increase in our bacon supply has thus already been taken.

The next step is to see that these extra pigs are fed and fattened. The fed situation is acute. Many farmers who have been able to breed and winter an extra sow or two will not be in a position to feed to a proper finish all of the extra pigs. There are numerous householders in Canada who could help relieve this situation by keeping on one or two pigs, which could be bought at weaning time, fed during the summer largely upon the garden and kitchen refuse, and finished off in the fall upon an increased meal ration.

There are thousands of people around towns and villages and in small settlements who could, and should, help in this way. It is past the time for "doing your bit"; it is now time to "do your utmost." Do not allow kitchen refuse, or garden weeds and waste to go unused. Feed them to a pig. A properly-cared-for pig is not a menace to public health. What you do in this matter may mean life or death to somebody "over there." Decide now and begin to get a place ready to KEEP A PIG.