

QUERIES' COLUMN.

In order to furnish our readers with information we propose to devote this column to replies to correspondents. Letters should be addressed to "THE CHRONICLE, Enquiry Department, Montreal."

Answers will only be given to such communications as bear the writer's name, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and only to questions referring to matters of general interest in regard to which the Editor of Queries' Column will exercise his own discretion.

1431.—L. O. W., Oshawa, O.—Only stocks not listed on the Stock Exchange are dealt in on the curb. The principal securities dealt in at present are as follows:

Havana Electric Company bonds and preferred and common stock.

Mexican Power Company bonds and common stock.

Rio de Janeiro Power Company bonds and common stock.

Electric Development Company bonds and common stock.

Japanese, 4½ p.c. bonds.

1432.—H. J. B., Quebec.—The Homestake mine has paid large dividends for years past, and it is stated that it is likely to continue doing so for years yet. The price is high and it would only be advisable to buy the stock on a decided break.

PROMINENT TOPICS.

THE MONTREAL HARBOUR BOARD.—The proceedings of the Harbour Board of this city are of service to the daily newspapers in providing them with a gossip class of reading matter. Whether the discussions they carry on and the resolutions they draft, but do not pass, are as serviceable to the interests of this port as their deliberations and actions should be in a question we do not decide. A very general conviction prevails in business circles in this city that, in regard to the actual business transacted by the Harbour Board it is a case of "*great cry and little wool*." How would it work out if the local press abstained for three months from noticing the meetings of the Harbour Commissioners, and so left them entirely free to attend to business? We make this suggestion without prejudice in the interests of all concerned.

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THE STATE OF THE STREETS.—Those whose functions and whose duties are, to express as well as guide public feeling and opinion would find their energies paralyzed were the ideas to prevail which some of our civic rulers have recently ventilated. It is protested that, complaints published by the press against the neglect of our streets by the civic authorities are injurious to the city's reputation. It is also affirmed, that these complaints deter visitors, whereby the trade of the merchants is injured. Those who raise this cry are somewhat confused in their ideas. It is not the complaints and protests against the state of the streets which damage the city, but it is the condition of the streets which alone is responsible for whatever harm is done to the city by our roadways being in so revolting a state during the winter and early spring. If the roadways and sidewalks are allowed to become blocked by accumulations of snow and made dangerous to pedestrians by "hummocks"

of ice, *now*, when the civic authorities are being continually prodded to arouse them into taking the necessary steps for improving the streets, what state would the streets get into if no complaints, no protests were published? The old song beginning, "Tis the voice of the sluggard, I heard him complain, you have woke me too soon, let me slumber again," seems an appropriate one for those officials who object to public sentiment in regard to the neglected streets being given a voice in the press.

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THE ALLEGED MONEY DIFFICULTY.—The plan offered as an excuse for the atrocious state of our roadways in winter and early spring is, that the City Council has not enough money to keep the streets in a fairly passable condition. This is a very stale cry, handed down from a time when Montreal was a very small and comparatively poor city, when its pecuniary resources were strained to meet the expenditures involved in creating a great commercial metropolis. That enterprize is now accomplished. Montreal is no longer poor, is no longer burthened with the work of founding a great city and equipping it for a large population. This is a rich city, a very prosperous city, a city accumulating wealth rapidly, it is a favourite resort of many hundreds of well-to-do visitors, both in winter and summer, yet we are told that this, the shipping and trade metropolis of Canada, is too poor to pay for keeping its streets and sidewalks in good order!

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THE POVERTY CRY IS HUMILIATING.—Whoever raises, or echoes so humiliating a plea as the city's poverty as an excuse for, or in palliation of our disreputable roadways is unworthy of sharing in the citizenship of this metropolis of trade. That plea going abroad would, indeed, be calculated to injure the credit of this city if its utter foolishness were not so glaring to all who have any knowledge of this community.

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WHAT THE SITUATION CALLS FOR.—It is, however, true that the City Council lacks the means to keep the thoroughfares in reasonably good condition. But this impecunious condition is quite voluntary. The City Council is short of money for necessary work because it is short of the wisdom and administrative ability requisite for obtaining the amount needed for civic services. Why do not the aldermen, boldly look the situation full in the face and consider and decide upon the best way of raising the revenue required? That is a duty they are elected to fulfil, they are not sent to the Council to repeat the parrot cry of "*insufficient funds*," which is a relic of olden times.

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A "WAYS AND MEANS" discussion is in order and the sooner it is entered upon the more creditable it will be to our civic rulers.

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THE HEAVY DEBT CRY.—The debt of this city is heavy no doubt, but, when it is considered that a large portion of it represents the cost of water works, city parks, fire-halls and other public buildings and properties, which are contributing every hour to the well-being of the citizens, there is not so much to be complained of as some imagine who use the size of the civic debt as an argument against expenditures needed to put the roadways in good condition.

It would have been of incomparably greater benefit