

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1917

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NOW THE NORTH END.

The south, east and west ends of the city have strong improvement leagues getting vigorously behind playgrounds and amateur athletics for the benefit of the young. The north end is not organized and has not as yet made any attempt to organize, perhaps because no playground is in sight. The way to get grounds is to organize and work for them. There must be somewhere in the north end of the city a field large enough to be a baseball diamond and athletic field. It is a question of locating such a field and then making such arrangements as may be necessary to secure its use and put it in condition. The people of the south, east and west ends are organized and actively at work. Not only will they provide for baseball but for general athletics, and there will be interesting meets before the summer is over. Then there will be skating rinks to provide for the winter. The city will develop Rockwood athletic field this year, and altogether it promises to be a banner year along the line of community effort to provide play spaces and opportunities for the young. Action by north end citizens would now give a further great impulse to the general movement.

THE HOSPITAL.

The municipal council is universally commended for its action yesterday in voting to provide a nurses' home and so make possible a larger accommodation for patients in the public hospital. The need is urgent. The physicians and the Ladies' Hospital Aid Association have made out so clear and strong a case for prompt action that to defer it would be to assume a far more grave responsibility than that of raising the money to enlarge the accommodation at the hospital. Having decided to make the improvements the council should act promptly and make the larger quarters available at as early a date as possible. Two great purposes will be served by the change. Not only will there be more room for patients, of whom so many are now discharged before they should be in order to make room for still more serious cases; but with better equipment and a proper nurses' home it will not be necessary for so many of our young women to go abroad to train for the nursing profession. The members of the Ladies' Aid who presented the case so forcibly before the finance committee of the council last week have every reason to be gratified with the response to their eloquent and urgent plea.

HELP FOR THE TENANT.

Mayor Hayes and Mr. W. F. Burditt, after a careful figuring of the cost of building houses such as a workingman's family could be housed in comfortably, and enquiring as to the probable monthly rental such a family could pay, are unable to see how we are to bridge over the difference between what the family could pay and what would have to be paid to yield even a small return on the investment, or to secure ownership for the tenant at the end of a term of years. It can only be done, they say, by taxing the whole community for the difference, or by the building company agreeing to build not only without profit but perhaps at a loss.

The London Times takes the view that the state might well consider the bridging over of this difference. It argues that proper housing is a public service. The British housing scheme is for the erection of houses to rent, although there is provision for purchase by the tenant on long and easy terms. We quote from an article in the Ottawa Journal:—

"When Dr. Addison, minister in charge of the scheme, introduced the housing bill in the house of commons questions were raised as to the method of fixing the rentals. Dr. Addison's position was that, for the protection of the state and the local authorities, machinery would have to be set up to ensure that a fair rental was charged. He contended that an economic rent should be aimed at at the end of a provisional period of seven years, as otherwise private enterprise would be killed. The local authorities are to levy a 'penalty rate' (on the pound) and the government is to shoulder any further liability for the seven year period; but after that, in Dr. Addison's view, the rentals should be on an economic basis. The Times takes serious issue with this policy, pointing out that purely financial calculations of the kind 'omit all reckoning of the certain saving to the community of the indirect loss—in health, in social amenity, and in industrial efficiency and contentment—which has now to be laid at the door of inadequate and unsuitable housing.' If rent is to be taken as the whole return on the cost of the housing scheme, without any reckoning of the indirect profit to the country, the Times believes 'an impracticable ideal is being set up.' It must be recognized, it argues, that 'proper housing is a public service' which must be paid for by the state, 'whose return cannot be calculated on any rigid economic basis.'"

In other words, the Times holds that the state might fairly contribute toward a reduction of rentals. We quote from the Times itself:—

"After all, as Dr. Addison said, great

companies in this country are beginning to see that it pays them to provide good housing for their employees, quite apart from the return on the capital expended which is provided by the actual rents. Has not the state to learn the same lesson, and, if the state, then other large employers of labor too? We are far from thinking that there is much possibility of this kind in many rural areas, but there is in some, and the thought is worth commending to employers of agricultural labor. It is no complete solution of the problem of rural housing, but it can be tried on a limited scale, and we are convinced that rural employers who have the means and the courage to try it will not lose by it all round."

The Ottawa Journal asks if the method suggested by the London Times cannot be adopted in Canada, not only by erecting houses to rent as well as to sell, but by relieving the tenant of a portion of the burden of the rental. We quote:—

"Is there not as great need here of a programme for the erection of homes for rent, in addition to houses for sale to people of moderate means on a small payment plan as under the Ontario Housing Act? The Ontario scheme requires that those who would take advantage of it must have some capital. A very large percentage of the wage-earning class have none, or not enough. They cannot undertake the purchase of a home even under the easy system provided. What is to be done for them? The Journal has already urged that both the community and the employers of labor must consider seriously the question of the provision of houses for rent to those who cannot purchase, and the point raised by the Times is applicable here. In the past, houses for rent have been provided by people with money to invest on a strictly business basis. The only consideration was dividends, and consequently the wage-earner unable to pay more than a small rental was at a disadvantage. That was bad enough, but now investors are leaving the house-building field, attracted by greater and easier dividends elsewhere."

The Journal would have the municipality and the employers of labor consider the whole subject with a view to such action as would relieve the tenant to some extent, along the lines suggested and at the same time provide adequate housing. It says further:—

"Neither the community nor employers can afford the loss in health, social amenity, industrial efficiency, and contentment that inadequate housing conditions impose. In what they may consider their duty toward the situation, municipalities and employers should not be influenced unduly by the dividend-paying character of investment in the erection of houses. A municipality may rightly look upon it as a legitimate duty to assist toward better housing. Economically it is in the employer's own interest, even though the financial return in rentals might not pay interest on the investment. His biggest return will be in greater efficiency in his industry and in greater social contentment, making for more stable industrial conditions."

It is to be expected, after the recent vote in Quebec, that the prohibition measure will meet with sharp criticism in parliament at Ottawa. The opponents of prohibition are active. Its friends must be all the more alert. There is a suggestion that the senate may offer some amendments. The country at large will watch developments with the keenest interest, for the country does not want any tinkering with prohibition that would make it less effective.

Let us all get ready to welcome the 26th Battalion and the Ammunition Column. The city should be dressed for the event, with an abundance of flags, bunting, and other decorations. But most of all, the citizens should be ready to greet the boys with a roar of cheering that will extend from the railway station to the Armories.

Hon. Mr. Veniot is going ahead with a permanent road programme. He also has road patrols out on the highways fixing the bad places and generally keeping the country roads in as good condition as possible. So long as he pursues that policy the Standard's wall will be unheeded by the people, who know a good road-maker when they see him.

Is it not time the whole city adopted daylight time? The present mix-up is intolerable; and, as we cannot go back to the old time, why not make daylight time universal?

Hon. Dr. Roberts hopes to see more hospitals like that at East St. John established eventually in different parts of this province to aid in the fight against tuberculosis. It is a dream that should be realized.

New York Herald:—"Passing of Sherry's is not without its dramatic touch, antedating, as it does, by only a few weeks the date beyond which there is to be no more passing of sherry."

That convention on June 3 and 4 to boost New Brunswick will be a winner. The province at large is showing great interest.

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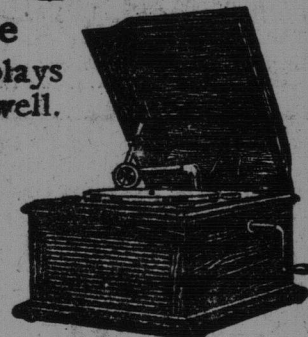
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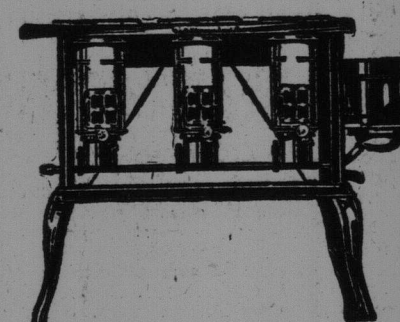
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WILL NOT STOP FIGHTING EVEN TO GET FOOD

Bolshevik Foreign Minister Turns Down the Nansen Proposal

Paris, May 14—(By the Associated Press)—A wireless message received here addressed to Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, head of the commission to feed Russia, from M. Tchitcherine, Bolshevik foreign minister, announces that the Bolshevik refuse to cease hostilities as a condition of the provisioning of Russia by neutrals.

Tchitcherine declares that a continuation of hostilities is necessary for political reasons and that it would be poor policy to stop them. The Soviet government, he adds, is willing to support a movement to feed Russia so long as it has no political character, "but will not be duped."

He then goes on to denounce Admiral Kolchak and General Denekine, and concludes by declaring that it will be impossible to give up fighting, as enemies are attacking on all sides.

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