

The Evening Times and Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., JUNE 24, 1913.

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COME, LET US REASON TOGETHER

Let us suppose a case. Let us suppose that, after another election or two we should be unfortunate enough to elect as members of the city government five men who were influenced unduly by politics, or by other considerations unfavorable to the public welfare from a civic standpoint. Or, let us suppose that, of five new commissioners, some side-wind of popular fancy should have elected three whose judgment or whose tendencies were open to question.

Would the civic electors and the taxpayers generally desire, or intend, that such a commission should transact its business behind closed doors? Is not the question answered as soon as it is asked?

It is by presenting some illustration of this sort that we come at the meaning and intent of the commission system, and understand the causes leading up to the strong emphasis placed upon the fullest measure of publicity as an essential feature of government by the plan we have chosen.

The election which resulted in the choice of the present commissioners was one which brought increased efficiency and notably better administration than St. John previously enjoyed. The Times and The Telegraph, which from the first advocated the commission system, have no hesitation today in saying that the system itself is the best yet devised for cities, and that, on the whole, the regime of the present mayor and commissioners, though perhaps far from perfect, has been an excellent start toward the business-like, economic, and yet sharply progressive government which a growing and ambitious city must seek before and seek with the utmost determination.

Nevertheless, frankness compels the assertion that the transaction of public business in private committee is a backward step, suggesting the older and darker days; that it is a procedure entirely at variance with not only the spirit, but the letter of the commission plan submitted to and overwhelmingly approved by the electors of this city.

Let us examine a further illustration. Let us say that three bodies of citizens, or three individuals, desire to transact some business this week with the mayor and common council. Let us assume that one of these delegations or individuals represents a wealthy and influential interest, that another represents a small and unimportant minority in the community, and that a third represents some group of foreign capitalists. Now, we are willing to assume that the mayor and the commissioners would deal with all of these men fairly, and from the standpoint of the common interest as they understand it. But it is essential, if these delegates are seeking concessions which affect the general public, that their representations should be made, not in private, but in public, in order that the electors may know where each commissioner stood on the questions involved, and what reasons guided him to the conclusions he reached. The commission idea is that, if the question had any public interest at all, the petitioners said in support of their case and what the commissioners said and did with respect to it. This is the very essence of government by commission. Those who say otherwise missed, or have forgotten, the very soul of the movement which gave St. John its present form of administration. If there is any commissioner whose perception is so limited or whose memory is so short, let him study these questions afresh.

See now, on the contrary, what three of our commissioners tell us. They say that it is sufficient, after a private committee meeting, that they shall issue to the press a statement prepared by themselves, summarizing what was done in private. We have only to return to our first illustration to measure the folly of such an argument. In other words, let us suppose that, instead of the five gentlemen now at City Hall, we should be unfortunate enough to have, next year, or the year after, or five years hence, a commission majority of which should be composed of men whose motives were open to question in the view of any considerable body of the electorate. If such a commission were to transact business in private and issue a cut-and-dried statement afterwards, would that be either satisfactory or in accord with the letter or the spirit of commission government? No, surely.

The commission plan would not be necessary at all if the average body of men selected to govern a city were always wise and public-spirited beyond question. They will not always be so, and for that reason the commission plan set up certain well recognized safeguards, among which constant and frank publicity was by no means the least important. Commission government means the open door. When the door is closed we are not enjoying commission government except in name. It is the first backward step that must be checked. Let us look Section 12 of the Act in the face and act accordingly.

SEA POWER SUPERB

When King George visits Liverpool there will be for his inspection, a column of merchant liners composed of thirty vessels of this class and five miles long. The Boston Transcript sees in this proposed exhibition an object lesson, not to the King, who is a sailor himself, but to the onlooking neighbors; and that journal believes a similar purpose animates those in charge of the arrangements for this summer's naval manoeuvres, when 344 warships, of all classes, exclusive of air craft, will be concentrated, and the flags of 23 admirals will be shown.

"Such a gathering of war vessels," says the Transcript, "is equivalent in demonstration of power to the mobilization of one of the great continental European armies. It will be Great Britain's explanation of why it gets along with no larger army and an intimation of how it will be a great factor in the politics of Europe. Nor will its entire naval hand be shown in the manoeuvres, for they will not exhaust its list of available ships. There are others which in reserve are as impressive as if they were present at the mobilization. British millenarianism, in the sense of power, has gone to sea. The personnel of the British navy exceeds 186,000, all ranks, and the naval reserves aggregate 46,000. No other nation approximates this total. Our newest battleship just laid down is numbered '90.' And of 'battle cruisers' we have none. Our authorized personnel is nearly 64,000, a goodly force, but not quite half the number of those over whom floats the 'white ensign.'"

Great Britain does not want to fight, but, as the Transcript says, if it has to fight, it wants the world to see it lacks not ships, men nor money.

By just what route the G. T. P. is to reach Courtenay Bay.

What has become of the Andover-Grand Falls section.

What is to be the route of the Valley railway from Gagetown to St. John.

How the Transcontinental is to make connection with the Valley railway, and where.

When the G. T. P. is going to take over and operate the Transcontinental from Winnipeg east.

If the Standard has the situation well in hand it might start on these questions and answer them explicitly, say tomorrow.

The Standard says the government has the situation "well in hand" with respect to the G. T. P., the Transcontinental, and the Valley railway. Yes? "Well in hand" is a vague phrase that will scarcely satisfy the Bowden Club, for example. Will the Standard tell us: Yes, children, the wolves, the foxes, and the bob-cats in the cages in Rockwood Park will all bite if you poke your fingers within reach—and they are all perfectly right in doing so. Give these wild forest folk a fair chance. They deserve kind treatment. Teasing them means cruelty and ignorance.

When the G. T. P. terminals are to be completed, meaning thereby not the Norton-Griffiths contract but the G. T. P. passenger station, elevators, immigration sheds and the like, which are necessary to handle the traffic as soon as the new railway begins to haul through trains to and from Atlantic tidewater in winter.

Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, the Episcopal missionary who has succeeded in climbing Mount McKinley and reaching the summit of the highest peak in North America, saw nothing of the redoubtable Cook says he left there. Perhaps they were destroyed by the earthquake which shattered the ridges near the top of the mountain a few months before Archdeacon Stuck made his ascent. Perhaps not.

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On and after MONDAY, June 10th, the ferry will be run to Reed's Point beginning at 6:32 p. m. from Carleton and continuing the rest of each day, until further notice. The work of sheathing the East Side piling will be carried on between 6:32 p. m. and 6 a. m.

H. B. SCHOFIELD,
Commissioner.

BIRTHDAYS OF NOTABILITIES

TUESDAY, JUNE 24

This is the natal day of Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum, the hero of the Sudan. He was born sixty-three years ago in Kerry, Ireland, and entered the Royal Engineers when twenty-one. He won his greatest distinction in Egypt and was later chief of staff and commander-in-chief in the South African War.

Thomas Ahearn, a prominent Ottawa capitalist, is fifty-eight years of age today. He has been interested in many important electrical contracts, including the construction of the C. P. R. telegraph system from ocean to ocean.

LIGHTER VEIN

LADIES, READ THIS

"What's the trouble at your house?" "Hunger strike for a new bonnet." "Your wife refuses to eat?" "No; she refuses to cook."

NATURALLY

I was a jurymen last week. And there is no denying I found the whole thing, so to speak, Undoubtedly most trying!

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

"My father has lost everything!" Exclaimed distressed Sue. As Herbert rose to go, he said, "Oh, no, he still has you!"

OUT OF HIS ELEMENT

First Cut-throat and Robber—Did you pull off that job in Syracuse? Second Cut-throat—Nay. Do you know, when I get away from New York I get nervous.

MISFITS

The stores that sell clothes all the paper. With pictures of handsome young men—Broad shouldered, with waist lines that taper.

I long for such clothes there and then. So for some of their duds I make payment. And hope like those pictures to be: But, however fine is the garment, It looks like the dickens on me!

I go to the tailor and hatter. And stand for a whacking big bill. But the cost of the things doesn't matter.

I look like a frankfurter still! I am too stout, Sir, you say, and am aging? That's more, sir, than I can quite see!

Though that coat on the hook seems engaging. It looks like the dickens on me!

You think that I ought to get married? Oh, there is abundance of time! And love, for me, somehow, has tapered.

However, I'm just in my prime. That silken noose never so charming. Reclaim you—but let me stay free! Its snaky folds seem most alarming—"I would look like the dickens on me!"

Gem, "Alone In The Jungle," Selig two-reel masterpiece, Wednesday and Thursday. See it. It's a sure winner!

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It is had enough to be sick without having to take drugs of doubtful strength and value.

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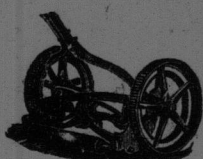
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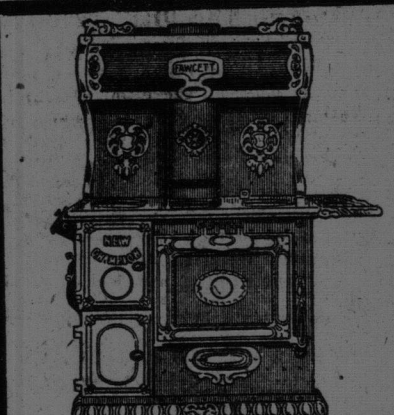
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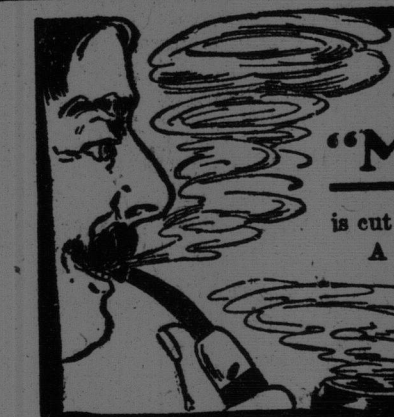
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WOOD-BLOCK PAVING

Under Improved Methods It is Reported to Be Proving Very Satisfactory

(Ottawa Department Bulletin)

The paving of city streets with wood is again coming into favor, new methods of laying the pavements making this one of the most satisfactory of pavements. Vancouver's pavements are largely of the same material. Eighty-two per cent of the new paving in Minneapolis is of wood-block, and Saskatoon and other western towns are giving the wood-block paving the preference.

Best results are obtained from rectangular-shaped blocks, cut from southern or Norway pine, which are thoroughly seasoned and cross-cut. This latter process not only lengthens the life of the wood but reduces its absorptive capacity for water, thus preventing the weakening of the wood-fibres and reducing its tendency to buckle. The most approved method of laying this pavement, used in London, New York and other large cities, is to first make a concrete foundation four to six inches thick, on which is laid a thin layer of sand, or, better still, of moist Portland cement, into which the blocks are closely set.

The blocks are from five to nine inches in depth and must be free from defects. Care must be taken to place them with the grain perpendicular to the road-bed. If laid with the long edges at right angles to the curb the joints are apt to become worn by the cabs on the horses' shoes, so to prevent this and to best provide for possible expansion, the paving is laid at an angle of about sixty-seven degrees with the curb. The joints are usually filled with ground cement and the surface of the paving is then covered with a thin dressing of

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course sand, which beds into the pores of the blocks and roughens them.

Such a pavement has the smoothness of asphalt and will last almost without repair for fifteen years under ordinary conditions. It is sanitary, noiseless, easily kept clean and has a certain springiness lacking in asphalt, and so is much easier on horses' feet. Expert labor is not required in its laying, and the cost of maintenance is practically nil, so that from the standpoint of cost as well it compares favorably with the asphalt, macadam, and brick now being used in Canadian towns and cities.

The manufacture of wood-blocks for paving would furnish sawmill owners with a means of utilizing the many defective logs of Norway pine unfit for saw material and, could a steady market be developed, much of the waste in connection with present lumbering and mill-operations could be avoided.

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