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The Gas Supply.

A SERIOUS SITUATION.

The notice in the press, in which the Gas Company state that unless adequate assistance is given the company by the Government it will have to discontinue the gas service to the city on October 31st next, will surely bring home to gas consumers and the public generally the necessity for prompt action if this essential service is to be maintained. At first glance it might appear to be a matter which concerned the shareholders only. This might be so with an ordinary factory, turning out goods that might be procured elsewhere, but in the case of the Gas Company, it is a matter which seriously concerns the public. The loss and inconvenience resulting from the stoppage of the gas supply to the city would be most serious, affecting, as it would, both industrial and domestic life. All appear to agree that everything possible should be done within reason to keep the business going, provided there is a reasonable prospect for the future prosperity of the undertaking.

With good gas coal obtainable from our local coal deposits, and the indications are that this coal will be available, sooner or later, there would not appear to be much doubt as to the ultimate result. Rather than permit the failure of the gas service, consumers would be willing to pay, for a period, high rates for gas. There is an excellent local market for residuals, such as tar, coke and sulphate of ammonia, and, with plenty of gas coal always available, a good revenue is assured. The Company did well up to 1916. At that time America joined the Allies in the Great War, and almost immediately thereafter it became impossible to make contracts for future deliveries, and prices began to soar. So that for the past three years, and especially the past two years, the Gas Company has been operating at a heavy loss, hanging on in the hope that at the end of the war coal prices would become more normal. The reverse has been the case, and the Company has arrived at the position where the financial stringency is such that, without adequate help, it cannot continue in business.

Early in the year the attention of the Government was drawn to the possibilities of our local coal deposits, and the Prime Minister, taking a keen interest in the matter, appointed a special Committee in Council to deal with the matter, and investigations were made with regard to the St. George's Coal Fields. The reports being favorable, a special grant was passed during the past session of the Legislature to take over and operate this coal area. A trial survey was run for, a branch line of railway from Cartville to the mines, and it was the implied intention of the Government to rush matters so as to get out coal before the end of this year. The prospects looked promising, and the Gas Company was encouraged to keep going, with the hope of getting plenty of good gas coal at a reasonable cost. Some hitch has in the meantime apparently stopped the development of the proposition indefinitely. The prospect of securing a very large quantity of good coal from the "Jukes Seam" was most encouraging. The seam about five feet wide, outcropped above the level of the Barachois River, and large quantities could be mined at low cost. It would appear therefore, that any disagreement between the Government and the owners should not have been permitted to even delay the mining of the coal.

Meanwhile, it is intimated, that the Government is developing the coal deposits at South Branch, and, as far as can be ascertained, expects to be getting out coal about the middle of October, and has assured the Gas Company of supplies from this source. It appears that the Gas Company finds it essential to float a bond issue to the amount of \$100,000 to meet its liabilities and to provide for the carrying on of the business, and has asked the Government to guarantee such bond issue to ensure its successful flotation. The ability of the Company to meet re-payment of bonds and interest, depends on plenty of good coal being available as required, and, in this regard the Government has apparently guaranteed such coal supplies, and therefore would assume no risk by giving such guarantee.

But, as the Government (which means the public) would be the means of keeping the Gas Company on its feet, as a going concern, all the earnings of the Company should be set aside for the payment of the bond interest, and the re-payment of the bonds on maturity.

On some such basis as outlined above, the Government would be fully justified in giving the necessary guarantee, and also to use every effort to supply the necessary coal.

With regard to our local coal, it is an interesting fact that nearly all our coal deposits show seams of excellent gas coal, low in sulphur, and much superior to Sydney coal. In fact, there is no coal in Cape Breton comparable to our local coal. There would be an unlimited market, at good prices, for any surplus of production after our local needs were supplied, for Coke Oven Plants, Gas Works and Smelting Plants. In Boston there is a coke oven plant using ten thousand tons of gas coal per day. The local coal is also most suitable for domestic use, and the bunkering of steamers. The coal burns to a white ash, does not clinker, and would eliminate almost entirely the burning out of furnace bars which is such a drawback with Sydney coal. It is stated that very promising indications of excellent coal have been found at Grand Lake, only ¼ of a mile from the railway, so that it would appear that there is no shadow of a doubt of our local coal resources.

The Government should come to an immediate agreement with the St. George's Coal Company, and carry out forthwith the original program as to the development of this coal area. The question of ownership should not be allowed to stand in the way, and an agreement is surely possible between the parties concerned. In the meantime the press and the general public should see to it that the necessary steps be taken to continue the gas service to the city, and the Government will gain much prestige by taking prompt action with this desirable end in view.—Com.

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(Signed)

W. S. PINEO.
"Woodlands," Middleton, N.S.

Publicity for Newfoundland.

MOVIE MAN TO PHOTOGRAPH OUR SCENES.

Mr. Kingsley Jacks who is here on the behalf of the Maritime Motion Picture Co., hopes to screen a 6000 ft. film depicting the Empire's "Oldest Colony and Youngest Dominion." This film will be composed of scenes connected with our beauty spots, our industrial development and in fact of anything pertaining to Newfoundland which would be of interest to the outside world. This picture will be shown throughout Canada; indeed if our generous Government will encourage them it will be shown throughout the Empire. As an advertising medium the screen is recognised as a big factor, and the advantage that this film will be to our island will be to say the least of it—of immense value, so it is a project well worthy of any support which the Government may give. The company camera man, Mr. McNeil, is at present in the city having come from Grand Falls where he took about 1000 feet of film.

A company such as that of the Maritime Motion Pictures is deserving of the support of every British citizen.

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The Week's Calendar.

SEPTEMBER—9th Month—30 Days.
27.—MONDAY. Battle of Busaco (Peninsular War, 1810). First Atlantic Cable ceased working, 1858. Hindenburg line broken at Cambrai, 1918.

28.—TUESDAY. Full moon, 5.28 a.m. St. Thomas' Anglican Church opened, 1836. Germans captured Strasburg, 1870. New Orphanage, St. Michael's, Belvedere, opened, 1884. Capture of Kut, 1915.

29.—WEDNESDAY. St. Michael and All Angels. First Custom House established in St. John's, 1764. Corner Stone Anglican Cathedral laid, 1847. Bell Island R. C. Church dedicated, 1880.

30.—THURSDAY. Thomas Sturgeys murdered Thomas O'Shaughnessy, St. John's, 1821. U.S.S. Arctic on hydrographic survey for first Atlantic Cable, arrived St. John's, 1856. Bulgaria granted conditions of peace, 1918.

OCTOBER—10th Month—31 Days.

1.—FRIDAY. St. Remigius. First cable communication between Sydney and Newfoundland, 1856. St. Quentin, 1918. British occupied Damascus, 1918.

2.—SATURDAY. St. John's illuminated in honor fall of Sebastopol, 1855. S.S. Prodanov went ashore in St. Mary's Bay, 1890.

3.—SUNDAY. 18th after Trinity. Treaty of Limerick, 1691. S.S. Bay State went ashore at Cape Ballard, 1899. Columbia-Shamrock first race for cup, 1899.

Their policy is to supply the demand—in many cases to create a demand—for British-made films. "Canada and Newfoundland" stated Mr. Jacks "pay approximately \$18,000,000 to U. S. A. for film rental. Newfoundland's proportion to this is about \$300,000." Now, "he continued," "for every dollar spent on American articles you pay a dollar and a half. Your duty is about 33% and your rate of exchange 14 or 15%. So you see we aim to produce an article of equal quality at a lower price. In order that every patriotic citizen may share in our profits, our shares are such as will permit any wage-earner to purchase them." When asked whether he thought they would succeed he said "Yes. The American companies made a mistake when they located in California. The sun is too strong there for successful film taking. They are rapidly finding that out now and so moving eastward. We are in Sydney where climate conditions are ideal for photography." Mr. Jacks hopes to photograph about 1000 feet of film here in St. John's.

"Lanterns of the Dead."

(From the London Times.)

Our Paris correspondent describes a monument to the Allied dead to be erected at Notre Dame de Lorette, in Paris. Even before the war, a little sanctuary on the hill was visited by pilgrims from the district; it will now bring pilgrims from the ends of the earth, for the dead of all the Allies will lie there, near where they fell. The cost is being undertaken by public subscription, to be collected in the Allied countries, and the generous response should be prompt and generous. The plans have been designed by M. Cordonnier, a member of the Institut de France, and a son of Artois. Fortunately there is to be no attempt at symbolism—that dangerous lure of the monumental architect. The main building is to be a domed and columned basilica, a stately hall depending on proportion for its beauty, historically apt for sacred or secular use. Like the Pantheon at Rome, it is to be flanked by two wings ending in corner towers, and in these the remains of the Allied dead will rest. The brief account already published refers to a "lantern of the dead" on a belfry tower surmounting the dome. Doubtless fuller details will clear this part of the description, in which there seems to be some verbal or architectural confusion. A belfry tower would be an unexpected feature on the dome of a basilica. Sometimes a campanile was placed alongside a basilica, and this might either contain a belfry or be itself a lantern of the dead. The latter structures date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and a few still survive in the centre and west of France. The Zoological Society of London has erected in the gardens in Regent's Park, in memory of the members of its staff who died on active service, a lantern shaped from one at La Southeraine, in the valley of the Creuse. Lanterns were tall and slender towers, usually hexagonal. They were hollow, and contained a windlass by which a light could be raised to shine through spectrums in the conical roof, and stood alone, usually in the middle of a graveyard. Peter of Cluny, called the Venerable, said that the light shining by night was a homage paid by the faithful to dead Christians sleeping their last sleep in blessed ground.

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