

debt on account of the department at the close of 1903 was \$48,000. In 1904 the debt was further added to by the rebuilding of the fire alarm and in 1905 there will be further additions for chemical engines which have already been purchased. The principal increase in the cost of maintenance as between 1890 and 1902 is in the stable account which cost \$4,253 in 1902 as compared with \$2,917 in 1890. But all of these accounts were jumped up in 1904 when the assessment was increased because the accounts were all falling behind, the fire department dropping to the rear at the rate of about \$2,000 annually. The assessment for fire purposes in 1904 as \$42,138 as against \$26,672 in 1889. A considerable increase must be made in the cost of the fire department through the introduction of chemical engines. At least one more fire hall will have to be constructed, as the present buildings are so crowded with apparatus that it is impossible to hitch the horses quickly. The chief value of a chemical engine—its only value, in point of fact, is the speed with which it can be got to a fire. It is only useful in the early stages of a conflagration and if apparatus is so crowded around it that the horses cannot be promptly hitched its utility is doubtful.

One of the great evils of the past in the management of the affairs of the city has been the over expenditure of the different departments. At the beginning of each fiscal year the aldermen make up an estimate of the cost of maintaining each service for the succeeding twelve months, or more properly speaking, until the 31st December following, when the accounts are closed for the year. The

theory is that the assessment will be sufficient for the maintenance of all services but experience has shown that in the majority of cases an insufficient sum was assessed. At the close of 1903 the overdrawn balances of various accounts amounted to the total of \$154,354. For 1904 there was a considerable increase in the assessment for various accounts, with the expectation of wiping out these balances, and in a measure the plan has succeeded. In the first place the assessment realized, \$38,851 more than the preceding year. The harbor revenues were the largest in the history of the city amounting to \$36,669, an increase of \$5,451 over the preceding year. In this connection, it must be borne in mind that the city expended \$150,000 for the McLeod wharf, and that the increase is largely due to this addition to the civic property in the harbor. Since the new warehouse was constructed, the Donaldson line which brings large quantities of freight for the St. John merchants, lands its goods on this side of the harbor, and then moves over to the west side to discharge western goods, and load export cargo. The new wharf has therefore become an earning asset, and bids fair to prove a good investment, as are all the deep water wharves on the east side owned by the city. The proposed legislation the Council is seeking to purchase the interest of the Canadian Pacific in the west side terminal will have the effect of increasing the harbor revenues, as it is the intention to charge side wharfage on steamers while loading local lumber which has not been done since 1897.

Everything considered the city has made great progress financially dur-