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### The Flavour Lasts!

## Up To T. I. L. to Gather Information Re Vacant Land

### Mayor Authorized to call Public Meeting When this is Done. Town Council Turns Down Proposed Inquiry Into High Cost of Living

Newcastle Town Council met in adjourned session on Thursday evening, 26th inst., Mayor Morrissey presiding. Aldermen present: D. P. Doyle, W. L. Durick, J. F. Kingston, D. Ritchie, John Russell, Percy Russell, Charles Sargeant and John H. Troy. About 25 citizens were also present. Minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

The following was read:

Newcastle, N. S., April 26, 1917. The Mayor and Town Council.

Gentlemen:—At the last meeting of the Newcastle Town Improvement League, it was unanimously resolved to ask the Town Council to take the following action:

- 1.—To call a public meeting for the purpose of discussing and disposing of the question of the cultivation of vacant lots;
- 2.—To investigate the high cost of living in Newcastle;
- 3.—To take steps to bring into operation an All-Day electric service.

The following committee were appointed to present, with your permission, the above questions to your honorable body: Messrs. C. E. Fish, E. A. McCurdy, James Stables, D. W. Stohart and H. H. Stuart.

I am yours respectfully,  
(Sgd.) H. H. STUART, secretary.

Mayor Morrissey suggested that a motion be passed to allow Mr. Stuart, the only member of the T. I. L. Committee present, to address the council on the subjects mentioned in the communication.

Mr. Stuart said that the other members of the committee would be present a little later. They were waiting until the council should be through with its other business. He would prefer to wait until the whole committee were present.

His Worship said that the rule was to hear those members of committees who were present when the communication was read. The others should be there if they wished to speak.

On motion, it was resolved that Mr. Stuart be heard by the council.

Mr. Stuart said that he had not intended to handle all the subjects mentioned in the communication, as the other members of the committee expected to be present and to have the opportunity to speak. The T. I. L. were anxious to have action taken on the three questions as soon as possible and had written to the Council to that effect.

Re vacant lots: The T. I. L. considered that the council was the proper body to handle that subject. It proposed that the council call a public meeting to bring together the men who had vacant lots and those who had not and endeavor to find out who were going to cultivate their own lots, who were willing to give the use of their lots to others, and who were willing to cultivate land if they were given the opportunity of doing so, the council to then take whatever further action might be deemed desirable.

Re High Cost of Living: It was patent to all that prices were excessively high in comparison with wages. The Dominion Government had passed a regulation whereby permission to investigate the prices charged for the necessities of life would be granted any municipality which should declare that, in the opinion of its council, excessive prices were being charged in its district. An investigation was necessary, in order to find out who was responsible for the disparity between prices and wages. He did not charge that the local merchants were making excessive profits. It was possible that they were making less than before the war, but someone was responsible and an investigation might be the means of finding out who was to blame. It was clear that either prices were too high or wages too low. The families of men who earn not more than \$2.00 a day when it takes from \$3.00 to \$4.00 to provide them with the bare necessities of life, must be dangerously nearing the point of starvation. As Rev. Dr. Macdonald, one of the professors of St. Francis Xavier University, pointedly asked in his admirable lecture in Moncton recently, how are those workmen of Newcastle to get \$2.25 a day—\$13.50 a week—to pay the \$16.32 a week needed, according to the Dominion Government's Labor Department's report of the average prices in 60 cities and towns of Canada, for the four items of rent, food, fuel and light, to say nothing of clothing and other incidentals and the support of the church? The majority of the last town council had, in opposition to his wishes and advice, and much to his regret, neglected to do anything about the cultivation of vacant lots and had refused to take any action re the high cost of living. The present council being, with one exception, entirely different from last year's, would, he hoped, take both matters in hand, as the T. I. L. requested.

The T. I. L. also requested that an All-Day Electric Service be put into effect, as voted for by the council nearly two years ago, and heartily endorsed by His Worship during his previous term as Mayor. A large number of business men and other citizens were asking for an All-Day Service, such as was being given in Chatham and Campbellton, and judging from the results of the civic by-election two or three years ago when one alderman who had resigned rather than make a report on a Day Service and had offered for reelection on that issue, was overwhelmingly defeated, a large number of the citizens were in favor of making the

change. He would, on behalf of the T. I. L. ask that the council give the matter of an All-Day Service its most favorable consideration.

He was sorry that other members of the committee had not an opportunity of speaking on these questions, but he trusted that the council would deal kindly with all three.

In replying to the requests of the T. I. L. delegate, Mayor Morrissey said he did not propose to speak for the council. They could speak for themselves.

The purpose of a public meeting re Cultivation of Vacant Lots was a good one. But previously it should be known who owned the vacant lots and where they were situated, and the T. I. L. might ascertain from the people owning lots whether they would cultivate them or let others do so. It might be well for the public meeting to have those facts before them rather than have a mere rambling discussion. This was just a suggestion he would make to the T. I. L. He would be willing to call a public meeting when called upon by them with the facts in hand to present to the meeting.

Re the High Cost of Living, His Worship suggested that the T. I. L. visit the various stores and obtain a list of prices. He did not think any merchant would refuse to give his prices and submit his balance sheet. He did not think any were making greater profit than formerly. In his own business the profits were less than before. The manufacturers were charging from 25 to 75 per cent. more than formerly, and in many cases goods had to be retailed at the old prices.

Re the All-Day Electric Service: He himself had so strongly advocated that measure in the council that one of the aldermen had resigned in protest. He was still in favor of it. It was paying in Campbellton, but there they had water power and the munitions factory contributed some \$400 to \$500 a year to the Light revenue. In Newcastle a new pump had been ordered but the company had refused to deliver it at the old price or any price, as the company's works were being operated by the government as a munitions factory. So all he could say in reply to the committee, on this matter, was that, due to the war, it seemed impossible to install the All-Day Service at present.

Mr. Stuart said that the T. I. L. considered the town council, and it alone, the proper body to deal with Cultivation of Vacant Lots and the High Cost of Living.

Ald. Sargeant wished for time to look into the matter, and he moved that the communication from the T. I. L. be taken up at a later meeting.

Ald. Ritchie favored the public meeting re Vacant Lots. It was necessary for the council to have the names beforehand of the parties willing to take part. Re the High Cost of Living, he didn't think that the town council could do anything with it at all, for regulation rested entirely with the Dominion Government. Probably the grocers were getting less profit now than ever they did. The Dominion Government had power to fix prices. The council could not prosecute parties for charging too much. He was not in favor of touching the question at all. He would refer the All-Day service to a public meeting.

Ald. Doyle suggested that the Water and Light Committee take up the All-Day service question, get all the information possible, and submit it to the council.

The Mayor suggested that the request of the T. I. L. be dealt with section by section.

Ald. Troy moved, That after the T. I. L. furnishes the council with the names and locations of different vacant lots with information as to whether or not the owners will culti-

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