

Council Sets City Tax Rate At 34.5 Mills :: Fire Chief's Resignation Asked

TAX RATE IS LOWERED BY FRACTION OF A MILL THROUGH BOOKKEEPING

City Council Definitely Fixes Rate For 1925 at 34.5 Mills by Reducing Expenditures and by Meeting Debt Charges For Six Months Only.

NEW FIRE ALARM SYSTEM POSSIBLE

London's tax rate for 1925 will be 34.5 mills. The city council last night definitely fixed the rate, making it 15-100ths of a mill lower than last year.

The 34.5 rate, prognosticated in The Advertiser, came as happy relief for the apostles of parsimony around the council, who at the last moment found new sources of revenue and fewer absolutely emergent reasons for proposed expenditures.

Gross expenditure was reduced to \$3,044,668.72, and receipts other than taxation are estimated at \$692,338.49.

The big cut this year is in debt charges, and this reduction is a matter of bookkeeping. Only debt charges for six months are provided for in this year's estimates.

Provide For Six Months.

According to the municipal act, the city is compelled to care for, in current estimates, only debt charges for the council year. In the past the custom has been to provide for charges six months in advance. Debt charges up to June are already paid. The council of this year will provide for only the last half of the year in the matter of debt charges, and it is expected that the calendar year will be followed in future.

Fire Chief Aitken's strenuous fight for efficient apparatus for the department made a little more progress than usual last night, when a motion was passed allowing the purchase of a new fire alarm system, by a debenture issue, if it is found impossible to properly repair the present system.

Costs \$1,200 a Year.

B. L. Baulsh, London manager for the Northern Electric Company, told the council that the present alarm system is costing the city \$1,200 annually for battery upkeep, an expense that could be cut to \$200 a year with a proper system in use.

A man may be a genius in telephone or telephone wiring and at the same time he may know nothing about fire alarm systems. Mr. Baulsh told the council when reports of expert knowledge of fire alarms to determine trouble.

Some considerable objection was taken to the outright purchase of a new alarm system at a cost of \$15,000. It was quite evident, however, that several thousand dollars might be spent in repairing the present system and a \$2,000 item was included in the estimates. This sum will be spent in providing for repairs, or if such measure is found really practical, the money will go to pay the first year's debt on a bond issue.

Will Take Plebiscite.

Ald. Harry Bottrell's lone hand was trumped by economy cards, and his move to help the playgrounds department was supported only by Ald. McCormick.

A plebiscite will likely be taken next December to decide the attitude

MILLER CRITICIZES PROPOSED LAW

High School Regulations Will Be More Ambiguous Than Ever, Principal Says.

Legislation on school law now being discussed in the provincial legislature was made the subject of criticism by Principal E. A. Miller, M. A. of the collegiate institute, yesterday morning.

In connection with the attendance of "county or non-resident students" at the collegiate institute, Principal Miller stated that the proposed regulations were "even more ambiguous than the old regulations."

Students, under the proposed regulations, are to attend the high school or collegiate "reasonably accessible" to them, and therein lies the ambiguity. It will be a hard proposition to determine what students will pay fees as individuals," observed Principal Miller, "and what students will be taken by the authorities here as to his or her place of residence in relation to the high schools and collegiate institutes in the district," continued Principal Miller, "and the county from which the student claims to come will be billed for the cost of educating that student. Then it will be up to the county to pay or repudiate the bill in so far as each individual student is concerned. In the case of a dispute between the county concerned and the city educational authorities, the new regulations provide that it shall be settled by the Judge one year later."

Impossible to Collect.

"This would mean, if the decision favored the county, that in many instances it would be impossible to collect the fees from the individual since he or she might have left the school and his or her place of residence be unknown. Fees collected from students as individuals are always collected at the time they are attending school, and to maintain any machinery to collect fees from individuals one to two years after the period for which they are paid would, naturally, be very costly and practically impossible."

Principal Miller is of the opinion that the charge made on the counties of 80 per cent of the maintenance and capital costs of educating the students is fair and equitable. The fact that the city educational authorities must bear the balance of 20 per cent gives them the right to own the buildings and whole control of the school, apart from any control by the county. Moreover, county students can be refused admittance to the collegiate at any time.

With regard to county representation being placed on the London board of education, Principal Miller was inclined to believe that such a move would hardly come within the regulations because of the fact that for educational purposes London is separated from the rest of the county.

H. B. Beal Comments.

Touching on this same point, Principal H. B. Beal of the technical school pointed out that the county would stand to gain little since much of the local educational system did not concern the county at all. Furthermore, that the extravagance upon the education which pertained to the city itself (which it is not), no consideration for the county in the past would deter the board from extravagant administration.

Principal Miller stated that there are about 200 county pupils attending three units of the collegiate institutes at the present time. Of this number, only two are paying fees as individuals. The fees for these two cases are assessed at the rate of \$12 per subject per annum, with a maximum of eight subjects.

Principal H. B. Beal stated that the Technical school also has a large number of county pupils, and last year collected \$8,000 from Middlesex and other neighboring counties for students attending the Technical school.

The proposed school regulations are now being discussed in the legislature and it is quite possible, therefore, that the ambiguous terms of the amendments to the act may be clarified before finally being passed by the house.

CANADIAN KIWANIANS SEEKING CONVENTION

Canadian Press Despatch.

Montreal, April 2.—Kiwaniis club representatives from Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Quebec and St. John's met in Montreal with local officials yesterday, it was ascertained to discuss the proposed holding of the 12th international convention of Kiwanians here. It is anticipated that the Canadian delegation to the St. Paul convention in June will surge that next year's meeting take place in the Canadian metropolis.

ROADS ARE OPENED.

Halifax, N. S., April 2.—With the opening to automobile traffic of all the highways in Yarmouth and Shelburne counties, and the probable early opening of all the highways in the province, Nova Scotia is ahead of the season from a month to six weeks.



LOIS MEREDITH, who is suing Lieut.-Col. Ian Onslow Dennistoun, husband of Almina, Dowager Countess of Carnarvon, for breach of promise and defamation of character, according to the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune.

Eighty-four German Soldiers are Drowned

Only 5 Bodies Have Been Recovered Following Pontoon Disaster.

Associated Press Despatch.

Berlin, April 2.—It is believed that 84 soldiers perished in yesterday's disaster to a Reichswehr contingent on the Weser. The ministry of defence stated that five bodies had been recovered from the water and that one officer and 78 men of the 100 soldiers known to have been plunged into the river by the sinking of this pontoon were still missing.

The ministry statement recites that 150 soldiers were crammed onto the last of the five pontoon ferries which was only intended to carry 100 men. It was this pontoon which sank.

BULLET WHICH KILLED POLICEMAN IDENTIFIED

Experts' Testimony Closes Case Against Notorious Bandit Chapman.

Associated Press Despatch.

Hartford, Conn., April 2.—After two pistol experts had positively declared that the bullet which killed Patrolman James Skelly in New Britain last Oct. 12, had been fired from a gun identified as that of Gerald Chapman's, the state's murder case against the notorious bandit was completed shortly before noon yesterday.

Directly after the prosecution's case, Nathan O. Freedman, of Chapman's counsel, moved that the indictment be dismissed on the ground that the state had not proven its case against the accused. Judge Newell Jennings denied the motion.

LARGE LAND OWNERS EXPELLED BY SOVIETS

Forced To Part With Estates For Reasons of State.

By EDGAR ANSEL MOWLER, Special Cable to The London Advertiser and Chicago Daily News. Copyright.

Berlin, April 1.—The Soviet Government has issued a decree expelling former large land owners who are still living on their estates, forcing them to migrate to other parts of Russia.

The reason given is that these owners have, in some cases, managed to make the peasants depend on them again and to exert their influence in favor of an anti-Soviet conspiracy. It is admitted that the decree works an injustice in some cases but it is considered necessary for reasons of state.

LONDON WOMAN SEEKS HER LONG-LOST PARENT

Mrs. James Henry Mudge, 86 Dakin street, is making an effort to locate her father, Isaac Wotton, formerly of Plymouth, England, but of whom the family has had no trace for over 31 years except a recent intimation that he was living some place in Quebec province. Mr. Wotton was formerly a sailor, but is believed to have entered commercial life and to have resided in Canada for some years.

Mrs. Mudge, whose maiden name was Laura Wotton, came to London 14 years ago from 45 Tudor road, Newton Abbott, Devonshire, England.

CURRIE DEPLORES EXECUTIONS TALK

Former Canadian Commander States Information Furnished in British Commons Unwise.

Canadian Press Despatch.

Montreal April 1.—Shown a London despatch in which Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, British secretary of war, was credited with stating in the House of Commons in reply to a question, that 25 members of the Canadian Expeditionary force were executed during the war for military offences, five New Zealanders and no Australians, Sir Arthur Currie, formerly commander in chief of the Canadian corps, made the following statement.

It is most unfortunate that any such figures should be given in the cable should have been asked for and it is hard to see what conceivable good anyone can derive from the information conveyed. It seems, moreover, a little hard to explain why such a question should have been asked or answered in the House of Commons without reference to Canada. The matter is one that concerns Canada alone.

Painful Subject

The subject of military executions was always painful, was one never discussed except when necessary and it is lamentable to have it re-awakened. There is, however, another aspect of the matter. The answer given by the Secretary of War makes a most unfair comparison between Canadian and Australian. The government of the dominions never gave up their authority over their own troops, but so far as discipline was concerned this authority was delegated to the chief of the British armies in France. This principle is definitely stated in an agreement made between the war office and the military forces of Canada in 1918. Australia delegated authority on point less completely than did Canada. For once the court-martial on an Australian soldier could take place without one or more Australian officers being on the court. In the same way, it is generally known that no death sentences on Australian soldiers were ever to be approved. While this latter fact was, so far as known, never published in orders and was a matter solely between the British government and the commander-in-chief and his adjutant-general, the situation was perfectly well known and realized.

"It don't wish to make any reflections on the conduct of the Australian court-martial, but it is not to be forgotten while 25 Canadians were executed nothing whatever. If the facts of the case as reported by Canadian Press are correct I consider the British government has committed another stupid blunder and struck a dangerous blow at imperial friendship."

U. S. SHIPPING BOARD SELLS FIVE VESSELS

Long Smouldering Controversy Opened Anew by Sale of Ships.

By DAVID LAWRENCE, Special to The Advertiser. Copyright.

Washington, April 1.—The long smouldering controversy as between ownership of a merchant marine has broken out anew.

The decision of the Shipping Board by the close vote of four to three to sell five big ships to the Robert Dollar Lines in the Pacific is the culmination of a series of steps which may bring to an issue in the next congress whether the whole American merchant marine is to be turned over to private interests or whether more safeguards are to be placed around the disposal of the ships now owned by the Federal Government as a result of war questions.

J. MINNES, LYDIA BURNS WIN PRIZES IN EUCHRE

J. J. Minnes and Lydia Burns proved the winners of first prizes in Tuesday's euchre party in the labor temple, given by the Canadian Women's labor party. The consolation prizes were won by Mrs. Scott and H. Webb. Mrs. A. Johnston sang a number of solos, and a lunch was served after the card games were over.

At the end of the winter season, which will be about the middle of May, a grand prize will be presented to the person who scores the highest number of points in the season. Mr. Minnes is ahead at the present time in the race. The prize is a silver flower bowl.

MAYOR BACKED IN HIS MOVE TO OUST FIRE CHIEF AITKEN

Finance Committee Votes Four To Three To Ask Resignation.

MAY BE GIVEN \$10,000

Move Comes As Bombshell at Special and Secret Meeting.

John Aitken, veteran chief of the London fire department, must resign from service if a motion passed by No. 1 committee last night is ratified by the city council on Monday. Meeting behind closed doors at a late hour, the finance committee cast a vote of 4 to 3 to demand the chief's resignation.

From storm clouds that have been gathering for some time came a bolt from Mayor G. A. Wenig's crossbow when he moved, at a hastily-arranged after-meeting of the committee, that the chief be ordered to turn in his keys of office.

Three Are Opposed.

Ald. Frank McKay, chairman of the committee, Ald. Thomas Clift and Ald. Robert Carswell supported the mayor. Opposition was made by Ald. Dr. L. H. Douglass, Edwin Smith and Paul Doig.

No conditions were attached to the motion, though it is understood a motion will subsequently be brought in to provide a \$10,000 retiring allowance for Chief Aitken. This is not definite, but at least one of the aldermen reported as favoring the chief's resignation has already stated that he would not so vote unless the chief secured a substantial allowance. The chief is entitled to some \$7,000 under the superannuation arrangement with the city.

The mayor's motion came as a bombshell last night. The council had already completed a 90-minute session to conclude estimate discussion, and over an hour had been spent in the regular session of No. 1 committee. The agenda was concluded, tenders were dealt with and the committee rose to leave. Chief Aitken and other officials and visitors and the press took their departure.

Hurried Meeting.

The committee was hurriedly called to order, and the mayor's motion tabled. Shortly before midnight, a vote of 4 to 3 in favor of demanding the chief's resignation was reported.

The mayor's consistent antagonism to the present administration of the fire department and organized labor's attitude favorable to the fire fighters' union brought the matter to a head. The mayor's argument is that the chief has been in the city for 44 years and that he is too old for the job.

Chief Aitken's bi-monthly report aroused a bit and organized labor's regular sitting of the committee. The chief reported having suspended Lieut. S. Scruby of No. 2 station for five days because of error made in responding to an alarm.

Only One Erred.

The chief reported that Lieutenant had received an alarm for fire last week, and had taken his company to the corner of Richmond and Dundas street, when he should have reported to Rectory and Dundas, a mile east of Richmond. He had been suspended for mistaking the alarm when all other companies responded correctly.

What's the usual suspension for

SARNIA GROCERS PLAN ASSOCIATION

Hawking One Matter To Be Dealt With by New Organization.

Special to The Advertiser.

Sarnia, April 1.—Grocers of the city decided, at a preliminary meeting held last evening, to organize an association. It is the intention to take up several matters concerning the welfare of the trade, including hawking, establishment of a credit bureau and co-operation in carrying out the egg grading regulations.

TRUCK LOAD OF ALCOHOL SEIZED NEAR BEAMSVILLE

Canadian Press Despatch.

Toronto, April 2.—Word has reached headquarters of the provincial police of seizure of a truck containing 528 gallons of alcohol near Beamsville early yesterday morning. The truck, which left Niagara Falls with its heavy load of alcohol, was said to be making its way to Toronto, and when an attempt was made to intercept it at St. Catharines the driver refused to stop. When near Beamsville the driver of the truck jumped from it and disappeared.

NECK FURS

The Vogue For Spring

The popularity of Furs for Neckwear is large and growing daily. Nothing adds more tone to spring apparel than an appropriate neckpiece of fur.

Our showing for the season includes foxes, from natural red to the high-grade silver varieties, mink, stone marten, sable, ermine, squirrel, etc., are here also in all styles and qualities.

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Coats with the new, slender lines, new uses of embroidery and fur borders. Made of the finest charmeuse, Poirat twills, palau crepe and tricotines in all the new spring colors \$10.50, \$15, \$18, \$25

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The smartest expressions of the spring mode in exclusive models for women and misses at special reduction for today and tomorrow only. We can offer \$15, \$18, \$25 you new ensemble suit with crepe lining, at

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\$10.00, \$12.50, \$16.50 and \$19.75

Your dollars will work overtime at this Millinery Sale, madam. Tailored and Trimmed Hats, beautiful new \$1.98, \$2.98, \$3.98, \$4.98 colors, worth twice our sale price

WE HAVE ALL KINDS OF FUR CHOKERS ON SALE.

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\$35 Diamonds, \$7 Down
\$50 Diamonds, \$10 Down
\$75 Diamonds, \$15 Down
\$100 Diamonds, \$20 Down
\$150 Diamonds, \$30 Down
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\$300 Diamonds, \$80 Down

GUARANTEED WATCHES

\$10-\$20 Watches, \$3 Down
\$25 Gent's Gruen, \$5 Down
\$35 Gent's Gruen, \$5 Down
\$50-\$100 Watches, \$5 Down
\$15 Lady's Watch, \$3 Down
\$20 Lady's Watch, \$3 Down
\$25 Lady's Gruen, \$5 Down
\$50-\$100 Lady's, \$5 Down

JOHNSTON BROS.

214 DUNDAS STREET

Boys Smoked While In Church

Now They Must Go Regularly

Special to The Advertiser.

Goderich, April 1.—Magistrate Reid meted out a unique sentence to three Benmiller youths yesterday. Some Sundays ago, Gordon Vanstone, Roy McWhinney and Charles Harrison, attended divine service at the Benmiller Methodist church. During the service they raised a disturbance by talking, laughing and smoking. On a charge of interrupting a church service they were haled to police court, where the magistrate imposed sentence of an apology to the minister and trustees of the church, also that they must attend church service at this church once a Sunday for six months, reporting the same to the court. Magistrate Reid stated that the good influence of the church was the best cure for such cases.

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