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THE HARBOR COMMISSION.

IT IS A NECESSITY IF FUTURE TRADE IS LOOKED FOR.

A Plain Statement of What the City Loss Annually by Owning the Harbor Rights.

In concluding the series of articles on the Harbor Commission which have been running through these columns it will be necessary to go over again part of the ground already covered. This will be done as briefly as possible. It is contended by those who support the Harbor Commission scheme that it will be of direct benefit to the ratepayers of the city, and at the same time a benefit to the trade of the port. That is the payment of \$500,000 by the government for the city's rights in the harbor will so reduce the interest bearing debt that fully \$5,000 can be taken off the annual assessment to be followed every year by still further reductions in the city tax. And inasmuch as the harbor now yields upwards of \$10,000 a year more than would be required to pay the interest on \$500,000 at 4 per cent, the Commission could consistently lower the tolls to the former level that is a cent a ton a day for vessels loading rather than two cents a day the legal rate.

The reduction in the city assessment comes in this way. At present the city pays for interest and sinking funds on account of its harbor the large sum of \$36,337.84, of which there is assessed on the citizens somewhere in the neighborhood of \$47,000 every year. The average receipts for the last five years are not more than \$28,000 which shows a loss of upwards of \$9,000 every year on the harbor which many believe to be an extremely valuable asset. But the question is asked how would this loss be avoided by selling out to the Commission. First, the Commission would pay but \$20,000 a year interest where the city pay now \$36,337. The Provincial act of 1875 under which the Commission is made possible renders it necessary for the chamberlain to invest all monies received from the sale of the harbor for the following purposes:

- 1. To meet the interest and principal of special loans raised on account of the harbor.
2. To meet the interest and extinguish as far as possible the old city debt much of which was incurred for harbor improvements.

Were the harbor transferred now to a commission, and the \$500,000 paid into the sinking fund, the only legal use it

can be applied to, there would be with the existing accumulations enough money to pay off the entire old city debt and the special issues of debentures on account of the harbor, and still leave a balance of \$10,412 in the hands of the council for the East Side and \$16,500 in the West Side account. In other words, the present condition of the city finances is such that, of the total debt of \$1,189,000, the placing of the harbor in commission would make provision for over one-half of it, or \$617,752. It would stop immediately the appropriation of over \$10,000 of money now annually put aside for interest and sinking fund, which would be a saving of just that much to the taxpayers. In the preceding article on this subject, it was shown that some \$55,000 of the old city debt could be wiped out at once, saving the city immediately the sum of \$2,200, and that while the investments would not pay the interest on the entire debt for the next two years; it would do so and more every year thereafter. Any one who will take the trouble to carefully look into the question of Harbor Commission, can not fail to be convinced that it is the best thing in the interests of the city, and the sooner the commission is organized and sets to work the better. They have now a sufficient sum of money—\$750,000—at their disposal to make the necessary repairs to the wharf and dredge the harbor where required, as it is not at all necessary that the whole sum should be expended in improvements until such time as trade warrants the laying out of so large a sum of money. There is no disposition now, and there never has been any, to deal either harshly or harshly with the owners of private wharves. Some of these people have opposed the question as bitterly as they could, and assailed most venomously and in the most cowardly manner possible, those who have stood up in support of the scheme. But these gentlemen should remember that private rights begin only where public rights end. The private wharf owners have the privilege of selling their property if they wish or holding it if they want to. There is nothing compulsory about it save that they cannot force the commission to take at any valuation they may choose to put upon a lot of worthless property. It would be unfair to the commission that they should be forced to buy, and equally unfair to compel the private owner to close out at the valuation of wharf property, as shown at a recent sale: Wherever the government has been the purchaser of property in this vicinity the prices paid have been about one and a-half times the assessed value. Therefore there seems but little reason for the wharf owners to imagine that they will get anything but fair prices for their property, be the commissioners who they may—Grit or Tory.

The phase of the question it is proposed to discuss in this article is the future of the harbor. In former articles it has been shown that the harbor at present is a dead loss to the city. Since 1881, when the placing of the property in the hands of a commission was first brought before the council the city has spent over \$40,000 in repairing the wharves and building warehouses. Of course, the city has added somewhat to its property in the past six years, the present value of the additions being in the neighborhood of \$10,000, leaving the large sum of \$50,000 spent in repairs alone, an average of \$8,000, and to keep the property in proper repair a like expenditure will be needed for at least five years more. In other words, to accommodate the trade we now have the common council will be obliged to find at least \$5,000 a year. They cannot get it from the revenues of the wharves, and will of necessity be obliged to take it out of the people by direct taxation. Can the citizens stand an additional assessment for this purpose? Early next spring we will have the Short Line Railway connecting St. John with the West. While not believing that this railway will bring the entire western export trade to St. John, it will undoubtedly bring some, and the sooner we are prepared to handle that trade the better. We have at the present time sufficient accommodation for two large steamers at wharves with railroad connections, but the terminal facilities are not yet complete. To handle the western trade we must have grain elevators, or an elevator on one of these wharves. It comes to us pretty straight that the Dominion government are disposed to build an elevator on one of the wharves they own if the harbor is put into commission, and if this is not done our chances of obtaining immediate aid from the federal government is not the best. Were the harbor in commission it would be federal property, and consequently the direct interest of the federal government would be to so improve the property as to make it pay the expenses of management. Apart from the elevator altogether, the harbor requires a large expenditure to make it all that it should be. At least \$50,000 should be spent immediately to secure proper accommodation for the trade we now have. There are two ways of doing this: the city may assume the expense, or the property now owned by the corporation may be transferred to a Harbor Commission, and that body can do it. If the first method is taken then there will have to be an additional tax of \$2,500 levied on the citizens for the next twenty years, whereas if the work is done by a commission the trade of the port will be obliged to pay for the improvements.

Already the Dominion Government have spent nearly half a million dollars in providing terminal facilities at St. John. All that can now be asked of them is to build a grain elevator which would place us in the same position as Halifax now is. The government is favorably disposed to do this with the proviso that the harbor is put in commission. Many are doubtful as to the ability of St. John to compete for the western trade. St. John is really in a better position than any other port to get this trade. Scores of vessels come to St. John every year seeking cargoes because their owners are aware that there is a large export trade in deals constantly going on from this port. This trade is not so large as it once was—indeed it is growing less every year and will continue to decline. We must therefore look about for a new trade and the existing business of the port will materially help us to get it if we don't delay too long. The fact that vessels come to St. John every year seeking cargoes will cause western exporters to ship their goods to St. John as they are more likely to secure quick transit and lower rates than if they shipped to a point where the only trade was that brought over the railways. Halifax is such a point as this, and therefore, with equal facilities with Halifax, we are tolerably certain to secure the lion's portion of the trade. But we can only hope to do this by immediate action. Delay will most likely prove fatal. Whatever is to be done should be done at once. The common council should take hold of the matter at once and deal with it firmly. It is their duty to do this. The public meeting called to discuss the question was a failure. It was not a representative meeting of citizens at the best, and the question was not discussed at all. If the council is afraid to take the responsibility of disposing of the question then let them have a report prepared setting forth the full facts, and then, when the public have had time to digest the report, let a popular vote be taken on the question. Once the harbor commission is thoroughly understood there can be no question as to its fate. Everyone who has the interests of the trade of the port at heart will favor it. At present opposition to the project rises solely from want of knowledge of the project or political views.

Spooning on the Stairs.

The fashion of spooning on the staircases was imported from England some seasons ago. As practiced across the board for party use, there is no particular objection to it. It is a relief to the crowded rooms, where privacy is impossible and where chairs are at a premium. Romeo and Juliet can steal away to the broad staircase, where the steps furnish seats, and all is well. They are in nobody's way, and are still within safe call. But there is no reason for its being introduced at the American summer hotel as it has been. The spooning parties are a nuisance. They block the none too wide stairways, and are an offense to every one who has to pass them by. The oddest part of it is that, though they have no business where they are, they always lose their temper when they are disturbed by people who are putting the stairs to their legitimate use.

Tired Nature's Sweet Restorer.

(Burdette in Brooklyn Eagle.) "Doctor," said Mr. Swallowgood, "my throat has been sore for several days; what shall I do for it?" Dr. Blunt—"Give it a rest. It's overworked. Don't do anything for a week but breathe with it."

TO BENEFIT ST. JOHN.

WHAT A CORRESPONDENT THINKS THE CITY NEEDS.

The Chignecto Ship Railway, Better Terminal Facilities and More Confidence in Our Own People.

What is the best thing to do to develop the trade of St. John? This is the question you have submitted to me, Mr. Editor, and I will endeavor in my humble way to answer it.

First, our people require to have more confidence in each other. It is strange but true, that the people of St. John will repose confidence in any adventurer who may chance along. They will not only believe his stories of wondrous wealth, but also give him financial aid. How many wild cat schemes have the business men and capitalists of St. John assisted financially only to find that the stories they were induced into believing were mere fictions told by an irresponsible party who had swindled the people of other places with them before, and on leaving St. John would do the same in some other town. At the same time the capitalists who were breathing in the stores of the adventurer, would not assist some deserving native to do some thing that there was an actual profit in. To follow up a trade or line of manufacture he was thoroughly acquainted with and which only needed capital to build up a profitable business. Therefore I say to build up the city and make it the centre of trade nature destined it to be. We must have more confidence in our own people, which simply means more confidence in our ourselves. We must not regard every new enterprise with suspicion. That some enterprises are unwarranted is beyond question. But the chaff should be separated from the wheat; the chances of success weighed, and if the balance showed on the right side it should be assisted and encouraged. We should particularly have confidence in our young men. They are the hope of the country, and if then our townsmen refuse them the confidence they deserve, they will be obliged to seek it, perhaps, in a foreign State. St. John boys are as industrious and hard working as the boys of any other city. When they have gone away from home they have done as well as boys from other cities, and could we have retained those who have left, there would have been a different story to relate—St. John would have been more prosperous and a better city in every way.

When we have got confidence we want all modern conveniences for doing trade. This includes shorter communication with the West—a railroad that will be run in the interests of the Maritime Provinces as well as the West. This we have reason to expect in the Short Line Railroad. In all their transactions the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company have shown themselves to be men of business at least. They run their western railroad on commercial principles, because they find it pays them to do so, and we may rest assured they will also run the eastern branch on the same principle. But the railroad is only one thing; we need and must have proper terminal facilities to handle the trade it will bring here. A grain elevator should be built at once; the harbor should be placed in commission and improved so as to accommodate vessels of any size. By terminal facilities I mean, also, that a branch of the Intercolonial should be run along the waterfront at the upper end of the harbor to the Robertson wharf. This would necessitate the closing up of York Point slip; but that place has long since ceased to be a very important point. Another branch of the railroad should be brought up Charlotte street and along Britain, to connect the deep water wharves at Reed's Point with the railroad. This would materially cheapen the cost of handling freight brought through by rail from other sections of the province.

The Chignecto ship railway is another project of vital interest to the commercial welfare of St. John. The completion of this great project would connect the waters of the Bay of Fundy with those of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and give St. John great advantages for carrying on the West India trade. Complete the ship railway and give us regular lines of steamers between Montreal and St. John and St. John and the West Indies and we would be able to do the trade between the West Indies and Canada. Regular daily steam communication between the Basin of Minas and Digby would then follow and St. John would go ahead. The importance of St. John as a railway terminus and a depot of trade would make a regular steamship communication with Great Britain an absolute necessity. There is no reason in the world why we should not have a regular line of steamers plying between St. John and Liverpool and London. While at the present time there would not be trade enough to fully support them the day will come when the trade will be more

than sufficient and St. John will be important competitor with Montreal Toronto for the trade of the west.

But our first step should be to secure a reduction of civic taxation. Could we but relieve the working man of a direct tax it would be the beginning of a new era in the city. This is possible only by placing the harbor in commission and refunding the city debt at a lower rate of interest. I hope to see this done, but the council moves so slowly that it will be a long time before it will take place. Such a reform could only be secured by agitation, and no one seems anxious, now that city bonds are worth 116, to begin the agitation. We can only hope to make St. John great by making it a cheap and attractive place to live in. Working men are frightened away by tax bills and men of wealth who come to live among us change color when they see their tax bills. We must also cease to depend longer upon the government to aid us to any considerable extent. The time has come in Canada or is rapidly coming when no further additions can be made to the public debt. It must rather be reduced. Already Canada owes too much money—not too much if the debt were held in Canada but too much to pay interest on when the money is always going out of the country. VICTOR.

ANSWERED.

Casey Top Discusses the Great Question "What is Woman's Power?"

I was reading a college journal lately, edited by a young lady, in which this astounding query appeared,—What is meant by "Woman's power?"

Come hither, sis, I would talk to thee. I notice that the less some people know about certain subjects, the more apt are they to open the flood-gates of their scintillating intellects upon said subjects—so come hither, dear. That's right. Sit right down there on that stool, by my feet. There! Now, place you pretty little hand confidently in mine, and as you gaze so trustfully up into the grief-furrowed visage of genius, I will fill the golden chalice with the Pierian waters and press it to thy ruddy lips. Woman's power, my daughter, may mean a good many things. A friend of mine became addicted to the club habit, and would frequently absent himself from his better half till long after the gloaming, oh, my darling, had glomed, and would then appear struggling with an attack of temporary aberration. His wife stood this patiently as long as she could, and at last she decided upon a desperate course. Her mother was visiting her at the time and she sent her home. In two days my friend was a gibbering idiot and he now wears his life away, writing humorous sketches for the papers. Isn't that a tale to freeze thy young blood, and make each particular hair stand on end like the quills on the fretful tooth-brush?

Agatha, Roxy, I'll tell thee something else a woman can do. A woman, between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, can change the whole course of a man's life. She can take a man of a sunny, joyous disposition, from whose lips flows naught but merry thoughts, and from whose eyes there sparkles the light of a cheerful, generous nature, and in six months' time—ay, even less—that same man will be going round like a bear with a sore head, and at last she decided upon a desperate course. Her mother was visiting her at the time and she sent her home. In two days my friend was a gibbering idiot and he now wears his life away, writing humorous sketches for the papers. Isn't that a tale to freeze thy young blood, and make each particular hair stand on end like the quills on the fretful tooth-brush?

But this, daughter, is not all of woman's power. She can make cheerful the gloomy stages of this our earthly pilgrimage. She can, by her sage counsels that spring from a pure affection and by her noble, self-sacrificing spirit, lift us from the slough of despond, up to the firm ground above, and show us the beacon hope, glimmering afar off and with its inspiring beams lighting up the tortuous roads that leads to the goal of success. And when the hour of sickness has come, and the weary soul is struggling to leave its earthly habitation, and weeping friends are gathered around to take their last, sad farewell, is she not there to smooth the pain-racked brow, to whisper words of bright comfort, and kiss away—God bless her!—the trembling fears?

Roxy, you may go now. CALEY TAP.

Look out for next week's Saturday Gazette.