

TO THE FREEHOLDER



N submitting a By-law to provide an additional sum of \$600,000 for the erection of a new City Hall and Court House, the Council feels it to be its duty to furnish the qualified ratepayers the fullest possible information concerning the proposed plan.

An agitation for a new Court House commenced in 1880, and continued year to year. The judges, members of the legal profession, jurymen and the public at large having business there, condemned, again and again, the present Court House as being unsanitary and unfit for the purpose for which it is used.

In May, 1883, a joint Committee of the City and County Councils presented a report to the respective Councils, recommending the erection of a Court House at the joint expense of the two municipalities, upon a site to be mutually agreed upon, the building to be under the control and management of the City, the County paying its proportion of the cost of maintenance. In June following, a report was substituted for the foregoing, providing that a site to be selected should be of sufficient size to provide room for the erection of suitable and separate City and County buildings, in addition to the Court House, such site to be mutually agreed upon, or settled by arbitration in case of difference. The plans for all the buildings were approved of by both Councils before the work of erecting the Court House was commenced. Further, the County Council was to have control of the new Court House. This report was adopted by both Councils.

In December of the same year, (1883,) the County submitted to the City two sites: (1) a block of land bounded by Church, Richmond, Clare (now Bertie) and Queen streets; or, (2) The block of land bounded by Queen, Bond, Victoria and Shuter streets. As the City Council was not asked by the County Council to join in the selection, as agreed, both of the sites were rejected by the City, and a conference was suggested.

Immediately after the organization of the City Council of 1884, the Court House Committee named the block of land at the head of Bay street as a suitable site; and suggested that if it was acceptable to the County, the matter should be referred to arbitration forthwith for settlement. Subsequently agreed between the City and the County, in view of the fact that the City was called upon to pay about ten-twelfths of the cost of both site and building, that the City should proceed at once to select a site and erect a suitable Court House and City buildings. Legislation was obtained, authorizing an issue of debentures to the amount of \$300,000, without obtaining the assent of the ratepayers, for the erection of the proposed new buildings, and power was granted to the City to expropriate lands for a site.

Later in the year it was determined to erect a Court House proper only; and, after a great deal of discussion and consideration by the Council, the site at the head of Bay street was selected and afterwards purchased at a cost of about \$210,000.

Competitive plans were advertised for forthwith, and after much delay the design submitted by Mr. E. J. Lennox was found by the experts appointed to examine the plans to be the most suitable and was accepted.

Tenders were at once publicly invited for the excavation work, and John Nasmith's was accepted on the 7th of June, 1886; on August the 19th, tenders for the foundation and basement