

Valedictory.

A PARTING WORD FROM MAYOR MORRIS.

Having put in seven years of service at the City Hall as a Councillor, and five months as Mayor, and now coming to the close of my term of office, it may not be out of place to pass a few words on to the public. My service at the City Hall has been somewhat difficult, and from the day the Commission first sat until the present moment it has been a problem of finance. It is pleasing, however, to be able to state that, amidst all the drawbacks which the Council and the Commission have had, which were due largely to War conditions, the Municipal Ship has been fairly well navigated, and the budget now to be entering upon calmer seas and more favoured ports. True it is that the coming year will have some difficult problems, and the first half of it may be especially so; but, given an improvement in trade, which we all hope for, and due economy, there is much in favour of the new Council, and it is not too much to expect that by judicious administration and cautious expenditure, the pathway will be smoother and the burdens easier. We feel that there is a possibility of these conditions prevailing, and that the incoming Council can encourage themselves, and that, after they have gotten into their work a little, they will realize what some of us had hoped and wished—that is, that they can do something more than collect taxes, pass paycheques and conduct the correspondence. There truly is a bigger field than this before the Councillors, and when once they get their forces in order, they should be able to advance, and assume a wider policy than has been hitherto possible.

CO-OPERATION THE KEY NOTE.

We feel assured that the Mayor-elect and his Councillors earnestly wish to improve the City, and they will certainly do their part as diligent officials; but, if they are to accomplish anything worth while, they must have the co-operation of the public. This is my reason for writing these few parting words, and to bespeak for my successors every possible assistance that can be given them. The Mayor and Councillors very often get blamed for what they do, as well as

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which intensify the responsibility of the office. Considering these conditions, we again ask that every assistance be given the incoming Council, and that the public bear in mind that, while the Council may seem exact and sometimes pressing, and apparently severe, what is being done is not for the benefit of the Council—from an individual standpoint—but is for the good of the Municipality, and, therefore, for the common good of the City.

A STRENUOUS LIFE.

From my years of experience at the City Hall, I have learned that Councillors—both officially and personally—have too much expected of them, and that the reason for this is because there is much misunderstanding as to the duties and privileges of the members and a meagre understanding as to their rights. A Mayor or Councillor, as I have learned it, can hardly call himself his own. He is interviewed at his home, he is interviewed on the street, and it is the same at the City Hall daily. I have studied out the situation, so that I might know what hours would suit the public for interviews at the Mayor's Office, and, having been there in the forenoon and afternoon and all hours, I have come to the conclusion that St. John's should have a Mayor who should give all his time to the office. But this cannot be for a while at least, and so I wish to say that the hours which seem to suit the public best for interviews are noon hours and late afternoon.

COMPLIMENTARY.

As already stated, the burden of the Council is that of finances; hence it is gratifying to note that the gentlemen who compose the new Board are all successful men from a business standpoint. The Mayor-elect has been successful, and his Board have the same proud distinction. This speaks well for the personnel of the new Council, and it is only natural to suppose that the men who were successful in business and who successfully competed in the industrial and commercial world will be equally successful in their official capacity as guardians of the Municipality. We feel assured that they will do their best to institute such improvements as are demanding immediate attention; and, while they cannot hope to carry out all the re-

commendations of their predecessors, as published in the last report of the Council, they will, no doubt, see their way clear to deal with those which are essential and necessary.

A FEW ESSENTIAL THINGS ACCOMPLISHED DURING MY TERM OF OFFICE.

During my term of office as Mayor, I endeavored to accomplish a few small things in the line of direct civic improvements. I had given two years to the preparation of the Charter, and had waited another five years for it to be adopted, and ex-Mayor Gosling had devoted much time to direct Charter work. On my assumption of office, I decided that the Charter had received attention enough, and that the City, which, in my estimation, is greater than the Charter, should receive more direct and immediate attention. I, therefore, laid the following matters before the new Commission, and they gave me a free hand to carry them out. And I did so. I did not even have a Committee. My experience for long years in societies and churches has taught me that, while I had to wait for a committee to meet and finally report, and then for the main body to adopt, the chance to accomplish the object in view was lost; so I learned to do things and not waste too much time in what is commonly called "Red Tape."

CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS.

Thus on taking office we at once decided to build Mullins' Bridge in the West End of the City, and it is agreed that it was a useful and much needed improvement. We also laid concrete sidewalk in front of the City Hall, and are pleased to say that property holders in the vicinity co-operated with us and had their sidewalks laid also, and it is hoped that others will follow. As our readers are aware, the Council pays half the expense of concrete sidewalks, curbs and gutters. We at once interviewed the Government in the matter of removing the Fire Hall at the Southside, and we have succeeded, and the Department of Public Works will dispose of the building at public auction at an early date. I tried to get this building removed seven years ago, but, at the time, we were too busy on the Board to give it attention. We immediately had the shed at the east of the G.P.O. demolished, which, for three years, was a standing reproach to Water Street. We also widened Lime Street, a measure which should have been adopted ten years ago. We improved the City offices, and renovated the Hall, and brought it up to date for the convenience of the public and the health of the staff. We succeeded in getting the Government to improve the entry to the gate of the General Hospital, and are negotiating with St. Thomas' Parish to have Military Road widened in that locality. We also installed a large number of lights, and have opened up correspondence to have Newman's shed on Water Street removed, as well as removing the so-called Fish Market at Baird's Opera, thereby greatly improving that splendid square, to the satisfaction of the public and trade generally. These are a few of the small things that I undertook with the permission of the Board, and personally carried out, and gave my time to. Of the larger work of road widening and improvements we shall not speak, but we have tried to do our best. These are minor improvements it is true, and there are many more to be adopted, and it is hoped that our successors will follow, but these things, and if they cannot accomplish great things they will be able to accomplish the lesser. In addition to the above, it may be fairly stated that I was largely instrumental in averting the longshoremen's strike.

A BUSY TIME DURING MY TERM OF OFFICE.

Our term of office at the City Hall was a very busy one, and one which taxed the energies of the entire staff. This was due to a number of factors: the Triennial Appraisal, and also of the Election; and the Court of Revision—both of Voters' Lists and Property—was being held at the City Hall. This was all intensified by the fact that the Charter was late in passing, and that the election had to be held not later than the 15th day of December. Seeing the possibility of confusion, I interviewed the Premier, as to the advisability of postponing the election until March, but found that it could not be done, as it would require an Act of Parliament to alter the date. We therefore continued with Mr. Doyle, who was afterward commissioned by the Colonial Secretary as Returning Officer, in regard to the enumeration and the possibility of carrying out the election. He at once stated it was almost impossible to do so, as there were but two months and a half to prepare the lists, and that they would require at least twice that time. The Election, however, had to take place, and Mr. Doyle undertook the work, as he had so often done before. We gave him every help, and, by mutual consent, we agreed that, by working until midnight for some three months, the election could be arranged. This will explain to the public the cause of some of the confusion which arose. Seeing the possibility of irregularities, the Secretary, Mr. Mahony, had prepared at the office seven hundred certificates, all of which were issued, with an additional hundred and fifty. We were prepared for a vote of 5,000, which, with the certificates, would increase the list to 7,000, but,

owing to the miserable booth system which prevails at our elections, and owing to weather conditions which arose, and also owing to the lack of interest taken by the public in the inspection of the Voters' Lists, we had an election, which, while quite legal, is lamentably non-representative. That our Election Act should be so antiquated and so inefficient is indeed regrettable, and it is hoped that the legislature will give this matter immediate attention at the next Session. The Council has no power in the election; it can only follow the General Election Act.

GAVE EXTRA SERVICE.

With the staff at the office so busy, I did my best to relieve the situation, and lighten the burden upon the Secretary's hands. Personally, I did not approve—or do I—of so much night work, as I have paid the toll myself during fifty years in the industrial world. I consulted with the Secretary as to the possibility of additional help, but he informed me that it would be of no benefit, as the work was largely statistical, and could only be done by the staff in charge, and that while a new official would be getting into the work, the time would be gone. I, therefore, undertook the correspondence of the Council, and endeavored to ease the burden of those who were being overworked. Hence it is that all the major correspondence has borne my signature instead of that of the Secretary. I did this to relieve matters, and, as I felt assured that I would be in office for a full term, I did not mind giving my time and doing so much work; but, had I expected a change, of course I could not have done it. To have done so would be not only an injustice to myself, but an injustice to my successor. But of course these special duties are now past, and the election appraisal and revision are over, and there will not be so much correspondence necessary. At the same time, I wish here to state that the matter of correspondence in the City Council is one of the most important of the office, and requires great care and much good judgment. In all my correspondence I have endeavored to manifest the spirit of courteousness, and to impart dignity to my office in every aspect of its duties.

PERSONNEL OF NEW COUNCIL EXCELLENT, BUT DENOMINATIONAL NOT FULLY REPRESENTATIVE.

While the public generally express satisfaction at the personnel of the new Council, there is, at the same time, a feeling of disappointment that, from a denominational standpoint, there is not a fuller representation. It may, or it may not, be a desirable aspect from which we in Newfoundland view these things, but, of course, we are all conscious that, more or less, in all matters of Government, both civil and state, the denominational element plays a big part. This may, or may not, be a commendable feature, but still it seems necessary, and I suppose that while communities are divided into sects and factions, there will be this spirit manifested. St. John's may be denominationally divided into three great bodies: the Episcopal, the Roman Catholic, and the Non-Conformist. Representatives of these bodies occupy prominent places in trade and commerce and in social life, and they each have large interests in property, and educational institutions. It can be fairly claimed that each body has large representations in every phase of life. It is therefore only fair to admit that there is a feeling of disappointment inasmuch as the great Non-Conformist body of the city is underrepresented at the Board. In a manner, it does not make a great difference, as everyone has entire confidence in the Board, and the question of denominationalism never comes up there, but the feeling of the public is that there should be representation of all classes upon it. However, the matter was decided by the electorate, and, whether intentionally or unintentionally, the result is that the Non-Conformist body of the city are without representation in civic matters.

SALARY.

There has been some little comment at different times as to the salary of the Mayor and Councillors, and some perhaps have misunderstood the situation. As to the Mayor's salary, it must be understood that such an official is daily called upon, and that he must give his salary pay often away before himself. Mayor Gosling liberally donated his salary to the Child Welfare Movement. I have donated mine to similar movements, although in a different manner, and when I have given the salary, and more, I had daily to refuse two or three calls. The dignity of the office is the best payment one can have, and the sense of serving the city is more than monetary returns. No one assumes the office for its salary—to do so would be mercenary and mean, and unworthy any who may occupy the position. These are all the points upon which I wish to speak, and I think that the public will accept them in the broad spirit in which they are written. They are not meant to be narrow, nor to convey anything like a petty spirit; but they are rather meant for the common good of the public.

SEASONABLE GREETINGS.

In closing therefore, I wish the



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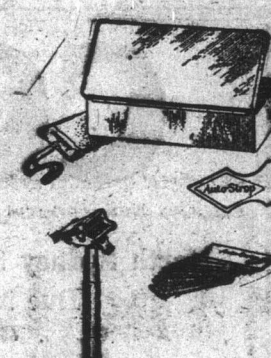


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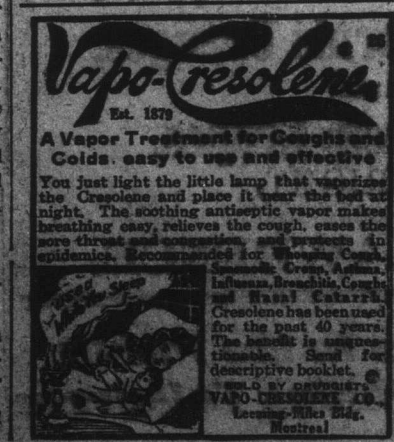
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