

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 1921

HE ADVOCATES CITY MANAGER

Edmonton Banker Presents
Reasons for Faith in That
Plan of City Government.

(Canadian Finance.)
The awakening of interest in civic affairs in Edmonton has been very pronounced since the recent election. The defeat of ex-Mayor Clarke, the labor representative, has been followed by a real go-together movement. The civic administration of receiving close attention and a move is already on foot to adopt the city-manager form of administration.

One who has come out strongly for a city-manager plan is Frank Pike, manager of the Merchants Bank and until recently a member of the city sinking fund board. Having an insight into civic affairs from membership of two important public boards, Mr. Pike's views naturally arouse interest.

Speaking to the Edmonton Journal recently, Mr. Pike stated:
"I have very strong and decided opinions regarding civic affairs, and believe that now is the time to speak plainly. At a time when our taxes are at the maximum, mismanagement, or rather, lack of experience and continuity in city management, is costing us hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Now, do not misunderstand me. I do not want to reflect on the energy or ability of any civic official, from the mayor down."

"I sincerely believe that the officials we have had for the last five years, without exception, have conscientiously done their best, but I am strongly of the opinion that we cannot make progress under our present system of civic administration, and that we shall only go from bad to worse until the system has been changed."

Need Capable Manager.

"What we want in the city of Edmonton today is capable, experienced and continued business management. This is impossible under our present system, where the executive head is constantly changing. All business corporations that have proved a financial success in the present day are managed by a board of directors, acting as a deliberative body, and the executive functions are looked after by a general manager and his staff. If the same business principles as are followed out by financial, railway, industrial and other large corporations were adopted by a city government it would be possible to achieve the same business efficiency. Therefore, I would recommend that the city-manager plan, money, co-operation and efficient business management under the guidance of an elective board of directors, or mayor and aldermen, whose functions would be purely administrative and advisory, be adopted by the city of Edmonton as its municipal form of government."

"If the announcement were made tomorrow that a strong capable and experienced general manager had been appointed for the city of Edmonton at a salary beginning at not less than \$10,000

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per annum for five years, it would mean the dawn of a better day for Edmonton. Any man not worth \$10,000 per annum would not be big enough for the job.

Poor Economy.

"This is no time for parsimonious cheese-paring and back-woods treatment of important officials. The poorest kind of economy is the cutting down of the salaries of capable officials, and thus losing their valued services to the city and replacing them by mediocrity. Brains and efficiency are always at a premium."

"It may be said that we have tried the city-manager form of government at Edmonton and that it did not work. However, we did not give it a fair trial. Had we continued that efficient, business-like system it would have saved the taxpayers of this city millions of dollars. If we fail to adopt it now we shall yet lose further millions. It may mean higher taxation—that, in itself, is not an unmixed evil, providing we are on the right road and can see daylight ahead."

What does it profit us if, by petty economies and reduced taxation, we save a few thousand dollars annually, and by mismanagement and lack of continuity in business methods lose hundreds of thousands?

Strict Business Methods.

"It may also be contended that the people will not support a business manager, but I do not believe it. I have more faith in the average common sense and intelligence of the citizens in this western city, and I believe, as a whole, they are ready to demand strict business methods in civic administration."

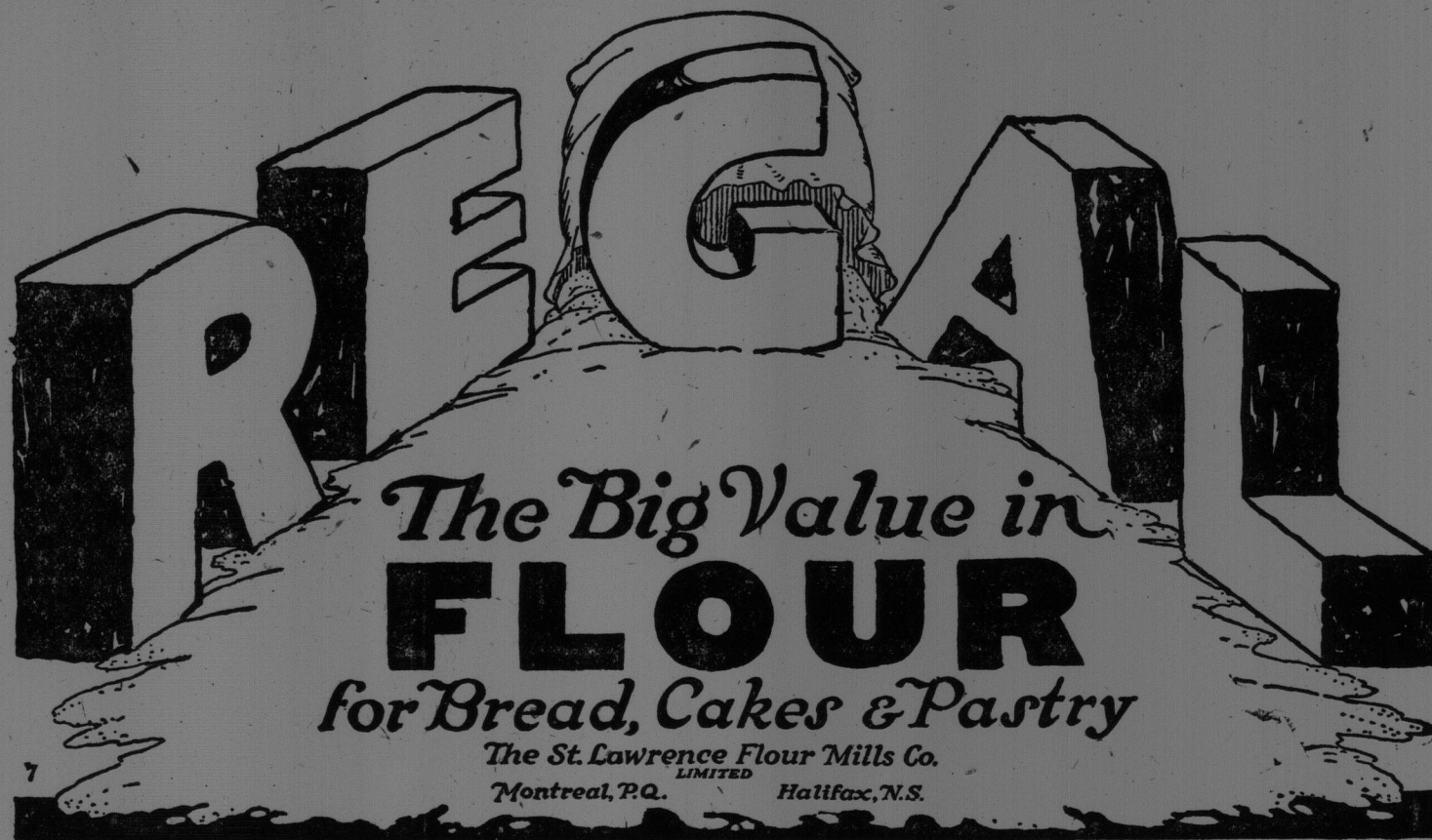
"I trust that never again at an election shall we see our citizens divided into two tickets—labor and citizen. Such a distinction is absurd when the great body of laborers and workmen are our best citizens. The success of the city-manager form of government depends entirely on the general and whole-hearted support of all citizens. The needs of the hour are hard money, co-operation and efficient business management."

Sir Auckland Geddes, British ambassador at Washington, was talking at a luncheon in Philadelphia about seasickness. "There are numerous remedies for seasickness," he said. "Some advice cotton in the ears; others recommend smoked glasses; a champagne diet has its votaries; fasting has its advantages as well; but I, for my part, however, in-

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fine to the old skipper's view, 'O, captain, moasted a lady passenger, 'my husband is frightfully seasick. Can you tell him what to do?' 'It ain't necessary to tell him, na'im. He'll do it,' said the old skipper gruffly.



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