

reason the rentals of stalls in the market were reduced eighteen years ago and are still at the reduced rate. Formerly the revenues were sold at auction to the highest bidder above the upset price but this has not been done in recent years although there have been demands for more stalls than there are in the market at present.

The general revenue account as it exists at present should be abolished, or its character completely changed. It should not be possible for the aldermen to take money from this or any other account under the excuse that the money is required for "an exigency of the public service." Every dollar of revenue should be applied to some definite purpose with the ultimate object of reducing taxation. This can never be while the revenues of the city remain unappropriated and the aldermen are permitted to expend money in excess of the income of any department. If the assessment were made to yield the amount estimated and expenditures beyond the estimates were not permitted overdrawn accounts would cease to exist and if taxation were not lessened the people would know at least that the affairs of the city were being conducted on a business basis. There is too much tampering with the accounts by officials. Do not let it be understood that this tampering means that there is any dishonesty whatever in the administration of the affairs at St. John. On the contrary no such charge is made or implied. But so anxious are the officials to make a good showing in their respective accounts that bills are held until the accounts for the year are closed in order than an already overdrawn account shall not make a worse showing than it does. For this the aldermen are not directly responsible as they advertise for all accounts against the city before the close of the year. To prevent this there should be but one purchasing department for city supplies and that directly under the control of the Treasury Board. That Board would then be in a position to know throughout the year the standing of every account. Under the present system an important function of the Treasury Board is completely ignored—the control of the expenditures of the various departments.

There are various important questions now engaging the attention of the Council or which have been considered and put aside. The largest of these is the extension of the

water system to Loch Lomond which involves also the question of civic lighting. The reorganization of the police force by the introduction of a patrol system and patrol boxes has been relegated to a back seat for the present but is liable to come up again almost any time. The fire department will have to be reorganized to some extent because of chemical engines and the street department must also undergo a great change before people get value for their money.

From the above outline of existing conditions it will be seen that there is ample scope for the reformer in St. John. He can labor industriously for a year or more before he will have got things into the condition they ought to be in. Strange as it may appear to those who are taking a first step in civic matters every thing suggested above has been discussed by the Common Council at one time or another and more than one resolution has been passed by the Council favoring every change that is now suggested. There have been resolutions favoring the consolidation of the debt, the revision of the charter, and the revision of the Bye-laws with the object of having them printed in one book instead of many pamphlets. The mode of street work has been condemned and it was sagely decided to arrange a plan of permanent street improvement and spend a fixed amount each year until all the streets had been paved or otherwise improved. Why have all these reform resolutions failed? The reasons are numerous. All the bond-holders favored consolidation of the debt when the city bonds were below par but as soon as they commanded a premium there was no further desire to consolidate or refund the debt on the part of those who held city securities for investment. The cause of the failure of the majority of the other reforms proposed at one time and another was due to the fact that they were not disposed of by the Council before a civic election took place and the decision of Common Clerk Peters that resolutions of this character passed by an outgoing Council were not necessarily binding on their successors. A lot of time and wind have been expended by aldermen of the past in discussing reforms which perished soon after birth, due largely to apathy on the part of the rate payers. If the rate payers are serious this time there are many things they can accomplish. But to do great good they