

No More Bonussing in the West

By CHARLES STOKES

BY an act which has just passed the Saskatchewan Legislature, the system of the bonussing of industrial concerns has been entirely abolished in that province. This consummation took the shape of an amendment to the City Act prohibiting any of the various forms of bonussing by which new industries seeking a location could be and have been bonussed; the granting of free sites, exemption from taxation, the guaranteeing of the bonds or subscription to the stock of the company by the municipality, or the assessment of land below its real value, are all declared illegal. It is worthy of note that this measure received the united support of both political parties. Very similar legislation was recently enacted in Alberta towards the same end, making it an offence punishable by a penalty not exceeding \$100, with disqualification from holding any municipal office for a period of five years, for any member of a city council to vote in favour of any by-law proposing to grant any such bonus.

This question of bonussing is a vital one with the cities of the West. Although regarded by most people as a principle of a vicious tendency, it has its strong advocates. In the case of this Saskatchewan measure, four cities out of six in the province, Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and North Battleford, made a plea for the continuance of the present system of moderate bonussing. At the conference of the Associated Western Boards of Trade in Winnipeg, in September, the delegate from Medicine Hat showed how that city had benefited by the system. They had granted in concessions to industries during the preceding eighteen months, he said, 137 acres of land, which, with all other concessions, had cost \$150,000. In return for this they had obtained industries which, when completed, would employ 1,850 men. Their increase in population through these industries might be estimated at 10,000, and as the city realized a net revenue of \$5 a year from the supply of natural gas from each person, this means \$50,000 a year.

DESPITE these figures, however, Medicine Hat is a striking illustration of the weakness of the bonussing system. Because of its well-nigh inexhaustible and easily accessible natural gas wells, it is able to offer to manufacturers very cheap power, the current manufacturers' rate being five cents per thousand cubic feet. This inducement ought logically to be big enough to attract the user of power on its own merits, without further concessions. Hon. Geo. Langley, the Saskatchewan Minister of Municipalities, spoke truly when he

said that there was very little benefit to come to any city or town from industries which were not able to stand on their own foundation without assistance that was in many cases a burden on the citizens. If they were successful, in nearly every case it was not due to the bonus granted; if they were not successful, the municipality would have been better off without an organization of the kind.

In fact, the only concerns which really benefit by receiving any bonus are those which have failed elsewhere. The bringing of a payroll to a city is, of course, a thing of great importance; but the greatest beneficiaries by the coming of a payroll are primarily real estate men, to whom the consequent increase in land values is often more than the welfare of the community. The real estate dealer is a bird of passage. When he has cinched a big wad, he has the habit of folding his tent like the Arab and as silently stealing away—for pastures new.

Another evil of the system of bonussing is that it introduces an element of haggling into the rela-

tions between the municipality and the prospect, which certainly does not tend to increase the latter's respect. Let a manufacturer make known the fact that he is in the field for a western location, and he would be the recipient of many offers of concessions. Now, if he adopted a frequent commercial method, he might go to City B and say, "Well, City A offers me so-and-so to locate there—what have you got?" And then B might go a little better; and C a little better still; and so on, underbidding each other by hanging bigger millstones around the neck of posterity. Be sure that if, say, Saskatoon offers strategic advantages as a base of commercial operations, Saskatoon will eventually get all that is coming to it, however Moose Jaw might strive to lure away the prospect with a bribe. No business man but appreciates that. Cities, as much as salesmen, are out to show results; but however competition presses him, no good salesman with a good proposition ever (as Bacon said) "maketh himself cheap" in his customer's eyes; and equally, western cities which tumble over one another in their scramble to entice the manufacturer to their free sites or their exemption from taxation may possibly be regarded, by the very manufacturer who is bombarded with their offers, as being, after all, rather contemptible.

Fairyland at Rideau Hall

Written for the Children by M. M.

IT is not every one who has the privilege of seeing fairies; indeed, it is not every one who has fairy-seeing eyes, even if the privilege is granted them, but I am one of the fortunate ones—a person who can hear a fairy orchestra in the chimes of the blue bell, who can taste the nectar in a lily-of-the-valley, and who can see all sorts of fairy souvenirs in the films people ordinarily call cobwebs, as drops of dew linger on them of a summer morning. It was no trouble at all, then, to be a fairy with the rest at the Fancy Dress Party given at Rideau Hall, recently, by Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. One little Titania had a real electric light in the end of her wand and in her hair; one tiny Peter Pan had a real pipe which blew; there was a baby rabbit, dressed in white fur from head to toe, not forgetting long, wagging ears; and there was a primitive creature—some said The Fawn and some a Stone Age Man—who must have measured all of two feet in height, and who was dressed in nothing but a shaggy bit of fur! Except that the fairies were all good ones, and that kindly atmosphere made every one else good, I am sure some one would have bitten a piece out of this young cave dweller's

sweet, chubby arms and legs! The daintiest pink powder puff you can imagine was there, and she was walking about and talking just like a real person. There were goblins and elves, and even the Man in the Moon condescended to come down from the sky and be with the fairies.

The Duke and Duchess received their guests with charming informality, shaking hands with each as their names were called and they passed before the throne. The lovely Princess did not assist in receiving, but stood near by and looked her interest in the proceedings. I feel sure that she is the sort of person who has fairy-seeing eyes, too. The orchestra played almost continuously and the larger fairies danced while the small ones romped and ran about with utmost freedom.

To show that there was real magic, one little fairy asked quite loudly:

"When is the party?" because even they think no party is a party unless there is something to eat, and at that very moment a magnificent red-coated, white-haired footman (the very kind Cinderella's godmother got for her!) appeared and announced that tea was being served in the Racquet Court. Could any wish have been granted more promptly?



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