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## WHO'S TO BELL THE CAT?

A SUGGESTION FOR A SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The Present Fund Might Form a Nucleus and the Council Could Extend Some Assistance as They do in Halifax.—The Men Would no Doubt be Willing.

The long illness of Sergeant John Owens of the police force and the consequent resignation and the still later illness of another veteran in the service, Sergeant Higgins, has caused the younger members of the force to debate with some curiosity for what purpose it is proposed to use the money that is now generally known as the police fund.

The impression they were under that the fund was started for the aged and sick policemen does not appear to have been correct because in no one instance has any aid been extended to any aged or sick policeman on the force. Men have been disabled for months and though far from able to bear the strain of the loss of half pay they have been forced to get along upon that and without any assistance from the fund which was supposed to be founded to assist them under such circumstances.

Progress has asked many times what the trustees of this fund propose to do with it; why they don't make some report to the whole force and come to some conclusion regarding it. The trustees are the chief, Capt. Jenkins, and Detective John King. It may be presumed that the two latter are waiting for their superior officer to take the initiative and this is no doubt the courteous course in regard to him but he has been for years now without attempting to give any account to the men and at the rate of the present changes on the force there will not be many of the men interested in the fund or the force when the report is made.

According to the statement made by the chief to the safety board there are five old men on the force, men who in his opinion are not fitted to bear the strain of the duties of policemen. That it was shown that two of them had been asked to resign and then refused will no doubt be borne in mind. But if the chief succeeds in his policy the departure of these five men will make so many less claimants for the fund. The policy of the council however was plainly stated and it is so: the aldermen's intention to disturb them so long as they are able to attend to inside or outside day duty.

Now while the men have got the curious idea into their head that it would be dangerous for any one of them to approach the chief and ask him about the funds, they do not hesitate to express their opinions among themselves. They have talked the matter over from every standpoint and many of them have plans regarding the money which are feasible and for the interest of all parties.

But "who will bell the cat?" In other words who will speak to the chief about the matter and suggest that a meeting of the men be called and some decision arrived at concerning the disposition of the fund.

One of the suggestions put forward is that the amount in hand be held as the nucleus of a superannuation fund and that the city be asked to contribute so much a year, say \$800 as in Halifax and that another small percentage be taken each month from the policemen's pay, the same to be held by the council for the purpose of superannuating policemen who have reached a certain age and who have spent a certain number of years in the city service. There are many aldermen who are in favor of some such plan and who have talked it over informally. No move has been made however, though it seems as if this would be an excellent time to make this proposition.

Halifax, Progress understands, has found the scheme to work well. The old men of their force do not look forward to want and penny when off the force, but to allowance enough to provide for them in their old age.

The same or a similar plan is commended to the attention of the police force and the council.

Remember old Acquaintances.  
Mr. Oliver Briggs of the firm of Briggs Brothers, Cambridge Mass., was at the Duffin this week on his return home from a visit to his old home in Mass. He is now a successful building contractor in Cambridge and every few years manages to visit the maritime provinces. Many of his friends in the city were made three

Few men who were in St. John so seldom could retain the same warm friendships as Senator Adams who died at his home on the North Shore this week.

His illness had been frequent and this time was of great severity and length, yet his vitality was so great that the news of his death came as a great shock to his friends on the first day of the New Year. The brightest personality of the North had gone to his rest and the man who had more friends than he knew of was unable to remain in this world and enjoy the quiet and pleasanter ways into which his life had fallen.

Ever since he was a man among men "Mike" Adams (as he was familiarly known) was in politics. He was in the government and out of the government of his native province; he was defeated and victorious as a candidate for the larger area

years ago when with Messrs Heron and Harris he spent some days here. Mr. Briggs says that both of these gentlemen are in their usual excellent health. This will be pleasant information to their many friends here who have received so many courtesies at their hands while visiting Boston.

HE FIGURED IT OUT.

Some Interesting Facts About Future Leap Years.

A correspondent sends the following interesting item to PROGRESS regarding some of the leap years to come. That it will be read with interest by the ladies goes without saying. "The familiar rule that leap year is every calendar year with a number divisible by 4 will be broken in 1900, which fact need not be regarded as an indication that even then it will time for a change. This rule of the almanac may account for the proverbial activity of the new woman at the close of every century. Then there is no leap year for eight years. February 1900 will have but 28 days, the extra day not appearing from 1896 to 1904. Centenary years are not leap years. That year will be broken the leap year 2000 when the interruption may be regarded as an indication that it is time for a change. Centenary years divisible by 400 are leap years, consequently there were 29 days in February 1600, and the same number of days will be given to February 2000 and again to 2400. The object of this rule is to make the calendar year coincide with solar year."

George Smith Passed Away.

The news of the death of Geo. Smith of the Wilmot Spa Spring Company did not come as a surprise to any of his friends who knew of his serious condition. Brain trouble was the cause of his death which took place at his mother's residence. Only a few weeks ago his brother Robert L. Smith passed away and it is thought that this may have had something to do with the worry of mind that seemed to hasten George's end. He was well known in Halifax where for some time he took some part in the settlement of the affairs of the

of federal politics and then when failing health demanded less physical effort he became a senator but at all times he was true to the principles he enunciated and honest in carrying them out. There was no stain of jobbery in this politician's career. He helped his friends when by doing so he did not conflict with the public interest but the people were first with him. He was not a party slave but supported what he thought to be right and criticized or opposed what he could not approve of.

Still it was as a friend, that the late senator was best known. His was an attractive personality and once a friend was always a friend with him. His generosity was proverbial: what he possessed did not appear to belong to him, but to his friends—if they wanted it. Such a man may well be regretted.

Queen hotel. He was the owner of the annex building at the time of his death. For many years he took a keen interest in boat racing and was instrumental in making many matches between crews from St. John and Halifax. The tidings of his death will be heard with much regret through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

ENJOYED THE SKATE.

They had a Good Time With the Ice and First Snow.

Two sailors from one of the ships in the harbor enjoyed themselves immensely during the recent icy spell.

They were not used to ice; evidently they made the most of their opportunities. They slid around until they got a clear space running from Germain street to a little distance below the Royal hotel and there they stayed for the amusement of many, for some time. They were great overgrown men but they enjoyed the, to them, novel pastime with all the zest of childhood. Their first little experience in the nature of a mishap was when two colored girls came along. The sailors thought they had the right of way for they kept right along and the result was disastrous to the girls. There was a general mix-up on the sidewalk and some dishes which the latter were carrying were smashed into atoms. The sailors picked themselves up quickly and disappeared around the corner, with the cry of "polite" follow them. They haven't returned since to the scene of their pastime.

Annual Meeting.

From the meagre reports which have been given the public there is not much chance of judging what the Opera House has done in the way of business, during the past year; it does not however appear to be very satisfactory notwithstanding the fact that there is a small balance to credit. A city of the size of St. John should be able to support one well managed playhouse, but the fact remains that it does not do so, and the natural query is, what's the trouble and who's to blame?

Undertaker's Work, No-covered, Repaired, Doves, 27 Waterloo Street.

## MR. R. RITCHIE OBJECTS.

TO THE COUNCIL FIXING HIS FEE AS AN ARBITRATOR.

And he Brings a Suit Against the City in the County Court—Now There Will be a Chance to Try Out the Whole Matter and Fix the Fee.

There must have been some mistake in the statement made by an alderman at the Treasury board last week when he intimated to those present that the arbitrators in the McCarthy and O'Regan claims were desirous of having their bills passed and would accept payment on the same basis as the Jewett arbitration bill had been made up by Judge Barker.

For since the account passed the Treasury board Mr. R. R. Ritchie one of the arbitrators has refused to accept the amount awarded him for his services in the Francis McCarthy claim and has issued a writ against the city for the full amount.

Mr. Ritchie's action will give satisfaction to Alderman Millidge and Purdy who will now have a chance to prove that they were right in their contention that the bills of the arbitrators were too large altogether. Mr. Millidge was so earnest in his protest against paying such a large amount that he offered to take the matter before Judge Barker and do the work thus saving the city \$60. But the majority of the board was against him and the account was ordered to be passed. He was assured however that the matter would have to come before council and so the whole aldermanic body may now refuse to ratify the action of the Treasury board and the accounts of all the arbitrators may have to be taxed by a judge. This would seem to be the fairest way. There are a large number of small claims to be made yet and if the bill of the arbitrators are in the same proportion as they have been there is no telling where the city may land. PROGRESS understands that one lawyer alone has four more claims that have never been presented. There was an impression that under the notice that was given claimants at the start, all those who failed to put in a claim within a certain time were barred out but it seems that is not so. A judge may permit any claimant whom he thinks has a good claim for damages to come in at any time and ask for damages. So it the city made any calculations as to what the damages would be it was probably very much out of the way.

The matter of costs seems to have been conducted very loosely and there is good reason to believe that many of the aldermen are not blind to the fact. But if the fees are going in the direction that suits influential men at the board, who cares? So far Alderman Millidge and Purdy are the only kickers.

TO BE MARRIED SOON.

A St. John Man Soon to Join the Army of Benedict.

The friends of "Jack" McBraith who left St. John more than a year ago to accept a position as steward in the service of the Merchants and Miners Transportation company of Baltimore have heard of his success from time to time with great pleasure. He now holds the important position of Port Steward and as there are a large number of ships in the company's fleet his position is an arduous and responsible one. Now, however, he is about to increase his responsibilities and take a wife. The young lady in question is Miss Barbara M. Bell, a sister of Rev. Father Bell, who it will be remembered was stationed in Millford some years ago. Those who have seen the young lady describe her as a charming personality. The ceremony will take place next Tuesday morning at nine o'clock in St. Alphonsus church, Baltimore. The invitations for the event are very handsome. The many friends of Mr. McBraith will wish him and his bride all possible happiness and give them a ready welcome should they come in this direction on their wedding tour.

Progress' Carrier Abroad.

Just at this time of the year when the news boys and news carriers, for there is a distinction, are gladdened beyond words by the pecuniary greetings they receive from their all-the-year-round friends, it would not be amiss to tell of one of its last year's carriers who is now aboard Messrs Troop's barque "Lanoe" in South American waters. Ernest Morehouse writes home that he is in love with the roving, rollicking life of a sailor lad and has fallen in with one of the best captains and pleas-

antest under officers it could be possible to have. Ernest says he is a regular "old tar" and mentions among his accomplishments that of going aloft in his bare feet. He is not the trout of New Brunswick brook, but dolphins, sea urchins, porpoises and all sizes of sharks, but does not venture to compare the river Platte spot with that of his homeland. Wishing the PROGRESS boys lots of good luck on their New Years "addresses" the ex-carrier draws his lengthy and interesting communication to a close. The letter was written from Rosario, Argentine Republic on Nov. 29th 1898.

AN INTERESTING VISITOR.

A Wealthy Young Cuban Talks of his far off Island Home.

A bright intelligent lad is Gustavo Gispere, a young Cuban; son of a wealthy sugar planter, who has been spending his college vacation with his classmate Stanley E'kin, on Princess street for over two weeks. During that time he and his host have been attending no end of pleasant social gatherings, a ball or two and various other social functions. While young Mr. Gispere has been attending Mount Allison University for over two and a half years, yet this length of time in English company and usage has failed to obliterate traces of his Spanish accent. Nevertheless the young native of Cuba is quite able to converse intelligently and with deep thought upon most matters of immediate interest. The fact of his being the son of a Cuban aristocrat, a family friend of the famous Garcia family, so recently bereaved by death of father and daughter, and a youth who has a peculiarly bright future in his native land, made him a pleasant companion and to friends he talked of his far off home, the exploits of his fathers friend the late General Garcia, and other matters personal and otherwise. He is glad the tyrannical rule of Spain is ended, but would not like to make any radical statement as to what we thought of Uncle Sam's sovereignty over his home.

This point seemed to touch a tender spot which brought to the surface, race, feeling and kinship. However after returning to Cuba in the summer he will be better able to form his opinion of what kind of people the Yankees are. Cuba, he says, is a great country with wonderful resources. On his father's sugar plantation, which is only one of the very many, there are two hundred and more men employed. Now that the long-oppressed slave is free she will doubtless show to the world what wealth lies within her bounds.

When Mr. Gispere returns to Cuban soil he will have, as above stated, the great advantage of a thorough education in English, thus being able to converse with the American and will have a knowledge of their social customs as well. He has chosen no particular line of occupation for his life's work, but Cuba will doubtless be his home. His parents are thoroughly Cuban and have very little knowledge of the English tongue.

Captain Douglas' Dog "Jack."

Capt. Douglas R. N. the veteran marine examiner who is in this city a good deal has a very favorite spud-dog called "Jack" and while his master is here "Jack" is almost his inseparable companion. From Monday to Saturday Jack is always ready waiting in the office of the Dufferin hotel for the Captain to come down stairs, and nothing except being tied up would keep him from being with him. That is never resorted to however for the Captain likes to have Jack as well as he likes to go. Sunday morning, however, the case is different. A few minutes before 11 o'clock when the Captain comes down stairs with his prayer book in one hand, his favorite never greets him except from the off-corner by a wag of his tail. He knows the meaning of the word "I'm going to church, Jack" and he never attempts to follow his master. All the time the service is going on the dog does not move, but when it is over, he stands ready to meet and gambol about the captain. Sometimes when the latter goes to certain cities, he takes "Jack" here to be caretaker and the canine is a picture of loneliness without his master.

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