The Colonist.

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CITY IMPROVEMENTS.

A day or two ago the Mayor spoke about the advisability of the city borrowing a considerable sum of money and going in for street improvements on a large scale. We think the amount mentioned by him was $500,000. The idea is a sound one. Our present rate of progress in securing better streets is entirely too slow. We have gone along at a good pace in the matter of granolithic sidewalks, but the work so far in regard to better carriageways is altogether too slow. Something better must be done, and unless some one can suggest a simpler plan than that proposed by the Mayor, we hope that will be adopted.

The Colonist favors the improvement of streets on the local improvement plan. This at present provides that the city shall bear one-third of the cost and the abutting property owners shall pay the two-thirds; but this has recently been held to apply only to those parts of the city that are within the fire limits. In the residential sections the city has been paying only one-fifth, and it is proposed that in the remoter localities the property owners shall pay the whole amount. We are not going to discuss today the equitableness of such an arrangement, because that would be to divert attention from the general subject. We will assume for the purpose of the argument that the city's proportion of the cost of street improvements will average twenty-five per cent. On this basis, if the city borrowed $500,000 the abutting property owners would have to provide $1,500,000, which would give a fund of $2,000,000 for street improvements. This would do a lot of work.

We suggest this as a matter well worth consideration. We have not made any estimate to ascertain whether or not it is more or less than can be profitably expended at this time, for we are only dealing with the general principle. The streets ought to be put in good shape at once. During the long summer days it would be possible to work two and probably three shifts of men and an immense amount of work could be done, if the money were available to pay for it.

We suggest the question as one upon which correspondents might be willing to express their opinions. That is a good way of getting at what people think.

NAVAL MATTERS

A meeting is to be held in the Victoria Theatre at which Canada's share in the naval defence of the Empire will be considered. It is desirable that there shall be a full expression of the views of the people of the Dominion upon this exceedingly important question, because the time has come when public sentiment must be crystallized into action. The press of Canada has discussed the question in all its bearings, and Parliament has placed itself on record in what may be called an academic statement of the duty of the Dominion. The Toronto Globe, which may be assumed to speak with some knowledge of the facts, says it understands that "the government is convinced of the sincerity of Parliament and will proceed at once to ascertain the views of the Admiralty in Great Britain." Our Toronto contemporary returns to the discussion of what is the best way to discharge the duty which Parliament has unanimously recognized, and it says:

The question which the Admiralty should be asked to answer is: "What can Canada do, within her means, that will be of most assistance to you?" And that thing we believe the government is prepared to do with the backing of the whole people of Canada.

The Globe believes that the best way to protect the shores of Canada is "to make sure that the fleets, which surround the British Isles are the unquestionable masters of the ocean." We quote further:

This may sound like an argument in favor of a substantial monetary contribution to the strengthening of the British fleet. In a moral sense the addition of a vessel or vessels to the British fleets, paid for and owned by Canada, would be vastly stronger and more influential. It would go freighted with the hope and pride of this young and expanding land, and would be a notification to every European power that Britain, strong though she may be now, has a future even greater than her glorious past. We confess we see no difficulty to the hearty and useful co-operation of Canadian vessels in the British fleet, though under the ultimate orders of the government at Ottawa. The ordinary post of such vessels would be on this side of the ocean, but they would be available for whatever part of the seas a vessel flying the Union Jack would be of most service for the maintenance of British sea-power, the one and important thing.

The views of the Hamilton Spectator differ somewhat from those of the Globe. The Spectator, we may add, is one of the oldest and most influential Conservative papers in Ontario. It does not favor the idea of contributing Dreadnoughts to the British navy, for the reason that they can not be built in Canada, and the resources of the British shipbuilding firms are already taxed to their capacity. It quotes the Canadian Gazette as authority for the statement, which it adds is corroborated by other British newspapers, that "the present danger to the maintenance of British naval supremacy is not due to the lack of money, but to inadequate shipbuilding facilities to turn out battleships fast enough to double the speed of the German navy building programme." It quotes the Gazette as saying "except as an always welcome and potent evidence of Empire solidarity the gift of Dreadnoughts by New Zealand, Australia or Canada is neither here nor there." We quote again from the Spectator's own views:

If this statement of the case is the correct one there would seem to be little practical use in an offer of a Dreadnought from Canada, unless we were in a position to build and equip such a contribution in Canadian waters, which we are not. And this being the situation of affairs, it would seem that the Canadian parliament, by pledging this country to a programe of home defense as well as to such further contributions as may be necessary in case of pressing need, has pursued a sane and reasonable course.

Our Hamilton contemporary says that by the recent deliverance of Parliament Canada has put her hand to the plough and must not look back. It says that "no time should be lost in arranging for a conference with the Admiralty authorities to the end that we may be properly started on our naval defence programme."

We regret that the attitude of those of the French papers of Quebec, which we have seen, is not as sympathetic as could be desired. Yesterday we mentioned L'Evenement as stating its preference for Mr. Foster's resolution because it only committed Canada to local naval defence, while that adopted by the House of Commons pledges the country to Imperial defence. Le Canadian says the Canadian navy will cost $50,000,000, and adds: "This is a beautiful programme for our patriots at Ottawa. The Georgian Bay Canal, the improvement of our ports, the question of cheap transportation may go to the devil." La Verite, which is the organ of the clerical party, says that we are now witnessing the results of our "participation in the conquest of the South African republics."

Other views expressed are as follows: By the Montreal Trade Bulletin, which thinks the action of the Government only half-hearted and that in view of our dependence upon the Mother Country for money we ought to be more ready with proffers of practical assistance; by the Ottawa Citizen, which is not prepared to say that the people of Canada favor the building of Dreadnoughts, but thinks our co-operation ought to be more tangible than it has so far been; by the Montreal Herald, which thinks Mr. Borden and Mr. Foster are to be congratulated for having courageously faced the situation, and that they showed wisdom in recognizing "the fundamental weaknesses of the proposition to offer Dreadnoughts or cash." From these expressions of opinion Colonist readers can gain a fairly correct idea of the trend of thought throughout the country.

MILITARY SERVICE.

We are favored with an advance copy of a paper which was to have been read before the Canadian Military Institute, at Toronto, on Monday night by Lt.-Col. William Hamilton Meritt. The paper is very long. It would make two solid pages of the Colonist. It contains a great deal of very useful information for those who are interested in military matters, but its reproduction in full in any newspaper would be out of the question, and it is so crowded with facts that any summary of it would not do it justice. We expect that it will be printed in the form of a pamphlet, and if that is the case it ought to have wide circulation and be read even by those who may not agree with Col. Merritt's views. It is a plea for patriotic military service and the Swiss system is favored. The principle of this is that all the people are soldiers, and the interesting feature of the case is that, when in 1907 the lengthening of the term of service and an increase of the number of men under arms was submitted to the people in the form of a plebiscite, the proposal was carried by a large majority. The people had had over thirty years' experience of the system when the vote was taken. We make the following quotation from the paper:

The Swiss military system has been so markedly successful in giving an efficiently armed and trained nation that the National Service League of Great Britain, of which Lord Roberts is president and Lord Milner one of the vice-presidents, organized a committee of representative men to visit Switzerland in 1907 and make a report on its military system. Representatives of the Times, the Morning Post, the Tribune, the Daily Telegraph, the Clarion, the Westminster Gazette and the Daily Mirror accompanied the committee. In welcoming them the President of the Federation said, among other things:

"Our military institutions constitute at once a basis of democracy, a school of manliness, a school of civic virtue, of self-sacrifice and of faithfulness to duty, and with us the obligation (to serve) is considered as the privilege of the citizen."

The report of this committee was signed by 22 representative men, and it said in part: "The enquiries made by the British committee, which has recently been enabled by the generous courtesy of the Swiss government to investigate the Swiss military system, led the committee to the conclusion that the system is extremely popular in Switzerland, and has produced results of which the Swiss nation may well be proud. It forms an integral part of the moral and physical welfare of the Swiss people; it brings together all classes of the community in friendly comradeship and co-operation in a common cause, and it appears to entail but slight interference with the industrial life of the people."

An average of employees absent from a number of Swiss firms through military duty in 1907, was only 2.17 per cent, and it is arranged that a man's occupation in civil life is carried on in his military service, and indeed he often is taught much of value to him in his usual occupation. The British military attache at Berne as a result of his experience wrote:

"The Swiss army is a school for the nation, and, as almost all Swiss in responsible positions will tell you, 'If we had not got the army we should have to invent something to take its place.' The keynote of their attitude is, that it is a free man's right and honor to serve his country, and a disgrace to shirk this honorable duty. Those who are unable to serve owing to physical deficiency are honestly pitied."

Were we in Canada working on the Swiss system exactly, we should have 600,000 armed men, and the total available number of trained men who would fight or work in war time to defend their country would then be 1,100,000, and the burden per capita to us would be no greater than the Swiss is bearing in his country today. And it is pointed out that statistics from Switzerland, Norway and other countries show that the percentage of the total number of males within the military age serving at one time is surprisingly small, therefore the actual hardship to business, etc., is much lighter than might be expected.

STREET FENCES.

Any report which the newspapers can give of the proceedings at a meeting of the city council is necessarily fragmentary, and therefore we are indisposed to criticize very closely any observations attributed to aldermen or city officials. We gather from the account of what took place at Monday night's meeting that some provisions, in the form of by-laws, are in contemplation, which need to be very carefully framed before an attempt is made to bring them into force. In regard to fences on the lines of streets and lanes we do not suppose any one will raise a question as to the desirability of prohibiting the erection of them until the city engineer has indicated where the street line is, but for the city council to profess to say to a man that he may not put a fence across his lot at any distance back from the street that suits his convenience without obtaining a permit to do so, seems to us to be an absurdity. We take leave to doubt the authority of the city council to pass a by-law imposing a fine upon a man who sees fit to build a fence upon his own property, unless its erection contravenes some provisions of the general law governing municipalities. The report says that an opinion was expressed to the effect that if a property owner saw fit not to place his front fence on the street line, but at some distance from it, the part of his property between the fence and the street would pass to the city. Surely this must be incorrect. Surely no one is so absurd as to say that unless a man fences in his property the city acquires a right to it.

MR. PUGSLEY'S CASE.

The publication by the Colonist of the synopsis of the report of a Royal Commission appointed in New Brunswick to investigate the affairs of the Central Railway of that province created a very painful impression among people of both sides of politics, which is not materially lessened by the explanation given by Mr. Pugsley, which we print this morning. A St. John despatch says that the effect of the report upon public opinion in New Brunswick has been somewhat discounted by a belief that it is tinged with partizanship, but we find it difficult to believe that Mr. Justice Landry, who is a member of the Supreme Court and who was one of the Commissioners, would lend himself to a partizan finding.

Mr. Pugsley has announced that he has no intention of resigning his posion as Minister of Public Works. This is a matter in which he ought to receive some assistance in making up his mind. Without expressing any opinion as to his participation in anything that will not stand investigation, we say without hesitation that no man ought to remain for a day at the head of the great spending department of the Dominion government, against whom there are even colorable charges of such a grave nature as have been made against Mr. Pugsley and his associates in the management of the Central Railway. If he continues to administer the Department of Public Works, the people from one end of Canada to the other will be scandalized. Mr. Pugsley's half explanations only render his resignation more imperative. It will be a scandalous thing to have the Minister of Public Works of the Dominion under investigation for the maladministration of the public funds of a province. Even if it is conceded that he did not profit illegally to the extent of a single dollar, the fact remains that large sums of money were expended in a manner which left a door wide open for all kinds of dishonesty.

Mr. Pugsley may be able to clear his skirts of anything dishonorable. Everyone will hope that he may be able to do so; but he cannot on his own showing clear himself of the charge of the grossest carelessness and irregularity in the expenditure of public moneys. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who found himself unable to retain in his cabinet Mr. Emmerson, against whom the charges were not so much as to imply financial dishonesty, will surely not retain in his ministerial family one whose name is connected with such transactions as those involved in the Central Railway.

If Mr. Pugsley holds office the shock to public opnion will be very serious. If he has not been a participant in wrong-doing, if his skirts are as clear as he claims they are, one would think that his first thought would be to send his resignation to the Prime Minister. One would suppose than an honest man under such circumstances would surrender every other duty to that of proving to the public that he has been grossly wronged. Until he has shown beyond all question that the allegations made against him by the Royal Commissioners are without foundation he has no right to continue at the head of a public department, no right to be one of those who occupy the position of advisers to the Crown.

The people of Canada will await with anxiety the action of the Prime Minister. Sir Wilfrid Laurier will not be justified, as the custodian of the good name of Canada, in accepting his colleague's denial in the face of the report of the Commissioners and permit him to remain in office. Mr. Pugsley should step down and out without delay and devote himself to establishing that he has been wrongly accused, if he thinks he can establish such a thing. If he does not Canadian public life will be lowered as nothing else has ever lowered it.

It is interesting to learn that General Lord Kitchener will return from India via Victoria. The Canadian Club of this city ought to cable him an invitation forthwith.

A

Good Tonic Is Needed

Often at this time of the year. If you feel, as many people do just now, run down, week or nervous, why not tone up the system and improve the appetite with

Bowes' Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites

No better spring tonic can be procured. One bottle, price $1, contains sufficient for one month.

CYRUS H. BOWES, CHEMIST

Telephones 425 and 450. 1228 Government Street, near Yates.

Curtains the Sun Cannot Fade

WE ARE EXCLUSIVE AGENTS FOR THE FAMOUS "SUNDOUR" UNFADABLE MATERIALS

THE GREAT TROUBLE with so many colored materials for the making of casement curtains, etc., is the havoc wrought by the Sun's rays. They quickly fade and soon loose their daintiness and attractiveness. We have the daintiest of dainty curtain materials — materials guaranteed not to fade in strongest sunlight. These are the famous "Sundour" unfadable curtain and drapery materials from the foremost Scotch maker. These lines won't be found elsewhere in the city, for we are sole agents.

Come in and let us show you the beautiful new designs we are showing this Spring in Madras, Shadow Cloth, Chintz, Taffeta, Art Tissue, Cretonne, etc. There never has been a finer showing of curtain goods shown in Victoria. Shown in the new drapery department on second floor.

Prices Range From Per Yard 40c up to $3.25

BEDROOM FURNITURE

In Selected Bird's Eye Maple

THE FINEST selected Birds' Eye Maple has been used in the making of these dainty pieces of bedroom furniture. The designs are not ordinary, the workmanship the best and the finish the finest, bringing out the beauty of this fine wood.

Come in and let us show you something dainty for bedroom use — something that'll add to the attractiveness of your room. You'll find these pieces displayed on our third floor. Other interesting furniture items are also shown on this floor and a visit will amply repay you. Pleased to see you today.

DRESSER—In Birds' Eye Maple, low style with shaped, bevel mirror of best quality. Priced at each..... **$35.00**

DRESSING TABLE—A pretty table in Birds' Eye Maple, has three drawers and large oval, bevel mirror of finest quality, placed horizontally. Priced at.. **$45.00**

DRESSER—This dresser is another splendid style in selected maple. Has large, oval, bevel mirror, two large and two small drawers. Priced at..... **$55.00**

DRESSER—A fine style with long oval, bevel mirror, with the drawers on both sides. Ten small and one large drawers. Priced at..... **$65.00**

WASHSTANDS—To match. Made of selected Birds' Eye Maple, and priced at $30, $20 and..... **$14.00**

UPHOLSTERING

Let Our Men Repair Your Old Furniture

NONE BUT MEN of many years experience and known and tried worth are employed in our upholstering department. This, coupled with the fact that we use nothing but the very best materials, is the reason why our upholstering work is so well and favorably known on this coast. .....

Much of the upholstered furniture in our shop is the product of our own workmen — a guarantee of goodness and satisfaction.

If you have some old furniture pieces that require repairs — recovering or the addition of a spring or two, send them in and let us make them "good as new."

Our stock of materials for upholstery work is large and the assortment offers you a broad choice in the matter of design and coloring.

LET US SHOW YOU THESE NEW VELVET CARPET SQUARES

Some Fine New Patterns Are Shown—Prices Are Very Reasonable

VELVET SQUARES make excellent floor coverings. They are rich in appearance and stand lots of wear. We show some very fine patterns in a choice of colorings broad enough to suit you. This range of sizes will be suitable for any ordinary room. Come in and let us show you these and other lines of carpet squares we show, for we have an unusually large collection this season. In Tapestry Squares, Brussels Squares, Wiltons and Axminsters you'll see some handsome lines.

VELVET SQUARE, size 10-6 x 12. Price. **$32.00**
VELVET SQUARE, size 12 x 13-6. Price. **$42.00**
VELVET SQUARE, size 9 x 10-6. Price.. **$24.00**
VELVET SQUARE, size 9 x 12 ft. Price.. **$27.50**

DAINTY LACE CURTAINS

Ready for You Here, Today

See the Pretty Swiss Curtains Offered for $5 to $35 per Pair

WE ARE SHOWING a grand assortment of Swiss Lace Curtains. This Spring's offerings in this popular curtain style far surpass anything we have heretofore attempted.

The patterns are better, the choice is broader, the prices the very fairest, and as you'll surely want an extra pair of curtains this Spring we advise that you see these offerings. No trouble to show such excellent styles. We have them in cream, white and ecru — showing many patterns in each. The price range is wide enough to suit most anyone.

Of course we have other styles of curtains at other prices — much the finest showing in the city. Prices start as low as 75c per pair. Let us show you these Swiss Lace Curtains at, per pair—

$5 to $35

NEED NEW BLINDS FOR THE NEW HOME?

YOU'LL NEED new blinds for your new home and when getting them get blinds of good quality. It doesn't cost any more — when you get them here, for we use nothing but the very best hand made oil opaque, the finest lancasters or the very best Scotch hollands. We mount the blinds on the famous Hartshorn rollers—the improved kind — using no tacks at all. The blinds cannot pull off. In other words we put "Weiler Quality" into every blind we make and sell them at the right prices.

We would like very much to show you the new Scotch Hollands. We have these splendid blind materials in pretty moss greens and creams — striped and plain. Attractive blinds may be made from these and durable too. Let us figure on your blind needs — we can save you money.

LET US SEND YOU OUR NEW CATALOGUE

We have a fine new catalogue — a book of more than 300 pages which cost us more than $2.00 a copy to produce — which we shall be pleased to mail anyone sending their name. You can hardly afford to be without this valuable book. Send now.

DOWN CUSHIONS—$1.25 to $3.25

To Fill Those Covers of Yours

WE HAVE just received a fine line of new down cushions — a fine assortment of sizes and weights.

These are filled with finest quality down and will make that cushion cover you worked last winter into a swell wedding gift. Covered in fine white cambric. If you want an extra cover or two to make cushions for some one's canoe you'll find us ready with a fine line of suitable covers. These cushions come at many prices, ranging from—

$1.25 to $3.25

WEILER BROS.

See the New Carpets

Today would be an excellent time to come in and view the Spring Carpet styles. We would greatly appreciate an opportunity to show you the fine range we have for this Spring's selling. No obligation to purchase—pleased to have you visit us.

WILL RE-ARM AUTOMATI RIFLES

Compulsory Adoption Arm Only a Matter —Advantage of the System

Special Cable to The Evening

London, April 15.—Mr. Ha retary of State for War, re in the House of Commons t chief military nations were the time had come for re-arm rifle embodying an automat The new Sjogren system, a tion of which was given at few days since, offers such over the ordinary weapon th pulsory adoption would seem a matter of time.

The particular merit of t system is that the soldier after firing a shot, to keep the same level and to corre immediately without glancing the object at which he is at weapons in the hands of fenders of a position would deadly a fire to be maintai attacking enemy that succe vance would be simply impo

At the demonstration at was proved that over eleve shots per hour could be fire any of the disadvantages of ary automatic rifle. The n has met with the enthusias val of military experts in F many, and in Austria, and the re-armament of Europe nearer.

After all, it only means 80,000,000 rifles and an expe $500,000,000, and if the compe tem of armaments is to be the powers will have to f larger figures by the time are perfected. A really effe matic rifle would be almost able as a military aeroplane, parently much nearer realiza

FAIRBANK'S HAVE CHANG TO GO

Former Vice-President ed States Wi ve of Post of Ambassa London

Washington, D.C., April mer Vice-President Fairba have an opportunity after al London as ambassador from ted States. Ever since his from the vice-presidency the Mr. Fairbanks has been constantly as a diplomatic p always in connection with o most important European e From a very well informed was learned that the offer of don embassy to Mr. Fairba being heretofore merely a gossip, had become, in the la two, "a moral certainty." ceeds, of course, come from that President Taft will not Charles W. Eliot the time to the offer of the London po that was at first proposed. learned recently from a very ministration authority that Eliot replied to the offer to he was extremely doubtful able to eccept, President T him to take plenty of time t it, and that the matter was although the President was hopeful of Dr. Eliot's ultima ance. At the White House mation whatever was forthc garding the London embass

From the same source w the information regarding banks, it was also learned th Bacon had declined the em Paris. Mr. Bacon has had under consideration for some has concluded that he does to enter the diplomatic ser understood that he could ha one of several of the most European posts, but that to return to active business up his interest in the firm Morgan & Co. nearly four and became assistant se state.

IS NORDICA GAGED O NOT

One Report Says She Marry New York But Singer Both De Affirms

Special to The Evening Post

New York, April 15.—Re current in this city today th Lillian Nordica, the opera to be married to George W New York banker and mem eral prominent clubs. statements were received fr ford, Ont., in one of whic Nordica was quoted as de she was engaged to Mr. Yo in another she was said to firmed the rumor of her eng

Saskatchewan Teleph

Regina, April 15.—It was le terday that the negotiation purchase of the Bell Teleph pany's system by the provin katchewan are at last takin shape, and that within a sh announcement of the transf made.