

## To Learn Public Opinion on Harbor Transfer Matter Council Takes Step—Resolution Authorizes Preparation of Deed of Transfer Subject to Approval by Plebiscite

The city commissioners in committee yesterday afternoon took the first step towards ascertaining the wishes of the people with respect to the transfer of the harbor facilities to the federal government and placing them under a commission. There were objections to the scheme, but the commissioners decided that the matter should be left with the people. With this object in view, a resolution, arranging for the delivery of the harbor property to the government under certain conditions, was passed.

The terms agreed upon were those submitted by the dominion house and provided for the payment of \$2,000,000 to the city for the facilities. The ferry property is to be retained by the city. The deed to the property is to be drawn up but the conveyance is not to be operative until the vote of the citizens is taken.

Commissioner Bullock strongly opposed the sale of the harbor for \$2,000,000.

He pointed out that the government engineers in his report said that the wharves had been maintained in good shape and were at present in a fair state of repair. He felt that the boundaries, as laid down, were vague and these should be definitely decided upon before the question was put before the people. He also said that the agreement with the government would take from the city the harbor fishing rights.

Discussed in Committee.

The mayor and commissioners met in committee with the city solicitor, Dr. J. B. M. Baxter, also present.

Mr. Fisher felt that there were several points to be considered and questions to be answered by the city solicitor before action was taken.

The mayor explained that Hon. Mr. Ballantyne had said that there was no need of further legislation.

Mr. Baxter explained the procedure necessary to enable the citizens to express their opinion on the matter. The commissioners should adopt the resolution, which he had prepared, and when this had been accepted by the government a further resolution would be necessary to secure the vote of the electors.

Mr. Fisher said that the act did not apply to the payment of the amount specified for the facilities.

Mr. Baxter felt that the act was obscure in places but he advised that the resolution in question would put the question up to the government. If the commissioners were not willing to accept the \$2,000,000 for the properties they could vote it down.

The Resolution.

The following resolution was then moved by Mr. Jones and seconded by Mr. Thornton:

"Resolved, That acting under the provisions of the Act of Assembly 9th Edward VII, chapter 61, the City of St. John does hereby contract and agree for the transfer to commissioners to be duly appointed under the Act of the Parliament of Canada 9-10 George V, chapter 70, to constitute and form a board of harbor commissioners for the harbor of

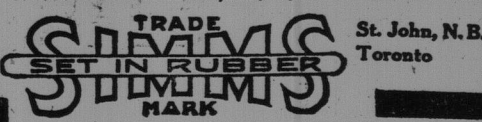
St. John of all the right, title, and interest of the said City of St. John as well as by the Charter of the City of St. John as by any Act and Acts of Assembly relating thereto and otherwise howsoever, of, in and to the harbor of St. John within the City of St. John, and of, in and to the land, stern water and the land covered with water, tenements and hereditaments within the bounds set forth in section 8 of the said Act of Parliament of Canada 9-10 George V, chapter 70 saving and excepting thereout and therefrom the right of ferryage from the foot or western end of Princess street on the eastern side of said harbor to Rodney wharf on the western side of said harbor as the same has heretofore been used and enjoyed also the east side ferry building (so-called) and the land occupied by the same and used in connection therewith together with the ferry slip and approaches on the eastern side of the harbor; also the west side ferry building (so-called) and the land occupied by the same and used in connection therewith together with the ferry slip and the approaches on the western side of the harbor including Rodney wharf from Union street eastward bounded northerly by land leased to the Canadian Pacific Railway, southerly by the southern line of the street railway trestle and the low water mark of a small piece of flats adjacent to the said Rodney wharf and eastward by the eastern line of the said wharf and also all movable property used in connection with or appertaining to the said ferry.

"And further resolved that His Worship the Mayor be and he is hereby authorized to execute a conveyance of all the right, title, interest and property specified in the preceding paragraph of

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this resolution to His Majesty for the use of said commissioners so to be appointed as aforesaid, he feels, however, not to be operative until the sale of the said harbor property and the rights shall have been approved by a vote of the electors of the City of St. John as provided in the said Act of Assembly, 9 Edward VII, Chapter 61.

And further resolved that the consideration for the said transfer is the sum of two million dollars to be paid as provided and set forth in Section 11 of the said Act of the Parliament of Canada 9-10 George V, Chapter 70.

Mr. Baxter said that there should be definite bounds for the property to be transferred and that the city engineer should make a proper survey would cost a great deal, but he felt that the city engineer and a government engineer might get together and drive iron spikes and so mark out the property to be given over. Then these could count as marking the boundaries.

In seconding the resolution, Mr. Thornton said that he had felt that the government had not used the city as generously as it might, but he thought the vote was still much doubt as to just what was included in the boundaries as laid down in the act of parliament. The city had not had a chance to say anything excepting the amount. In October last a resolution had been passed in council agreeing to \$2,500,000 as the price for which the city was willing to transfer the harbor, and that amount was still on the minutes.

Mr. Bullock said that, although this was not a deal for a concrete agreement, it did not mean that the city had to accept it. There were some people who would give the harbor away. The price offered had not been agreed to by the city commissioners and that was for this meeting to decide. We did not think that the present price should be accepted. It was still much doubt as to just what was included in the boundaries as laid down in the act of parliament. The city had not had a chance to say anything excepting the amount. In October last a resolution had been passed in council agreeing to \$2,500,000 as the price for which the city was willing to transfer the harbor, and that amount was still on the minutes.

The weak point in the present scheme was that the government had no definite plans for the development of the port. There had been promises made with reference to the improvement of the port but many had not been carried out. If the government wished to increase its steamship facilities, new wharves soon could be constructed below the Ballast wharf.

The foreshore, from Union street to Barrack point, had been given over to the government some time ago, but not a dollar had been spent upon it since it was decided over.

The federal authorities had not taken up the harbor proposition in a big or a bold way when they offered \$2,000,000. Mr. Bullock thought that the city should have a square deal, but he was sure the city was not getting it through the present resolution. It certainly was not a generous offer.

The harbor had not been on the market. There had been no effort to secure the best price through competition. When Mr. Ballantyne was here, he had said that St. John should get what it paid out for the improvements but that was not being done. The minister had thought the bonded indebtedness of the wharves had covered all the city had spent, but this was not so.

"I defy anyone," said Mr. Bullock, "to say that we have only put \$2,000,000 into the property." One of the government's accountants, Gordon Scott, had gone over the accounts and had valued the property at \$2,970,878.80, but in spite of this a bill had been shoved through placing the price at \$2,000,000. Before the bill was passed the statement had been made that a large sum would be necessary to put the wharves in shape, but W. P. Anderson, their own engineer, had reported that the property had been maintained in good order and was in a fairly good state of repair. The city engineer had put the figures at \$80,000 for repairs, which would have been necessary this season.

The boundaries, too, said Mr. Bullock, might take in the whole city. They certainly included Courtenay Bay. No one could tell just what was to be taken over.

"I do not know how you would get an agreement on what we have," continued Mr. Bullock. "The metes and bounds must be laid down and now is the time for that and not later. By this act the city gives over the fisheries, too."

Mr. Jones—"It certainly does."

Mr. Bullock—"It also takes in North and South wharves. We would not have a son of interest left as far as the harbor is concerned."

"When the government constructed No. 7 wharf in 1909, the cost was \$600,000, approximately. How does that price strike you in comparison with the proposal of two millions for the whole harbor? The deep water wharves would be worth \$4,500,000, or more, on that basis."

"Quebec, under harbor commission, has had no great prosperity. There are deficits every year. In St. John last year we met the interest and sinking fund and all expenditures on the harbor property out of revenue. The business is coming stronger every year. It has been suggested that the revenue would fall off when the war stopped, but it has been coming as good and probably better than ever. I do not think we should give up our rights to the harbor without looking to the future."

Mr. Bullock then went into the matter of the value of the land on which the wharves were built and pointed out that on a low estimate these were worth a very considerable amount. He considered the harbor an asset and not a liability for the city. He also spoke of the lands which had been given over to the government. Land to the value of \$516,000 had been turned over to the federal government without cost to it.

He felt that the price put upon the property by the city was a reasonable one. When the report of the values of the harbor property was handed to the minister there had been a mistake of \$300,000, affirmed Mr. Bullock.

In closing, he pointed out that he did not consider that the harbor should be put on sale for \$2,000,000. This was not

a fair estimate of the value. The government had not kept pledges given previously. Improvements in this port should be undertaken by the government. The proposition would not go to the people without his approval. If there were any changes, it should be to nationalization.

Mr. Fisher cited two reasons for the harbor being transferred. First, it would do away with the present dual control and, second, the future would require a growing expenditure which might make the harbor a burden. He felt, however, that the question should be given to the people. Many were in favor of nationalization, but this might be attained through commission.

Commissioner Thornton favored the people being given an opportunity to express their opinion.

Mr. Jones felt that the resolution would show a willingness on the part of the council to have the people express their opinion.

His worship said there had been much friction on account of the dual control of the harbor. The conditions had been unsatisfactory. The question should be put to the people and the step taken was only for that purpose.

The vote was then put and passed, with Mr. Bullock voting contrary.

The committee then resolved into council and adjourned to meet this morning at 11 o'clock.

## Will Hear Several Interesting Speakers

An executive meeting of the Women's Canadian Club was held yesterday at the residence of Mrs. L. P. D. Tilley. Miss Pitcher, first vice-president, was in the chair. Those present were: Mrs. W. E. Foster, Mrs. H. Shaw, Mrs. G. A. Kuhring, Mrs. John Thompson, Mrs. W. Bonnell, Mrs. F. Beatey, Mrs. E. Barbour, Mrs. Stanley Elkin, Mrs. James McAvity, Miss Tinger, Miss Ethel Jarvis, Miss May Harman, Mrs. D. C. Dearden, and Miss McGivern. The business transacted dealt almost entirely with the social program of the club.

The club is inviting Mrs. Dobell, of Quebec, a worker with the French war emergency fund, and Sir Oliver Lodge, the great English scientist, to address it at an early date. The date was fixed for the lecture which Dr. Hibbard has consented to give on the educational convention in Winnipeg. In view of the keen interest being taken in this great national movement, Dr. Hibbard's address will prove a fund of information on how to make a better and higher type of Canadian citizen. An enjoyable musical programme was arranged for this address and it was decided to extend to the members the privilege of inviting their friends. A communication was read from the association of Canadian Clubs at Ottawa asking the Canadian Club of St. John to join this co-operative bureau.

## BRIDE OF TWO DAYS ASKS SUPPORT ORDER

Philadelphia, Pa., Nov. 19.—Mrs. Ester Kress, a bride of two days, went into the domestic relations branch of the municipal court and made an application for an order for support against her husband, Charles G. Kress, a University of Pennsylvania student and a son of a banker of Johnstown, Pa.

Mr. Kress filed a suit in the common pleas court for the annulment of the marriage on the ground that it was brought about on "force and coercion."

Mrs. Kress at once said she would fight such a proceeding.

The student-husband served with an ambulance unit in France. He was wounded and reported among the missing. He met the actress two years ago while she was playing in a theatre in Allentown.

## W. C. T. U. WORK.

The fact that both Canon R. A. Armstrong and Rev. Dr. Hutchinson had made pulpits reference the evils of intemperance and spoke in favor of prohibition was spoken of with gratification at the meeting of the W. C. T. U. yesterday. The forward movement of the churches also engaged the attention of the meeting. One member reported having been present at the Women's Canadian Club when Francis Jones gave his address, telling of the close banding together of the people of England and Canada and saying that none stood so high in the estimation of England as did Canadians. The year books were received and distributed. The union took up the matter of the receiving of the British women immigrants on their arrival and decided to do all in its power to aid them. Mrs. James I. Davis sent her report of her hospital work. Mrs. R. D. Christie and Mrs. David Hipwell were appointed to visit the D. S. C. R. hospital and Mrs. Seymour was authorized to take flowers to the sick. It was regretfully reported that a large number

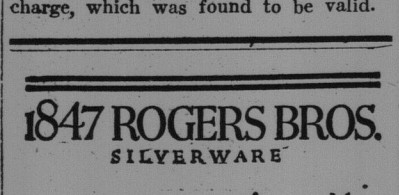
of the members were in sorrow or in ill-health. Preparations were made for the next quarterly meeting.

## FROM PRISON TO ARMY.

Philadelphia, Nov. 19.—Captain William Carroll of the House of Correction guards arrested a uniformed man on a State road trolley car, whom he recognized as a prisoner who had escaped from the House of Correction two years ago.

The prisoner, William Meenan, thirty-nine years old, admitted his identity. He said he had escaped in order to "do his bit" in the war. Although over the enlistment age, he managed to get into the artillery, he said, but failed to reach France, having served at Camp Dix until a few days ago, when he was discharged. He exhibited an honorable discharge, which was found to be valid.

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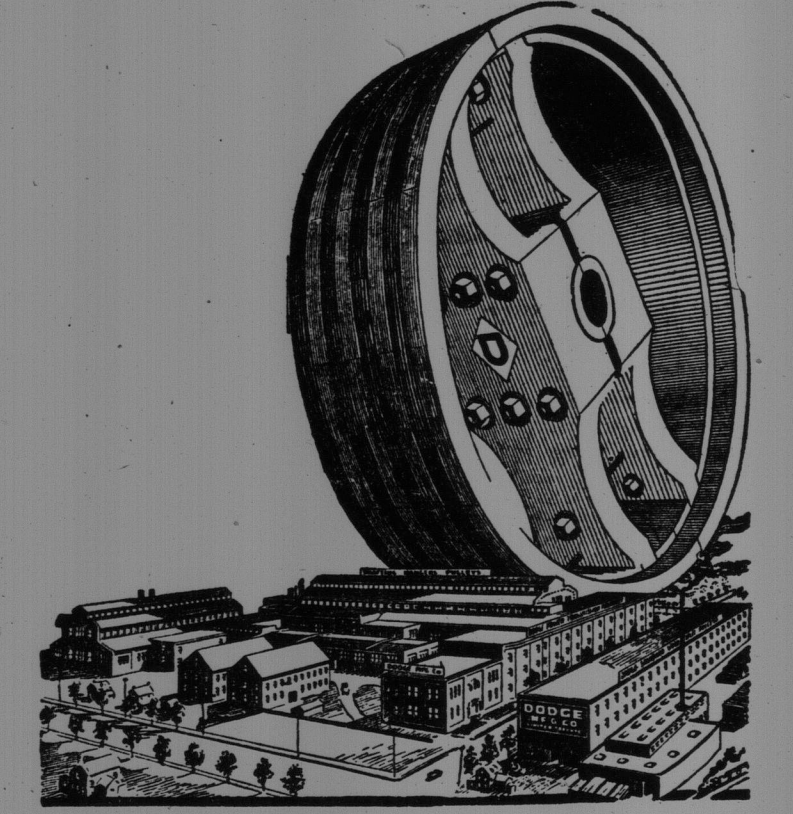
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