

The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, THURSDAY MORNING, MARCH 5, 1914

THE TIMES IS SURPRISED!

For cool audacity it would be difficult to equal a statement in the Times last evening. The organ of the Commission Plan, after heaping insults on the Common Council, holding the aldermen up to ridicule at every turn, picturing them as a set of incompetents and a clique, because they are opposed to its pet scheme, calmly expresses surprise that as yet very few of them appear to be taking part in favor of its adoption!

What does the Times expect? The aldermen granted the request of the gentlemen who wanted to test their scheme by a plebiscite, having done that they washed their hands of it. They have the city's business to attend to and have also to give careful consideration to certain reforms which they propose should be incorporated into the present system, and which, on the strength of their practical experience in civic affairs, they believe will be acceptable to the people who elected them.

The Times must be suffering from mental delusion if it imagines that all the mud-slinging in which it has been indulging has intimidated the Common Council or will turn them a hair's breadth from their purpose. If there is one thing more than another which would veto the Commission scheme in the minds of the council it is the ardent advocacy of the plan by the Telegraph and the Times. Like many hundreds of their fellow citizens, the aldermen are suspicious of the Greeks bearing gifts, and they have good memories. Last the Telegraph and Times have forgotten where they stand in relation to civic affairs we will remind them of a certain law suit brought against them by a former employee last November in which they were mulcted in damages. The plaintiff in his evidence swore that the editor of the Telegraph, in giving his reasons for cancelling a contract to "write up" the aldermen, stated that the Telegraph was "taking no part" in the election this year, that it had got bumped last "year on the head of it, and was keeping out of it" "this year."

The bumps so feigningly referred to arose from the defeat of a slate which the Telegraph and Times made strenuous efforts to elect in 1909 in order to control the council for purposes which were clearly apparent. The great majority of the electors of this city are opposed to slates, and they are all capable of solving a simple problem in arithmetic. If the Telegraph and Times failed to elect a slate to control a council of seventeen men, how much better are the chances of controlling five?

The attacks which the Telegraph and Times made on the Common Council two years ago are being repeated today if possible in more virulent form. The aldermen must be discredited at all costs that the Commission plan may prevail. Statements without a vestige of truth in them—as for example the story relating to the Maher property in the North End—are published in the Times and Telegraph and by the Times are given editorial endorsement. The campaign has been resumed, but under much more favorable auspices. Neither the electors nor the Common Council are fools. The Commission Plan in any event is not suitable to conditions which exist in St. John, but should the Times be again tempted to express surprise why the aldermen do not appear to be taking part in favor of its adoption it need only consult its own record and its own columns to supply the answer.

MR. SPROUL'S SPEECH.

Mr. Sproul's speech in the Legislature has aroused the ire of the Telegraph and Times and apparently created a new issue. Instead of correcting the maliciously false statements that have appeared in their columns daily since the opening of the House, Mr. Sproul is threatened with dire consequences because he has shown up in exceedingly plain language the shortcomings of the Opposition, and exposed the vicious method of warfare adopted by the Westminster members in and out of the House.

The threats of the Times and the Telegraph are not likely to affect the course of Mr. Sproul. He will do his duty as he sees it, irrespective of either the blame or the praise of newspapers which have only one reason for existence, which is to transfer as much of the gold of the public treasury to the pockets of their owners as they can get away with. Neither the Telegraph nor the Times cares a hawbee for the interests of the people. Their motive in opposing the Hazen Government is purely selfish and if it did not pay both newspapers would be silent.

It is amusing to read in the speech of Mr. Copp his anxiety for the welfare of the common people. Was it in their interests that he pocketed a large fee from the Central Railway for doing nothing? Was it the interests of the common people that suggested to Mr. Copp that as the old Government paid good fat fees for legal services he should have his share of the loot?

Then there is Mr. Sweeney who spurns all the blue blooded aristocrats who were born with silver spoons in their mouths, and thanks his Maker that he is not of these. Of course Mr. Sweeney has said that he was misrepresented in that remarkable speech of his. He has denied the silver spoon episode and the cowardly attack on the late Deputy Surveyor General, but up to date he has not taken the people of the province into his confidence to tell them just what he did say at what Mr. Copp has described as "a little missionary meeting."

The facts are that the four members for Westminster have made the unpleasant discovery that public

opinion in that county is swinging very strongly Hazen-wards and that events over which they have no control are creating a situation in the Railway Town and surrounding country which is not at all pleasing for them. It was this reason that inspired "the little missionary meetings" all over the country, and called forth malediction and vituperation on the heads of Mr. Hazen and his Government. It is no doubt unpleasant for politicians of the stamp of the Westminster representatives in the House to figure their personal losses through the change of government and as the feeling grows upon them their violence increases.

Mr. Sproul spoke plainly. It is a time for plain speaking. The campaign of slander and misrepresentation has gone far enough. Mr. Hazen has governed the country well. He drove from power an imbecile aggregation that had succeeded strong but unscrupulous men who had exploited the Province for their personal benefit. The corporal's guard that did not fall by the wayside in the general elections seek now to repudiate their responsibility for the reign of graft and misgovernment by the old regime, and to distract public attention from themselves by malicious attacks on Mr. Hazen and his supporters in the House.

The sense of fair play which the people of this province possess will not tolerate such a policy. The people know only too well how shallow are the pretensions of the Opposition. They know that under Mr. Robinson and his predecessors they did not get good government nor honest government. They know that year after year untruthful statements of the financial standing of the Province were handed out to them and representations made that the Government was living within its income while in point of fact the debt of the Province was being increased by over-expenditures on current account. With these facts in mind it is not common sense to believe that they will accept the abuse and misrepresentation of the Opposition for fact, and change their political allegiance.

But this is what the Opposition seem to think is going to happen and that a campaign of slander is the best means to bring it about. Mr. Sproul's exposure of their methods is displeasing to them and they have unleashed their hounds and given them full swing against the member for Kings. The silly blunder made by the Opposition, in attacking the Government for handing out a report to the press before it was laid on the table, has made the Snorkys of the Opposition ridiculous, but it is improbable they have been cured of the habit of discovering more nests where none exists.

POST OFFICE REFORMS.

The Postal World makes out a good case for a classification of Canadian post offices such as is found in other Postal Union countries, and for the extension of the Civil Service regulations to all or most post offices in the Dominion. In the United States all assistant postmasters and clerks have been brought under civil service rules. The introduction of a similar reform in this country would entail the classification of from 15,000 to 20,000 Government employees, but the size of the undertaking should not deter the Government. The welfare of the officers and the efficient conduct of the offices are at stake.

It has been proposed to make all city offices first class offices, all accounting or money order offices second class, and all non-accounting offices third class and to place the first and second class under the Civil Service Commission. Postmasters of the non-accounting or third class offices do not generally give their whole time to their offices, but have these offices in conjunction with local stores, offices, etc., etc., but the second class comprises a large body of postmasters who give their whole time to their task, and have no other occupation.

These men work hard as a rule. There is no insurance scheme in which they can join, or any provision for their superannation on an allowance. Any arrangement that would add to their sense of security would tend to improve their work, and there seems to be no reason why they should not be brought under the Civil Service Commission. The postmasters' associations which are working to this end have the sympathy of the public for which the postmasters labor. Occasionally the petty interference of the patronage committee in post office appointments and promotions is aired in Parliament. The day for such abuses has surely gone. It will be in the general interest when the conduct of the service is removed from politics and when the best posts go to men who have spent their lives at the work instead of to party favorites.

Current Comment

(Montreal Herald.)

It is difficult for the average man, who finds himself constantly coming into contact with Hebrews who are as good workers and as civilized persons generally as he is himself, to adopt the view that they are heathen who must be "converted" like the suttee worshippers of India or the fetish devotees of Africa. And if he comes to examine into their religious life his reluctance to take that view will be deepened when he finds them doing infinitely more to raise the moral and spiritual level of their own less fortunate brethren than any Protestant community on the continent.

(Vancouver News-Advertiser.)

More unanimous and more remarkable still is the deliverance of the Winnipeg Board of Trade. If any part of Canada was expected to welcome this bargain it was the prairie country, whereof Winnipeg is the metropolis. But the Winnipeg board, by a majority of 69 to 13, or more than five to one, condemns the compact, declaring that it is not in the best interests of Canada, and particularly not in the interest of the West.

(Quebec Chronicle.)

It is interesting to note that the most successful Canadian authors of the present day are from the prairie provinces. Canada's three best sellers this year are by Western authors. They are:—"Janey Canuck in the West," by Emily Ferguson (Mrs. Arthur Murphy, of Edmonton); "The Trail of '88," by Robert W. Service, and "The Second Chance," by Mrs. Nellie McClung, of Manitoba, Man.

(Montreal Star.)

Just when the United States Consul General is urging American students at British universities to tug back with them, for use at home, an intelligent appreciation of the spirit of British institutions does not seem the psychological moment for preaching the superiority of the United States brand here in Canada.

(Atchison Globe.)

While you may feel that way occasionally, it is well to remember that repining isn't included in the list of lucrative occupations.

(Hamilton Spectator.)

Lower Pullman rates are being adjusted now, but the charge for riding on the bumpers will remain stationary—\$5 or thirty days.

(London Free Press.)

The reciprocity editors are having a busy time of it explaining away defections in the party ranks.

Commission Plan of Government

To the Electors of St. John:—

Ladies and Gentlemen:—Under the Commission plan of government every expenditure is openly accounted for from month to month in such a manner that every elector has an intelligent knowledge of the way in which civic business is carried on. Not only does this cause the taxpayer to take a deeper interest in civic matters, but it has the effect of making the commissioners more careful in expenditure. They are constantly under the public eye, the people are taking note in an intelligent way of all that is done, and the result is the application of careful business methods, so that the monthly statements when scrutinized may prove satisfactory.

This feature of publicity, combined with the fact that the commissioners meet daily, and are held strictly to account for every act, makes for economy, and for such an administration as will give the people value for the money expended.

CITIZENS' COMMITTEE.

FIVE MEN, ALL CZARS

Correspondent Compares Aldermanic Rule in Milwaukee with the Commission Plan of Government.

To the Editor of The Standard:

Sir:—Since some of our wealthy citizens have become interested in the commission form of civic administration, we have heard a great deal of how the commission plan works in some of the cities on this continent.

Although the Board of Trade and the citizens' committee have inquired about the commission plan, they have never thought it worth while to consider whether the aldermanic system could be run successfully or not. Because the present council and those before it failed to accomplish any startling improvements, some people wish to throw the present system of government overboard.

The aldermanic administration of Milwaukee has been and now is an unqualified success. At the last election the so called business men were put on the shelf and men from the working class were elected to run the affairs of the city. The working man in the city of St. John is not required to dabble in political affairs whether civic, provincial or federal, as he is supposed to be incapable of doing anything except to vote at election times. This fact was proved when a working man attempted to address the meeting in the North End last week, for most of the speakers and platform supporters beat a hasty retreat when they knew what they were up against.

You will no doubt wonder why Milwaukee can run their civic business successfully and St. John is a failure. The answer is not far to seek, the administration at Milwaukee has the welfare of the people at heart, the Mayor and Aldermen, mingle with them and use their best endeavors to do everything for the public good. In St. John the present council meets once a month, why not try once a week and hold all council meetings in the evening and do away with property qualifications for candidates for election? I do not want to boast of the things the Milwaukee people have done but I append a few extracts from letters which have appeared in the public press which may prove interesting.

"I cannot set in order the things the administration has done for the city, but there can be no doubt that it has lifted the business of managing municipal affairs to a higher level. There is no suggestion of graft, or of pandering to the interests of predatory wealth, but a genuine effort to minister to the welfare of the working people."—C. H. Beale, Grand Avenue, Congregational Church.

"I believe the Socialists are giving us a good administration. Conditions are better than they have been."—R. G. Pierson, South Baptist Church.

"I believe our city government is run more honest if not more economical than formerly."—Rev. S. C. Haslam, Trinity Congregational Church.

"I will say that Mayor Seidel seems to be honestly, sincerely and heartily endeavoring to promote the moral welfare of the city. As far as I know they are enforcing the law against vice."—W. A. Cutler, Westminster Presbyterian Church.

"I have been favorably impressed, especially with the course pursued by the Mayor. Close attention has been given to moral and sanitary conditions and the effort has been made to make this a clean city."—W. Fuller, Bay View Baptist Church.

"It is disgusting that some people even Catholic priests, find fault with every step towards reform. Let the Catholic priests of Milwaukee get a move on themselves and do something ahead of us in our own work."—Joseph Schell, Catholic Priest, Saseon, Wis.

I could quote many more but with another quotation with reference to the commission plan and I am through. One of the largest contractors of city work in the United States, when asked what he thought of the commission, said, "I prefer to do business with city administration on an honest basis," but with a shrug of the shoulders, remarked, "The Commission plan simplifies my work, if I have to buy, I have one man with whom to deal, and he is cheaper than a bunch of ward aldermen." There you have the commission form of government—making czars of five men. If they are good czars there may be an improvement, but if not, all conditions are aggravated.

Yours, for good civic government, VERMILLION.

FUNERALS.

Mr. George H. Oulton was buried yesterday afternoon at 2.30 from his late residence, Elliott Row. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. F. S. Porter and interment took place in the

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Fernhill. The funeral was largely attended.

The funeral of Mrs. Noah T. McKee wife of Mr. Albert McKee took place yesterday afternoon at 2.30 from her late residence, 55 St. Paul street, to Holy Trinity Church, where funeral services were read by Rev. J. J. Walsh. Interment took place in the new Catholic cemetery.

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