

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1912.

ST. JOHN'S FINANCIAL POSITION.

No city in Canada is in a better position financially than St. John. It is a matter of common complaint that taxation in this city is unusually high as compared with other cities, but as a matter of fact this is not the case. There are no special assessments or general improvement taxes in St. John, with one exception, while in many other cities and towns in Canada, as well as the United States, the taxation for benefits received or for local improvement is sometimes equal to fifty per cent. of the general rate.

Some years ago a special tax was levied for asphalt sidewalks, but this was abandoned when the cities of St. John and Portland were united. The only improvement tax levied in St. John now is for the Germalin street pavement, the property owners having agreed to pay a portion of the cost of paving and other improvements made on that street two years ago. There is also a sewerage entrance fee levied. Outside of these St. John has no special fees unless the licenses collected for certain purposes may be construed as special taxation.

In 1911 the total amount collected for licenses was \$7,281.82. The sewerage entrance fees amounted to \$900, while the cost of maintaining this department was nearly \$17,000, charged up in the general assessment. It is the fact that there is but one tax levied in St. John that makes taxation appear to be large.

According to the report of the Chamberlain the city owns real estate to the value of \$3,988,518.76, a large proportion of which is revenue producing. The plant of the water department, which includes the main and distributing system throughout the city, is valued at \$2,112,732.72, while the sewerage is placed among the assets at \$576,609. The total value of the assets of the city is \$7,121,074.52, while the liabilities amount to \$5,046,404.69. This shows an excess of assets over liabilities of \$2,074,669.83. The revenue producing assets of the city are the harbor which had a net revenue of over \$70,710.19, the lands on the East and West sides and in Lancaster, which produced about \$18,000, and the market which had a revenue last year of something over \$3,000.

The debt is now less than \$5,000,000, against which there is a sinking fund of \$883,972.56. Between 1912 and 1915 inclusive, over \$600,000 of this indebtedness falls due, about half of it will be provided for by the sinking fund and the other half will have to be met by a re-issue of debentures.

What is known as the fire debt, largely falls due in 1917 and 1918. This amounts to about \$500,000 and will be met almost wholly out of the sinking fund. With anything like decent management St. John will be in a very enviable position before the close of the next decade. Of course, many public works have been neglected, such as the paving of streets, but expenditures for them will not equal the rapid decline in the debt during the next few years.

The new commission will take over the affairs of the city when they are in a most flourishing and healthy condition. They will, also, come into office at the beginning of a real estate boom, the like of which has never been experienced by any city or town in Eastern Canada for a generation or two back. After a long struggle St. John has at last received recognition as the winter port of Canada. Already the Dominion Government has expended a considerable sum in harbor construction at this port and it is the firm belief that the expenditures so far made are but a beginning in this direction. The people were never in such an optimistic frame of mind as they are at the present time, nor have they been so prosperous at any time since the great fire.

A new generation has grown up since 1877 which knows little of the prosperity of St. John during the days of wooden ship building, and who have been compelled by circumstances to seek a livelihood in other directions. While St. John can not be regarded as yet as a manufacturing centre, we possess some very considerable manufacturing establishments which are extending the market for their goods over the whole of Canada. No merchants are more progressive in their own field than those of St. John and every year its trade is expanding into new territory and its volume increasing. The clearing house returns of the banks show large increases every year. In 1908 the total clearings amounted to \$66,435,636, and in 1910 to \$77,843,546. This is a very good showing for a city the size of St. John.

The winter port trade has grown enormously, the coasting trade is increasing, and the railway traffic has expanded far beyond anything hoped for by the early promoters of railways in this Province.

The growth of St. John has been slow in beginning but the general feeling everywhere is that we have only been preparing for a great development of our trade and a rapid increase in population. But whatever the future may have in store for St. John its financial position in 1911 is as sound as any city in Canada, in a better position than the majority of cities, and with the brightest hopes for the future.

STEAM TRAWLING.

The fisheries, both on the Atlantic and the Pacific were the subject of a long and interesting discussion in the House of Commons on Monday. In the course of the debate steam trawling and its effect on the fisheries was dealt with by Mr. Hazen in a comprehensive statement setting forth results and conclusions in the experience of his department. Steam trawling and its effect on the fisheries has long been a debatable subject. It is prohibited in Canadian waters within the three mile limit, but outside that limit it becomes a matter for international consideration. It is a firmly established institution in Great Britain, the United States and other countries and Mr. Hazen did not hold out much hope to the members who wanted the practice prohibited that any international arrangement to that effect could be looked for in the near future.

In the statement prepared by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and submitted to the House, both sides of the question are fairly presented.

The arguments used against steam trawling are mainly:

- (a) The destruction of set lines or hand trawls, by being carried away by the net or hauling ropes attached to it, from the steamer.
- (b) The ruin of the spawning grounds;
- (c) The capture of great quantities of immature fish, which being useless for market, are thrown away.

In reply to the first contention (a) Mr. Hazen points out that all possible protection has been afforded by prohibiting steam trawling within the three mile limit. As to the second contention (b) Mr. Hazen says that no information of the spawning grounds of any of the fish caught by steam trawling has been received.

gear by the trawlers that have been operating from Canada has reached the department.

With reference to (b) he says there is much misapprehension, as none of the fish caught by trawlers spawn at the bottom of the ocean. The eggs of these fishes are lighter than the water and float on or near the surface, so that steam trawling really does not injure the spawning areas.

With regard to (c) it does not pay to catch unmarketable fish. There are here and there around the coast, areas which might be called 'nurseries' to which young fish resort in large numbers, and steam trawling at such places would doubtless result in the capture of great quantities of immature fish; but as it is marketable fish that are being sought, these areas would be avoided by the trawling skippers when once located.

Mr. Hazen's report proceeds:

"While steam trawling tends to revolutionize fishing, and to replace existing methods, an unbiased examination of its results does not seem to leave room for much fear that it will result in depletion of the fisheries. In the North Sea, for instance, over 2,000 such vessels operate from Great Britain's ports alone, and not for seven or eight months in the year, but for the whole twelve. This has been going on for years; but there is no evidence of depletion of the yield. On the contrary, an ever increasing quantity is being taken."

Dealing with an important point, the effect on the price of fish, Mr. Hazen finds no evidence that it has been lowered. It says:

"It is not a fact that the use of the steam trawlers—2 in number—that have been operating in Canada for the past few years, has lowered the price of fish to the fishermen, or has in any way interfered with their markets. Indeed, the opposite is the case. Prices have been better, and the work of the trawlers has enabled the supply to the markets, when the inshore boats could not get out."

"It is realized, however, that if many steam trawlers are shortly placed in commission on the Canadian coast, the hand trawl and long line fishermen will find it hard to compete, and anything that the government can do to protect them, it is anxious to do. It must not be forgotten, however, that there are great obstacles in the way of an international agreement for the abolition of trawling, or even preventing their use in extensive areas. Steam trawling has already been firmly established in the United States. Six such vessels are now operating continuously from Boston, and some four or six more are being built for work from that port. Every year varying numbers of steam trawlers come over from France—last year nine—and operate from St. Pierre as a base. Since the abolition of the treaty rights of France on the coasts of Newfoundland, French vessels have no reliable source of bait, and if trawling were given up that country would largely have to go out of fishing on this side of the Atlantic."

"Again, it cannot be said with assurance that trawling is unduly destructive. Ever since 1904, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, which is made up of some of the best scientific authorities of Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Russia, Norway and Sweden, has been investigating the matter; but has been unable to agree to advise against such method of fishing. It will, therefore, be seen that it is impossible to turn to any government which has taken action to prevent such trawling except in limited inshore areas, and Canada has gone farther than any other, by prohibiting trawling in all its territorial waters."

The difficulty which would confront Canada, should there be any general desire to extend the prohibition of steam trawling, is, as Mr. Hazen pointed out, that the Dominion would stand practically alone in any attempt to secure an international arrangement by which trawling could be prevented outside the three-mile limit. Negotiations to that end in the past have been unsuccessful. He gave the House the assurance that if possible a further conference would be held, but he was not hopeful for any definite results. In the meantime it is satisfactory to know from the statement of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries submitted to Parliament, that the fishermen are being protected as far as possible and that this great industry is not suffering at the hands of steam trawlers any serious depredation.

The arbitration of the North Atlantic Fisheries case has cost the country \$200,000. The annual report of the Auditor General furnishes some interesting facts. Among the items in the account for the tribunal are the fees for the non-national arbitrators, which totalled \$31,361.67, and the national arbitrators, Judge Gray for the United States and Sir Charles Fitzpatrick for Canada, \$18,500. Mr. J. S. Ewart, K. C., was paid \$10,000 as counsel fee, and the report states that this is only in partial settlement. G. F. Shepley, Toronto, was paid \$19,886.67, and W. N. Tilley, Toronto, \$19,473.33 as counsel. Right Hon. Sir Robert Findlay cost the country \$47,758.06 in fees, and Sir Eric Richards, London, \$20,215.41. Sir Allan Aylesworth's travelling expenses amounted to \$4,022.58. Other items include expenses for shorthand reporters and minor counsel fees and travelling expenses.

Hereafter all communications to be published in The Standard must bear the name of the author for publication.

Current Comment

(Boston Transcript.)

In these days of soaring prices it is gratifying to find even a single article in which there is a reduction. We are likely to have considerable sloppy weather before the green leaves come again, and the announcement by the United States Rubber Company that the price of rubber footwear is to be lowered about ten per cent. is most welcome. The lower price of the raw material is given as the reason for this, and rubber tires as well as overshoes should feel the benefit of it.

(Victoria Colonist.)

The decision of the Government to call in the \$4 notes and issue \$5 notes in their place is a good one. It has led to the suggestion that new and smaller cents ought to be coined. Out here we have only a platonic interest in the cent, but we know enough about it to believe that its value is not commensurate with its weight. On the other hand the silver 5-cent piece is too little. The chief objection to our gold coinage is that it is too scarce.

(Ottawa Journal.)

There aren't many people who would take steps to stop a Sunday band concert, always provided the musicians, individually, are willing to play Sunday, and are not forced to do so. A more harmless and more entertaining manner of making the parks attractive Sunday afternoons in summer can hardly be imagined.

(Mail and Empire.)

A Pittsburg paper published daily for several weeks the legend: "For President, Theodore Roosevelt." At the Colonel's request it desisted for some time. Now it is booming him in still more energetic fashion, and has not been chided. The contributing editor of the Outlook is ready for the sacrifice.

(Stratford Herald.)

It is true that "Tad" has received "a call." Mr. "Tad" had better go into training at once.

REMINISCENCES OF THE LIFE OF DICKENS

Stephen Fiske, Last Survivor of Dicken's Coterie Tells Some of His Personal Impressions of Novelist.

Note—Feb. 7, marks the centennial of the birth of the novelist, and the beginning of the memorial celebration in his honor in the United States and England. Stephen Fiske, writer, editor and dramatic critic, is the sole survivor of the Dickens coterie and his personal reminiscences of Dickens constitute the main portion of this article.

(Charles Dickens at Home. By Stephen Fiske.)

Dickens was very happy at Gad's Hill. When a boy, tramping with his father from London to Rochester, he had stopped before the pretty house and exclaimed, "There I shall live when I get to be a man." The fulfillment of this prophecy seemed to Dickens like the happy ending to one of his own fairy tales. Besides, the place was holy ground to him, for it had been trodden by the feet of Shakespeare, was a resort of Falstaff, Poles, Peto, Pistol and Bardolph. In the hall a painted panel read, "This is Gad's Hill, of which Sir John Falstaff said:—"and the quotation from Henry the Fourth follows.

"There was only one other residence in all England that Dickens preferred to Gad's Hill. His favorite walk was to Rochester, and he would stand for hours, viewing the ruined castle; rebuilding and repairing it, repossessing it with kings and queens, lords and ladies who had lived within its massive walls. One day he said:

"If I could only have this old castle to live in I would reft part of it at once and sell the rest to the public on certain days or hours. It would not cost so very much. I have made the calculations. But this is one of my dreams that will never come true."

While Dickens was lecturing in America I obtained an interview with another great novelist, Dumas, then Premier of Great Britain, and told him this story. He replied promptly: "He talks with such a quaint precision, such an undertone of fun, wit and satire, that it seemed as if he might have saved himself many weary hours by dictating his novels to a stenographer."

Across the road, but within the manor of Gad's Hill and under the jurisdiction of Dickens as landlord and as Justice of the Peace, was a country tavern, originally called "The Jolly Flow Boy," but rechristened "Sir John Falstaff's Inn." One night there was a disturbance in the tavern and we went over in a body, Dickens leading, to investigate it. Among a party of rough fellows was a man with blood streaming down his face and he said that the landlord had struck him with a pewter pot.

"Did you strike this man?" asked Dickens sternly.

"Well, sir," replied the landlord, "vether Hi 't that mon on the 'ed with a pewter pot hit his not for the likes of me to say, sir; but the impression on my mind that Hi did not."

"Well, sir," retorted Dickens judiciously, "whether you hit that man on the head with a pewter pot it is not for me to say; but the impression on his head is your duty!"

Dickens left no memoranda from which the plot of his uncompleted novel "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" could be discovered. But, before writing this novel he told me of a plot which he was considering. For him to a building on the bank of the Thames, he said: "That is our Poor House. A well-to-do overseer put his father into that house under an assumed name. The old man revealed his identity to the Board of Managers, and they sent him back to his son, whom they threatened to prosecute for fraud. Angry, moan and alarm, the overseer put the father into a bag and drove him into the river here at this spot. His intention evidently was to drown his father and pretend there had been an accident. But the father clung to him and both were drowned. The overseer had taken out insurance policies upon his life and that of his father, and distant relatives applied for the money. The insurance company refused to pay. Litigation ensued, and the court decided that the policy upon the father was void, because he had been deliberately murdered, but the policy upon the son must be paid, because he had not intended to commit suicide. There are hundreds of such ready-made plots in British jurisprudence."

The room best known to the public is the library, because of the picture by Luke Fildes, called "The Vacant Chair," which has brought tears to many eyes. But, so far as Dickens was concerned, that chair had always been vacant. It was for the accommodation of guests. He never used it, except to write the most casual notes. "How could I write works in a library," he exclaimed, "with all those volumes glaring at me and muttering, 'What! Another?'"

The books on the lowest shelf of the library were dummies, with titles selected by such London humorists as Albert Smith, Mark Lemon, Edmund Yates and Andrew Halliday. "Lives of the Poets" was so thin that there was scarcely room for the title on the back. "Five Minutes in India, by an Englishman," was in five portly volumes. "Eggs on Bacon" caricatured "Coke on Littleton." Dickens recalled the authors of all the dummies selected by such London humorists as Albert Smith, Mark Lemon, Edmund Yates and Andrew Halliday.

His important writing was done in a large bedroom upstairs or in a chalet on the opposite side of the road, connected with Gad's Hill by a tunnel cut through the chalk and so that Dickens might pass to and fro without encountering the scores of admirers who stopped before his house.

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Caution: Do not apply where hair is not desired and be sure to avoid the eyes containing poisonous wood alcohol.

daily to catch a glimpse of their idol. The chaperon was presented to him by Charles Fechter, the famous French actor, who saw it at the Paris Exposition. It arrived at Gad's Hill in sections, carefully numbered and boxed. Dickens had the boxes strewn carelessly over the lawn, and when Fechter arrived, asked him anxiously: "Why have you sent me this lumber?" "Ciel!" cried Fechter, "but I have been swindled! They told me they would send you a Swiss watch to write in!"

The world knows Dickens as a writer, but as an oral story-teller he was even more marvelous. He told stories almost as constantly as Lincoln or Schopenhauer, but they had a mysterious peculiarity. Remember them—repeat them word for word—and they had lost their magic. For example, when we were a small family party at Gad's Hill, we would coax Dickens to tell us the story of the "Woman with the Red Shawl." He had dreamed of a woman who wore a red shawl and at night, going home after his lecture, he had met the identical woman, wearing the same red shawl as in his dream. There was nothing very remarkable in such an incident; but, as Dickens told it, the story interested, amused and thrilled us, though we had heard it over and over again.

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PEOPLE MARCONED ON HOLLAND ISLAND ARE IN NO DANGER
Washington, Feb. 7.—The 250 men, women and children marconed for several weeks on Holland Island in ice-locked Chesapeake Bay, are not facing starvation and pestilence, as supposed, but are possessed of plenty, according to a wireless report to-day from Captain Carmichael of the revenue cutter Apache, hurriedly despatched to the relief of this sand bar of the bay.

"Investigation proves conclusively" the message declared, "no assistance is needed immediately. Plenty of food, fuel enough to last a month, and sickness unimportant."

The Apache was compelled to cut its way through the heavy ice for 8 hours to reach the island.

NOTHING DOING AT HOEDEIDA.
Perim, Arabia, Feb. 7.—Contrary to previous reports the town of Hoedeida has not been bombarded by the Italian warships, which have been threatening bombardment for some days past. The town of Jebanah was shelled several days ago and considerable damage done. Communication with that town has now been restored.

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Local Examinations in Theoretical music for all grades will be held on April 13th, 1912.
Local Examinations in Practical Subjects will be held about a month later.
Application forms, filed in and accompanied by fees, must reach the Central office in Montreal on or before April 1st, 1912. Forms and free copies of the Official Syllabus containing full information are obtainable from the Local Secretary, Mr. D. Arnold Fox, 183 Princess St., St. John, or from the General Secretary, Mr. J. D. Macdonald, 223 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal.
Information about the Yearly Examinations for Diplomas of Licentiate and Degree of Mus. Bac. can be obtained from the General Secretary, Montreal.
The Examination Board, on application being made, will be glad to consider any additions to the present list of Local Centres.

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