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NEWCASTLE, N. B., DECEMBER 13, 1911

A PROGRESSIVE CITY

The proposed new charter of the city of St. John, which has been submitted to the citizens by the committee in charge, is a good example for other towns to follow. If the draft as submitted is approved, St. John will be governed by a Mayor and four commissioners, each of whom shall be a salaried officer and shall have control of one department of affairs. The Mayor's term of office shall be two years, and that of the commissioners four, two new commissioners to be elected along with the Mayor every second year.

Any one qualified to vote is also qualified to hold any office, that is, PROPERTY QUALIFICATIONS OF CANDIDATES FOR MAYORALTY AND COMMISSIONERSHIP IS TO BE ABOLISHED.

Two elections—primary and secondary—are provided for. If there are more than two full sets of candidates in the field, all run at the primary, and if no one gets a majority of all the votes polled, a second election must be run two weeks later, between the two leading parties.

Twenty per cent. of the number of voters who voted at last election may, upon petition, have any bill of their own submitted to the electorate—THE INITIATIVE. Twenty per cent. may, within ten days after the passage of any civic ordinance other than such as relates to the immediate preservation

of the public health, safety or peace, demand a vote upon such legislation—THE REFERENDUM. Fifteen per cent. may demand a vote upon the RECALL of the Mayor or any commissioner.

The Council shall be the Board of Health for the city, and, subject to the Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall, shall have full powers to govern the city. Four shall form a quorum. Meetings must be weekly.

St. John thus proposes to adopt the radical legislation recently installed by Washington, Oregon and California other parts of the United States, who in turn copied largely from Switzerland, Australasia and Europe. It is time that the other towns of New Brunswick began to adopt similar modes of democratic government. We should abolish Property Qualifications for public offices and adopt the Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall, and, as soon as finances permit, have fewer aldermen and pay them for their services.

A RIDICULOUS INJUSTICE

A Montreal despatch, of the fourth instant says that on that day judgment was rendered by Mr. Justice Charbonneau to the effect that members of a religious order having taken vows of perpetual poverty and obedience, were



disqualified from making use of the electoral franchise and the names of sixteen persons attached to the order of the Clerics of St. Vincent, engaged in teaching at the Rigault Roman Catholic College, must be struck from the electoral lists of that district. The court in giving its decision said that despite the qualification of the sixteen clerics to vote, owing to their culture and education the law must be maintained and they must be disqualified on the grounds of earning capacity as they had no income.

This decision is evidently in accordance with the law of the province of Quebec, where no undue hostility to the disqualified teachers would be expected because of their religious faith. But the law itself is ridiculously unjust. Here there are sixteen well-educated persons who, while not technically speaking in receipt of an income, are daily pursuing a laborious occupation in the service of the people of whose children they are in charge. That they receive no salary other than what is barely necessary for their needs does not lessen the value of their work to the community. All laws imposing property qualifications for voters and officers and all other such restrictions upon citizens should be abolished. Even in Newcastle property qualification is demanded of Mayor and Aldermen and a clergyman is disqualified for both offices. This is not as it should be. Any respectable citizen, when the majority of the voters desire to represent them, should be eligible for office. Let us take a leaf out of St. John's book and bring our municipal constitution up to date.

THE COURT HOUSE

The strictures of Judge and Grand Jury upon the antiquated, dilapidated and unsanitary condition of our County Court House were not at all uncalled for. A new building is sadly needed. It need not be a \$50,000 house. A good, substantial, sanitary wooden building could be put up for \$25,000 if necessary. If money is borrowed, the sinking fund should be large enough to soon pay off the debt. It is not wise to pay interest very long. Much of the money needed for a new building should be raised beforehand and by extra assessment, and the rest secured by a heavy sinking fund.

Don't Miss it.

The receipt of a sample copy of this paper is an invitation to subscribe. Subscription price from now to Dec 31st, 1912, is \$1.00. To all new and all paid-up old subscribers the UNION ADVOCATE and Family Herald and Weekly Star with the beautiful picture "Home Again" from now till Dec 31st, 1912, for \$1.50.

NEW SCHOOL REGULATIONS

Dr. Carter has recently posted an order of the Board of Education to have school flags flown over school-houses every fine day except in winter. Canadian Civics has been prescribed as the text book for use by teachers, and knowledge of the subject will be required of applicants for license. The Board of Education has also ordered that a text book in music be prescribed, but the text has not yet been selected and will be announced later. The Chief Superintendent has issued an official notice asking teachers throughout the province to co-operate with agricultural authorities in exterminating the brown tail moth.

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