

POOR DOCUMENT

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THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1921

The Evening Times and Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., JULY 21, 1921.

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LET THE ACT SPEAK

If any of the gentlemen who are supporting the harbor commission act should desire to purchase a horse they would go about it in a business-like way. They might betray a languid interest in other horses in the stable, but their attention would be centered upon the particular animal they proposed to purchase. They would want to know whether it was sound in wind and limb, tractable and dependable, or the reverse.

Now the only harbor commission act in which St. John is interested is the St. John harbor commission act. What are its features? What does it undertake to do for St. John?

Under its provisions a far greater burden would be placed upon the harbor revenue at the very outset than it now bears, and to this would be added the greater cost of administration and the interest and sinking fund of all new expenditures year after year.

The act says that all this shall be a lawful charge upon the revenue. In other words, if a million or five millions should require to be expended for harbor development, the act says the principal and interest of the debentures to be issued under authority of this act shall be repaid out of the revenue of the harbor. There is not a word about any expenditure by the government to be charged to the country at large.

The advocates of harbor commission cannot dispose of the act in a summary manner. As Commissioner Frink says, it is clear and simple. And it is the act, and not what any gentleman may assume, that the citizens are to accept or reject.

Let us consider one of the additional burdens to be placed on harbor revenue before anything else is done. It is a part of the contract. Here it is—Section 13:

"The elevator, the property of His Majesty, and all wharves, the property of His Majesty, in the right of His Majesty of Canada, within the limits of the harbor of St. John, as set out in Section 3 of this act, shall be subject to the control of and administration of the corporation (the harbor commission) upon and from such date as may be fixed by the governor-in-council, and the corporation shall pay in consideration thereof to the minister of finance of Canada, interest at the rate of three and one-half per centum per annum upon the amount of the cost of construction thereof."

This includes the various government wharves, among them the marine wharf, and the grain elevator. What was the cost of their construction? How many million dollars—two, three, or four? Whatever it was, three and a half per cent per annum on the amount must be paid out of harbor revenue. It is a new burden on that revenue before a single pile is driven for new work, the interest and sinking of which would also have to come out of harbor revenue.

That is what the act says, and it leaves no loophole of escape. Once the city agrees to that proposition it places an unanswerable argument in the hands of any government or parliament against any further government expenditure in St. John harbor. They can simply point to the act and say to any delegations.

"You agreed to this act. You did it with your eyes open—what are you doing here now?"

Can any citizen explain the reluctance of the advocates of harbor commission to discuss the act—and their eagerness to direct attention to something in Montreal or elsewhere? Of what are they afraid?

Why did Mr. Ballantyne fail to come to the city as was promised? Why did Mr. Wignmore go away without speaking to the people? Why has the city council not held meetings and fully explained the text of the act so that the most humble citizen could understand its terms? Why were the terms of the act known in Ottawa long before they were known in St. John? Commissioner Frink says he did not see the act for many months after it had been assented to by parliament, and that in this he was in common with other citizens. And yet the act was vital to St. John.

However, the act is now before the citizens, and they are asked to vote on it. It is a binding agreement affecting the whole future of the port. It asks the people to give up control of their harbor, from Green Head to Red Head, and at the same time say they are not

interested there shall be no more expenditure on port development in the future than the harbor revenue can take care of. That is what the act says, in plain English. And yet the very men who advocate the adoption of the act assert that the harbor revenue cannot even go on taking care of the repairs that will be necessary. If not, how can it take care of the new charges imposed by the act?

Let nobody be deceived by assurances that the government, in spite of the act, will do this or that. What government? And of what value are verbal assurances in the face of a written and signed contract? When a man signs a contract the law assumes that he exercises common sense, and verbal pledges are therefore valueless. It is the act and not what any man says, who may not be in office a year hence, that will bind the people and influence parliament in its relation to this port. The thing to do is to reject the act and demand national treatment of a national port. St. John's harbor should be its most highly prized possession. Let us have a square deal.

THE HARBOR WHARVES

Has anybody heard that the wharves of St. John are rapidly falling into hopeless decay? Where does the information come from? What engineer has so reported? If there has been such a report, why has it not been given to the public? If there is no such report, why label the port? As a matter of fact there has been no such report. Such repairs as the wharves need can be taken care of as in the past nine years, which yielded a handsome surplus over expenditures. The foundation is the expensive part of a wharf in St. John. Once properly laid, it will not decay for a very long period—if at all—not will fire go down and destroy it. Only the top and the warehouses would be affected by fire. But why should it be alleged that there is need of large expenditures for repairs? To frighten the taxpayers into voting for the harbor commission act? Before an authoritative statement could be made as to the amount required for repairs this year or next, a survey would have to be made. Has it been made? The citizens should utterly disregard any loose talk that is not backed by competent authority. Freight can be handled as speedily at this port as at any on the coast—to the limit of its pier accommodation for vessels. The record of the war-period proves this statement. There is no ground whatever for assertions which it is alleged are being made to the effect that St. John cannot longer afford to keep up its harbor. True, the city cannot build new wharves and develop the port as it should be done. That is a national obligation of which the harbor commission act would relieve the country by throwing the whole burden upon the harbor.

Premier Meighen is not to come here at once, as was intimated a few days ago. When he does come it may be to consider the question of appealing to the people. That, however, is unlikely, despite some rumors that come from Ottawa. Another session of parliament is far more likely, as many of the present members will not have an opportunity to go to Ottawa in the same capacity after the country has been heard from.

The Globe now explains that if the harbor commission act is not all right it will be made all right by the mayor and city solicitor before the deal is consummated. Why delegate that authority to the mayor and city solicitor? And can they change an act of parliament? The Globe is getting "wuss an' wuss."

Union carpenters in Toronto yesterday refused to accept a cut of ten per cent in wages. Meanwhile it is said building projects involving millions of dollars are held up and idle men walk the streets.

The citizens should make it their business—and also their pleasure—to hear tonight's discussion of the harbor commission act. It will be illuminating—and will help to clear the air.

The rain that put out the forest fires also brought new life to the crops in this province, and was a most welcome visitation. It greatly improves the prospect for the grain and vegetable crops.

The wage cut has come to the Canadian railways. It is not severe, but it had to come.

The western crop outlook continues good. A heavy crop means much for the west this year.

Intimidation of a man who is engaged in earning an honest living is something a community can afford to tolerate.

WHO'LL BUY MY DREAMS?

I go from door to door. Peddling my fancy rhyms. Some look them critically over. Saying, "We've seen such stuff before. Write something for the times."

But some with eager eyes Read them, and read again. With growing wonder and surprise, Till visions of the soul arise, Up-converted by the strain.

A pedlar of dreams am I Along the world's highway: From door to door my trade I ply. Crying aloud, "Who'll buy? Who'll buy? Who'll buy my dreams today?"

—J. Lewis Milligan, in The Graphic.

IN LIGHTER VEIN

Learning His Trade. "Johnny" said the teacher reprovingly, "you mis-spelled most of the words in your composition."

"Yes, I'm going to be a dialect writer,"—Washington Star.

His Destination. Friend—That movie star is very pompous. He boasts that he has arrived. Director—He has. This is where he gets off.—Boston Transcript.

Just Enough. "Was there much of a gathering to see the ship start?" asked Col. Edwards, whose servant had been down to the wharf.

"Yes, dey was a monstrous lot o' folks." And was the crowd tumultuous or quiet?

"Well, suh," replied Mose, doubtfully, "dey wasn't sackly too mutinous, should'n't say. Nussuh dey was just about mutinous enough fo' de occasion."—American Legion Weekly.

His Little Quip. Lawyer—What distinguishing feature was there about the watch that the accused stole? Witness—My sweetheart's picture was in it.

Lawyer—Ah! A woman in the case.

Reports of Home for Incurables. Annual Meeting of Subscribers Held Today.

Requests Total Above \$6,000 and There is Increase in Income from Paying Patients—The Invested Funds Above \$185,000.

The annual meeting of subscribers to the St. John Home for Incurables was held at the Home at one o'clock this afternoon. The reports presented were as follows:

President's Report. Ladies and Gentlemen—The board of management of the St. John Home for Incurables herewith presents its report for the year ending July 1st, 1921.

Your board to the best of their ability have endeavored to minister to the wants of the suffering ones under their care, and trust that the efforts put forth have not been without success.

At the beginning of the year there were in the Home twenty-eight patients, sixteen males and twelve females. During the year ten patients died, seven males and three females; twelve patients were admitted, six males and six females, and there are now in the Home twenty-nine patients, fourteen males and fifteen females. There were fifteen applications considered by the board, six males and nine females. One male patient left the institution. Twelve regular meetings were held by the board.

The heating capacity of one of the boilers having become diminished a new one was installed, which has proved satisfactory.

The financial condition of the Home will be fully explained in the treasurer's report.

Mrs. Meyer and her capable nurses have, we believe, faithfully carried out their duties. This year has been specially hard one owing to the number of serious cases under their care.

To the medical staff we desire to tender our sincere thanks for their valuable services, always so cheerfully and efficiently given.

The Women's Aid Committee, as in the past, have rendered most valuable assistance, which is most gratefully acknowledged.

To everyone who during the year has aided us in any way in our work we desire to offer our heartfelt thanks. Respectfully submitted, T. WALKER, President.

The Treasurer. St. John, N. B., July 8, 1921.

To the Subscribers of the St. John Home for Incurables.—Thanks to a generous public response to the appeal for help made last fall we close the year with a cash balance on hand. But for the \$2,235 raised by that appeal we should have been compelled to add an operating deficit of \$19,42 to the deficit of \$31,30 carried from the year previous, after our credit balance had been completely exhausted. Happily we start the new year with \$1,748.88 cash on hand and all bills paid. One very gratifying feature of the year's receipts has been the increase of \$2,000.50 in the sum received from paying patients. That amount is hardly likely to be reached this year. Another gratifying feature of the year's receipts has been the growth in the interest return. During the year three bequests were paid, \$6,201.04 through the Royal Trust Company, a half interest in the residuary estate of (Continued on page 2, second column.)

FOREST FIRES

Forest fires benefit no one and they rob the workman, the merchant, the farmer, and indirectly every citizen. Forest fires are fought not only in the bush, but in towns and cities. When Canadians of town and farm and forest are all determined to stop forest fires, then our forests will be freed from the ravages of this feud.

Dr. Florence Murray, formerly professor of anatomy at Dalhousie University, was dedicated to the work of medical missionary to Korea at an impressive service in the Zion Presbyterian church in Charlottetown, last night. She will leave on August 1.

LOCAL NEWS

We have long khaki pants for the young lads, in all sizes. For \$1.98 a pair. At Bassett's, 14-16-18 Charlotte. 7-22

Teausters and chauffeurs meet tonight at 8 o'clock in their rooms at the corner Prince William and Church streets. All teausters, chauffeurs and jitney drivers will be in attendance.

Gentlemen! You have no need to wear overalls, you can buy strong tweed pants for \$1.98 a pair at Bassett's, 14-16-18 Charlotte St. 7-22

EASY ON POCKETBOOK. And easy on feet, too. Patent leather pumps, high or low heel, only \$2.92, at Model Shoe Store, 641 Main street.

Lace curtains by the yard, and all kinds of scrim, marquisette and all kinds of cottons and muslins for less money at Bassett's, 14-16-18 Charlotte. 7-22

BIG CUT IN PUMPS. Patent leather pumps, high or low heels. Special at \$2.98—Model Shoe Store, 641 Main street.

Ladies! Come and do all your shopping for less money at Bassett's, 14-16-18 Charlotte St. 7-22

WHO PAYS THE DEFICIT? To the Editor of The Times: Sir,—I hesitate to take up more of your space in discussing a matter which I think must be perfectly plain to most people. However, since you seem to have overlooked or misunderstood the point of my argument, I am tempted to try again to make it plain. So far as I can see it is not material whether you say that the charges enumerated in clause 20 of the act, "may" be or "shall" be or "must" be legal charges against the revenue, the question is if the revenue is not sufficient to pay all these charges, who makes good the deficiency? The owner of the property of course. Under the present ownership the city of St. John makes good the deficiency, and we as taxpayers pay. If the same property is transferred to the dominion government, that government will have to make good any deficiency, whether the act says so or not, and the people of Canada will pay.

Let me illustrate. Suppose that you buy a property that you are unable yourself to look after, a block of buildings in another city, for instance. You appoint a competent agent to look after it. You say that you want to get at least sufficient revenue out of it to pay taxes, insurance and interest on investment in the order named. These are legitimate charges against the property. But the property is in a bad state of repair, the rents have not been sufficient to pay insurance along with other charges and the previous owner has not been able to make needed improvements. Now your agent finds that he cannot raise the rents because of the competition of other nearby property, but if he is a good agent he will make the property more attractive by improving it. He will ensure that it will at least be fully occupied and perhaps will consider it advisable to add another story or in some way increase the accommodations. But, after all, the expenditure outstrips the revenue, and what are you going to do about it? You may quibble as much as you like about words, but whether you say that the legitimate charges "may" be or "shall" be paid out of the revenue will make no difference. You will find that, as owner of the property, you will have to make good the deficiency. That, it seems to me, is exactly parallel to what the position of the government and its agent, the commission, will be with reference to the St. John harbor under the proposed act.

The act proposes to appoint a commission as the agent of the government to administer the harbor property as a whole to the best advantage; under the commission is composed of lunatics they will not raise harbor rates to a point that will drive business away or even have a deterrent effect upon business. They will rather seek to attract business by improving facilities and lowering rates and in that way endeavor to increase revenue.

Mr. Ballantyne, you remind us, told parliament that "hereafter harbor commissions would be expected to finance themselves out of revenue," but did you not previously advise us to pay no attention to what Mr. Ballantyne says, but be guided by the act? I would add, also, by experience and precedent in the administration of similar acts. The act nowhere says that the commission must raise rates, or even that the commission shall be paid out of revenue and in what order—provided, of course, there is sufficient revenue to pay them. But suppose there is not sufficient revenue, what happens? Why, the owner of course is obliged to make good the deficiency as the taxpayers of St. John are now doing.

You ask what is the value of the government property upon which there will be interest at 3½ per cent chargeable against the revenue. I don't know, but the act says that the interest is to be charged upon the "cost of construction."

I therefore conclude that it is only upon the actual cost of buildings such as the elevator, wharves and warehouses, and does not include land. The wording of the act therefore limits the charge to this account to a figure which must be a matter of record, and will be easily ascertained by the commission. It seems to me perfectly reasonable that that portion of the harbor property now owned by the government should bear interest at 3½ per cent when that proposed to be acquired from the city is to bear a higher rate.

Yours truly, W. F. BURDITT.

St. John, N. B., July 20, 1921.

In this letter to The Times Mr. W. F. Burditt appears to find an exact parallel between a man who makes a speculative purchase of a block of buildings and the government of Canada in its dealings with a national port. People generally will hardly agree with Mr. Burditt. He does not deny that the harbor commission act places upon the harbor commission a burden it cannot bear. Why, then, approve of the act? Why not insist upon an agreement which will make it clear that development work will go on as it did in Halifax without burdening the harbor revenue? The citizens of St. John are not paying any harbor deficit. The harbor yields a substantial surplus. There is nothing in the harbor commission act to say that development of the harbor will proceed beyond what the traffic will bear. Mr. Burditt would have the city give up control of the harbor and trust the government. That is his argument—a nutshell.



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PLAYER'S

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CIGARETTES

AT BISLEY

Bisley, July 21—(Canadian Associated Press)—The weather is bright and it is much cooler today for the last stage of the King's prize, fifteen shots each at 900, and 1000 yards. Those Canadians who failed to reach the last stage are leaving camp.

Petty Officer Morton won the Elkhington aggregate for total scores in the Duke of Cambridge and City of London matches. Sgt. A. Lucas of Toronto was fourth; Sgt. A. F. B. Wilson of Ottawa, sixth; Lieut. H. W. Patterson of Ottawa, 14th; Captain W. E. Swaine of Kingston, 19; Gunner W. E. Tingman of Quebec, 21st. They win a pound each. Canada wins the Colonial prize of fifty pounds, given to the team exclusive of the mother country team which makes the highest aggregate score in the Kestrel Cup match.

LITTLE BOTTLE OF BRANDY MAKES HIM FIRST UNDER NEW LAW

Ottawa, July 21—Luke Lynch, giving Quebec city as his address, is probably the first victim of the laws which made Ontario bone dry as from July 19. He was placed under arrest at 12.30 this morning on the Soo train and had a small bottle of brandy in his possession. He will appear in police court today.

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P. Nash & Son, Ltd., Indian Town.
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