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THE COUNCIL AND THE STREET RAILWAY

The discussion of the Street Railway Committee's report at a special meeting of the City Council on Tuesday afternoon showed that the proposal to retain the franchise and operate the road by the city had a great many more supporters in the Council than was generally supposed. The idea that it would be well to proceed cautiously and to try civic management for a time, at least as an experiment, before irrevocably committing the city to a twenty years' lease, finds warm advocates among many who are not as yet prepared to commit themselves fully to the principle of municipal control of all public services. The aldermen are proceeding with the consideration of the conditions on which the franchise is to be leased, on the distinct understanding that Ald. Macdonald's resolution for a popular vote on the question as to whether the city shall run the road is to be voted on at the next Council meeting, and that if that resolution is carried all further proceedings will be subject to the result of the de-

cision speak out and strengthen the hands of those who are holding their breath, before it is too late.

HENRY GEORGE'S CAREER AND ITS LESSON

HENRY GEORGE, the apostle of the Single Tax movement, has withdrawn from the management of the New York Standard, as that paper has been a financial failure, and has for some time been hanging round.

There have been few men who have achieved world wide celebrity so suddenly, or whose popularity and prestige have ebbed so quickly as the writer of "Progress and Poverty." Mr. George wielded enormous influence, and has left a permanent impression on the thought of his day. He has unquestionably done more than any one else to popularize correct views on the land question and impress upon the public mind the injustice and robbery involved in the system of private land ownership. For this, despite his subsequent errors, every Labor Reformer owes him a debt of gratitude.

The enthusiasm with which Henry George's book and lectures were received made his name a tower of strength among Labor Reformers. In 1886 he became candidate for the mayoralty of New York, and although defeated, made a splendid run and polled a very large vote. Previously labor candidates in that city had proved indelicate failures, but the heavy vote cast for George, despite the fact that the election machinery was in the hands of his opponents, inspired Labor Reformers every where with new heart and hope.

and forget their pledges afterwards with equal facility. So long as the Labor Reformers get their professed principles second to party, and play into the hands of those interested, who to schemers we shall accomplish very little. Our only hope lies in an absolutely independent political action. If Henry George had remained true to his principles and maintained his position unwaveringly instead of diluting his views to please the allies of Capitalism he probably would have been in Canada today with a large following he had found. In any event he would have been the honored leader of a large and influential body of progressive men actuated by the old spirit and enthusiasm.

Not despite his faults as a politician, Henry George is a great man and has done grand work, and every Labor Reformer will hope that as a lecturer and writer he has yet a long career of usefulness before him.

A PURCHASED PRESS.

It is true that the people of this city woke up to the way in which their interests are being betrayed by the party and monopoly-riddled daily press of Toronto, in the matter of the street railway franchise. In view of the action of the leading newspapers on the question, upon the secret Committee's doings (as we have made public, it is evident that senior influencers have been brought to bear upon more than one editorial pen. The course of the committee in assuming to advertise for tenders was clearly a usurpation of powers to which they had no shadow of legitimate claim. Granting that according to the terms of the resolution constituting the Committee, it was within their power to consider a scheme for the disposal of the road—that is an entirely different thing from taking steps to carry such a scheme into effect by advertising for tenders before it has had the approval of the Council.

form of direct bribery but by means of some of the commentators by which great financial interests are identified with journalistic management.

In view of the terms which the discussion on the street railway by the City Council has taken, the Nationalist Association may fairly congratulate themselves that their labor has not been altogether fruitless.

The London County Council and many other British municipal bodies are inserting clauses in their contracts for public works, that only firms paying standard, that is union rates of wages, will be awarded contracts.

At the meeting of the City Council on Tuesday afternoon Ald. Benson expressed himself in favor of leasing the Street Railway for a term of ninety-nine years. This is an eminently Denisonian idea. A ninety-nine year lease has a fine, old, medieval, antiquated flavor about it, which carries one back to the last century when men were hanged for sheep-stealing, the parson and the squire ran everything to suit themselves, and the mass of the people paid their taxes and were contented "to do their duty in that sphere of life, etc." Yes, it is truly Denisonian.

In the British municipal elections held during November thirty-eight working men candidates were returned in several cases at the head of the poll. In Northampton the labor candidates were defeated owing to divisions, and in several constituencies the Liberals withdrew the official party candidate in favor of the labor representative. The only qualification for a seat in a British Municipal Council is that of being a male and entitled to vote at the elections. Every householder, male or female, is entitled to be on the voters' list. In these particulars the old country is far in advance of Canada.

DISCUSSING THE STREET RAILWAY QUESTION AT THE GLOBE OF WEDNESDAY EVENING.

The idea of operating the road by a committee of the Council as at present constituted would be treated with derision, and justly so. Well, then, why does not the Globe proceed to "treat with derision" the idea of constructing streets and sidewalks, maintaining the water works service and the fire brigade, and providing the people with parks and squares by a committee of the Council? If a committee of the Council is unfit to appoint an expert to manage the road and see that he does it honestly and efficiently, without interfering in details, what is Heaven's name are they fit for? If the Globe has deliberately come to the conclusion that the people are unfit for self government let it say so, and advocate the appointment of a commission to manage our affairs.

Ald. Macdonald's scheme for civic reorganization which proposes to abolish the existing ward system and substitute four districts each returning six aldermen, thus reducing the total assembly-fourteen is a good one in its main features. It proposes the payment of aldermen, the heads of the three committees—who with the Mayor will constitute the Board of Control to receive not more than \$2,000 each, and other aldermen to be paid \$5 for each Council or Committee meeting which they attend. The Mayor would be given fiscal powers and greater responsibility than at present. These features of the scheme should be heartily approved, but there is one serious defect in the measure. The proposal that the aldermanic term of office shall be two years in place of one, as a reactionary one and if adopted would tend to weaken the power of public opinion over our representatives, which is none too great now.

The speech of Sir Richard Cartwright to the Young Liberals on Monday evening was marked by an interesting episode. The speaker had charged the Dominion Government with preventing the settlement of the North-West by the landless impecunious settlers. At the close Mr. J. S.

Macdonald, a well known Young Liberal, got the floor as second speaker. He thinks and pointed out Richard's inconsistency in accusing a certain Sir Joseph gasconade the settlers, while he himself is owner of large tracts of undeveloped land in the North West was discouraging the producer, by holding property until the value thereof is ascribed to the labor of others. This point was well taken, but the Young Liberals were not liberal enough to refrain from hooting and grousing the speaker in default of being able to answer his arguments.

Mr. A. T. Middleton of this city who has devoted a good deal of attention to the question of free school books has written an instructive letter on the subject to the Toronto School Board giving particulars as to the working of the system in several of the United States where its operation has been most satisfactory. On the basis of the American statistics available Mr. Middleton estimates that while the present annual expenditure for books for the Public School pupils of Toronto is \$50,000, under the free school book system they would cost at most \$15,000 for the first year and \$5,000 for each subsequent year. The cost would be met by an addition of 1-10th of a mill to the taxes for the first year and 1-20th of a mill afterwards. The School Board would meet the wishes of the great mass of its constituents by strongly urging this change upon the legislature.

AFTER a somewhat lively discussion, the Trades and Labor Council at their last meeting agreed to cooperate with the District Assembly in organizing a series of Sunday evening lectures on the labor question. The only objections raised were on Sabbatarian grounds, and we are glad to notice that they were overruled. This is emphatically a case in which the proverb "the better the day the better the deed" is strictly applicable. Temperance and Moral Purity organizations, the Jesus Christ promoters of which make strong professions of religion, hold their meetings on Sunday, without a word of protest, and it certainly does not look very consistent on the part of any Labor Reformer, to admit that our cause is any less righteous than these movements. Sunday evening is in many cases the only one in the week when the workingman can conveniently attend such a gathering. We trust that everything possible will be done to make these lectures successful.

We do not admit for a moment the likelihood of the citizens deeding to hand the street railway over to a municipality to be run as a source of profit. Still elections are provisionally necessary, and in the event of such a change being reached owing to the misrepresentations of any particular class, it will be provided for by some contingency. If it is provided to be the least of the greatest evils should be taken that the rights of labor are properly safeguarded. The stipulations in the scheme reported by the Street Railway Committee are—as we pointed out in last issue—not really satisfactory to see this defect remedied, and to move in Committee, and afterwards if necessary in Council, that the proposition be changed so as to read that no employee shall work "instead of" shall be compelled to work "as in the report" more than ten hours per day, and also to move the insertion of a clause fixing the minimum rate of pay at fifteen cents per hour. The action of the Council on this matter will be watched by the labor organizations with much interest.

The free reading rooms in connection with the Toronto Public Library and its branches, are supported by the money of the people at large and therefore the tastes and interests of every considerable section of the public in regard to reading matter ought to be consulted. This would only be fair but on looking over the list of periodical publications taken and kept in file we find one very considerable con-

cision of the citizens. Still there is a reason ominous look about the action of the Council in voting down Ald. Ritchie's amendment for the insertion of a distinct proviso to that effect in the specifications—on the suggestion of Mayor Clarke that it "would frighten capitalists." Does His Worship suppose that the capitalists do not read every word of the reports of the Council meetings bearing on the subject? But the assurances given that the people would be given an opportunity to be pronounced on the question, before its final settlement have been too distinct to allow of the resolution being suppressed.

The language of a supposed pledge given to the citizens though slightly altered for it that the city would not undertake the operation of the road as a business industry some of the Council who would otherwise be disposed to favor the project. It ought not to need emphasizing that the proposition to rest the decision upon the result of a popular vote—carried out completely dispenses of that objection.

On the whole the effect of Tuesday's discussion is decidedly satisfactory. The speeches and forcibly uttered protest of Ald. R. A. Macdonald against the undue haste and recklessness with which some members wished to reach the loan's through, and his clear presentation of the principle that every enterprise in its nature a monopoly ought to be under public and not private control, settle him to the gratitude of all public spirited citizens. Ald. Frankland made a excellent speech in favor of the experiment being tried for a time at least, and Ald. Lusk's endorsement of this proposal is equally to his credit. Among others who took strong ground for a reference to the elections of father and father consideration of the feasibility of civic management were Aldermen Lindsay, Ritchie, Hewitt, Leslie and McAllen. Ald. Macdonald, as chairman of the Committee of the Whole, took no part in the deliberations, but his resolution on the subject speaks for itself.

And now let the citizens and above all the members of the labor organi-

zation continue to support. He showed a fatal weakness—shared it is true by too many others of whom better things were expected—in allowing to the storm of general and prejudiced popular passion, and justifying the crime of the 11th of November, 1887—which will ever be a dark stain upon the American judicial system—the logic flogging of the Chicago anarchists. This result was that when he next entered the political field the analysis of the vote showed how far the radical element had been alienated by his course.

From that time Henry George as editor and politician devoted his principle energies to cultivating the "respectable" and wealthy class, in order to do this he presented his doctrines in a considerably modified form. The term "Single Tax" was invented as a ready line to give offence to property owners and social conservatives than "Land Nationalization." When the presidential election for 1888 came on Mr. George vigorously exposed the Democratic case, and his paper became virtually a Cleveland campaign sheet. The Democratic party have never given him the slightest ground to imagine that they are likely to do anything for the plain, solid ones of a single tax, about which knowers care a hundred times as often as care anything. But Henry George with singular infatuation insisted on tying what was left of his organization to the tail of the Democratic kite, and carrying his followers to assist in committing the plain, solid ones of an utterly rotten and corrupt political party. And the result is failure.

The history of the American Single Tax movement in its later developments is full of instruction to Labor Reformers. It shows how a great and noble cause can be wrecked by the vanity of its leaders in entering into entangling political alliances with partisans who have no single speck of sympathy for their aims, and only wish to use and betray them. The Green and Tory parties are both anxious to capture the "labor vote," and are prepared to promise anything before elec-

tion. The fact is, partisan and financial considerations are swaying the course of our daily newspapers on this as on every other great question. It is the large money interests represented on the directorate or allied with the proprietorship of the so-called organs of public opinion which is dictating their policy. Political and personal feelings may to a certain extent exercise an influence, but the main and controlling power which writes the daily press of Toronto—with the sole exception of the *Evening News*—in a conspiracy to promote the spoliation of the citizens by a corporation is the power of hoards—not necessarily in the credit-

also their credit power, there has been no hearty, capillary, condemnation of the act from the daily press. Considering the magnitude of the issue involved, and the importance to the future of Toronto of the question to be decided in a few weeks at farthest, the press of Toronto has been singularly remiss in its duties. There has hardly been the semblance of intelligent discussion on the question, nor brought into prominence by the proceedings in Council of whether the city shall retain and operate the road, or let the franchise to a private corporation. When the matter has been mentioned it has been handled in an off hand and casual way, without attempting to present fairly the arguments against parting with the franchise, still less to answer them. The whole question of leasing the road—suddenly sprung on the people by the forcing of the doors of the Secret Committee—is being decided for twenty years to come, and the daily press—the self proclaimed guardians of the people's rights—is consenting at the attempt to crush a snap-judgment in the interests of the monopolists. They are deliberately playing the people of Toronto false by their cowardly silence, or the meagre and commonplace trawling which does duty for opinions in their editorial columns, while the selling out of the franchise, which the citizens thought they had wrested from the monopolists to be used for their own benefit, is being quickly consummated.