

3 OF MAYORALTY CANDIDATES HEARD

McLellan, Potts and McAvity Address Meeting in Pythian Castle.

R. A. McAvity, H. R. McLellan and P. L. Potts, candidates for the Mayorship, were given 20 minutes apiece to expound their platforms to an audience of 750 people at Pythian Castle last night at a meeting held under the auspices of the Civic Progress Party. The speakers came in for a warm reception and the meeting was a success.

Mayor Fisher, a candidate for reelection, was not present, although invited. The candidates for the Mayorship exhausted their time about 9:20 o'clock, when the chairman called on R. G. McInerney, a candidate for the commission under the banner of the Civic Progress Party, to speak on the ideals of the party. At the conclusion of Mr. McInerney's address, Mr. Phillips also spoke.

Each speaker was given a hearty reception. Party Plan Outlined. Herbert Phillips occupied the chair. In opening he outlined the purpose of the Civic Progress Party. It came into being, he said, because of participation in civic affairs by young men. It had its origin in the hydro question and to the fulfillment of the hydro policy it was pledged.

Mayor Fisher, he said, had been invited and because he was not at the meeting it was to be presumed that he had nothing to say. H. R. McLellan. In opening, H. R. McLellan thanked the hosts of the evening for inviting him to the meeting. The first plank of his platform, he said, was to present to the Legislature a bill authorizing the election of representatives from each ward or district to City Hall. He said he would not support the giving to any one man full authority as city manager. He said that the change might probably take place in June. There would be a plebiscite, he said, to test public opinion on this question. He said he was not seeking the change because he wanted to be elected. The commission form, he said, instead of being economical, had proved the reverse. One claim against the aldermanic system was that there was too much log rolling, but the commission form of administration offered many more opportunities. He knew what he was talking about, he said, because he had practiced it himself. There should be a limit placed on bond issues, he said, but it should be a reasonable one.

Deal with the cost of the commission form of city administration, he said that the assessment from 1903 to 1912 increased \$216,962. From 1913 to 1922, under the commission form, it increased \$1,061,041. Valuation. In 1903, the valuation was \$1,000,000. In 1912 it was \$2,742,500 and in 1922 it was \$3,624,800. Under commission from 1913-1922 it increased from \$30,624,800 to \$84,079,900. The tax rate, he said, increased from \$1.62 in 1903 to \$1.96 in 1912 and under commission from \$1.96 to \$2.98. Equality, certainty, convenience and economy were the four principles of taxation laid down by Adam Smith, he said. With these in mind he had come to the conclusion that it was quite within range of reason to provide for these principles in the problems of taxation here. He would exempt income taxes up to \$1,000 with payment of poll tax. He would have a quarterly payment scheme for taxes. One payment, he said, would qualify a person to vote. This was not possible within the sanction of the people of the city, however. He would support the restoration of the Court House, he said, but not expenditures for a great Municipal Building. There should be a new harbor policy. Lastly, he said, he believed in the education of youth in pursuing athletic sports and in this respect would support the building of an athletic where their athletes might be developed. Someone asked "How about you?" Mr. McLellan answered: "I'm dead and I died with it."

Potts. Several years ago, Mr. Potts said, he had worked out a system of flat rate of taxation. He had not studied any of the great authorities but depended on his own intelligence to work out the problems of the city. "Get the system and I'll back it up," he said. The commission form of government did not give fair representation of the people in the city, he said, and he advocated a change. For two years, he said, he fought the street railway; he beat them, but the people beat him, because he would not pay for the foundation for the street railway when paying street. In those two years, he said, he saved the people more money than had been saved to them since. A man had not a chance in this town, he said, at present, with the existing system of assessment and taxation. In the years he was at City Hall, he said, he had not been able to put through a bond issue, so that nothing of that sort could be charged against him.

Wants Improvements Tax Exempt. The position in St. John today, he said, was such that every firm was having the struggle of its life to pay its overhead and wages. "Is the city of St. John prosperous?" he asked. "If you sold the assets out today you couldn't get 75 cents on the dollar for them," was his assertion. The main thing for which he was striving, he said, was on exception from taxes for five years on all improvements. He said how a \$1,000 improvement on a house today meant a tax bill \$30 higher the following year. If a few patriotic citizens would dig down and put a few dollars into the dying industries in the city today these would be saved, he said. He added that it was hard to make them see the light.

"The power of light is what we want," he said. "Did it ever occur to you," he asked, "that you would have to pay for light if you use it or not?" He wanted light at cost, but at the lowest cost. If City Hall was going to spend the money let them be responsible them," he added.

When his time was up the chairman and Mr. Potts had a little tussle. Mr. Potts wanted to speak but his time was up and he subsided at the pressure of the chair.

R. A. McAvity.

In opening Mr. McAvity said that they were not advocating the spending of money on works which were not immediately necessary. Every year that necessary work was put off it would cost the citizens more. Every man in the city would be benefited by the money which would thus be put into circulation through the development of public works as advocated in their policy.

There was a yidro to spare, and having this power, he said, manufactures could be brought here, especially those from the United States, which country was driving them out, he said, by high tariffs and who were going to Ontario, where special inducements were offered them. The same could be done here.

Form of Civic Government.

"No one man is competent to say just what kind of civic government should obtain in the city," he said. He added that it was up to organizations of citizens to name a system and his party would adopt it.

The flat tax rate argument of Mr. Potts, he countered by reading the opinions of commissioners of cities in the west, where it had failed, he said. He also treated the proposition of exemption of improvements in the same way. He treated of the question of investigations into the working of the different departments of city hall and making recommendations to the commission, which he pledged himself to carry out.

The harbor, he said, was the city's greatest asset and business should be sought to develop it. "You hear," he said, "of many shipments through this port by the C. P. R. and so little by the C. N. R. The city should get down to business and get business for the C. N. R. and thus develop this port on its own merits."

The chairman explained that as it was early and Mr. Fisher had not put in an appearance, he would ask R. G. McInerney to explain the objects and ideals of the Civic Progress Party.

Ralph McInerney.

Ralph G. McInerney, candidate for commissioner, dealt with the accusation which had been levelled against the Civic Progress party, that their policy was extravagant, in that they proposed to spend \$2,000,000 for needed civic improvements. Retrenchment

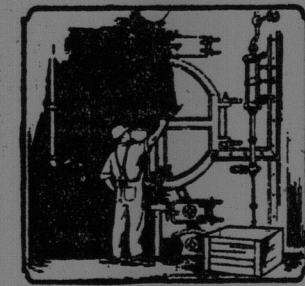
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foundation in the hope of keeping the citizens of St. John in the city, and instead of making the departing ones a liability, to make their staying at home an asset. What was the reason, he asked, that six stores were closed on King street? The explanation was to be found in the migration of the citizens from the city. He dealt with other planks of the Civic Progress Party's platform, as had been outlined by Mr. McAvity.

Herbert Phillips.

Herbert Phillips, also a candidate for a commission, outlined events which led up to the formation of the Civic Progress Party. St. John was stagnating, he said, but at that it was not nearly as bad as it had been painted by one of the speakers. St. John, he said, needed young blood, young men and fresh minds at the helm.

Dealing with the necessary bond issue required to finance the civic improvement policy adopted by the party, he said that a few days ago a gentleman had come into his office and announced that a disgraceful state of affairs existed in St. John. He had asked what the gentleman referred to, and the answer he received was that the city was indebted only to the extent of \$9,000,000. He had agreed with the

gentleman, it was a disgraceful condition for a city the size of St. John and having the facilities which St. John offers for development of trade and industry inside its border, to be in that state. He touched on the hydro question, affirming the policy of the Progress Party to stand by the hydro guns, and work them to the limit, and also treated with the other planks of the platform briefly.

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