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Our Montreal Letter

(From Our Own Correspondent)

SCATHING ARRAIGNMENT OF THE POLICE SYSTEM.

The administration of the Police force in Montreal is antiquated and is fitted only for a city of one hundred people and not for a city of a million such as Montreal. The system in arrests is often revealed. Jealousy among detectives prevents efficient work. We have also found that in the department there is a great amount of ignorance, a lack of initiative, a lack of instruction, lack of co-operation in the work and those in charge; also a failure on the part of the superior officers to study each man individually in order to know his character, his honesty and his ability more thoroughly. Proof of this is seen in the John, Hicks, and Racine case.

The Chief should be entirely independent of all outside influences and above the control of the Executive and the Alderman. It has also been proven that the Chief cannot act on his own initiative and that the law does not permit him to make nominations or to dismiss or promote his men.

Such was a part of a scathing denunciation of the Police System, as given by Arthur Brossard, K.C., one of the lawyers for the petitioners in the judicial probe, which has been in progress since September, 1924. He characterized the Chief of Police as being incompetent, and as the victim of a vicious system.

He recommended the dismissal of the Chief, Captain Forget and, Sauro, Inspector Robert, some of the detectives and policemen, as they were unworthy of the confidence placed in them by the public. Mr. Brossard classified the system whereby certain police officers acted as go-betweens between the public and the police as a disgrace, and that these of commercialized vice, which are allowed to remain open, despite the laws against them, is another proof that officers are lax in their duties. Speaking on the Chief's responsibilities, he said:—The position of Chief of Police is the most important in the administration of the City of Montreal. In effect the Chief is the guardian of the lives and safety of the citizens. It is incumbent upon him to force the respect of the city laws. He is exposed to all sorts of temptations and the snares of such nature as to make him swerve from the path of duty; in consequence, he should be a man well instructed, of strong character, good organizer, completely independent of all influence,

of a reputation above all suspicion and should command the greatest respect and confidence of the population. His officers should be of the same caliber and he should be able to depend upon their judgment, discretion and honesty on all occasions. The position of constable also calls for many qualifications. He should be honest, patient, punctual on duty, active, vigilant, respectful and courteous on all occasions, ready to respect the laws, submissive to discipline of his superiors whom he should respect and esteem.

It is to be hoped that public opinion will be respected and that a change for the better will be put in force.

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS FOR TWO MONTHS.

During the months of November and December there were 1517 deaths in the city from all causes, according to the Health Department report, published January 20th. Tuberculosis as usual led the field with a total of 123 victims while cancer and Bright's disease were tied for second place with 104 deaths each. Pneumonia and broncho-pneumonia were responsible for 69 deaths respectively, while diphtheria, scarlatina and measles claimed 59 victims.

There were 32 deaths due to accidents while there were 946 deaths due to other causes.

There was a slight increase in infant mortality during the year, 3,151 children dying from various causes as compared with 3,057 in 1923. There were 211 deaths in December alone compared with 185 the previous year.

During the last two months of 1924, 1914 cases of contagious diseases were reported to the health department, there being 812 in November and 1102 in December. Scarlet fever had its innings during these two months there being 496 cases reported. Measles also spread its ravages, 433 cases being reported from various sources. The white plague showed a slight decrease over previous months, 193 cases claiming the attention of the authorities. During 1924, 1143 cases were reported, as against 1230 in 1923.

There was an all round increase in contagious during 1924 over the previous year. In 1923 there were 8,774 cases, while in 1924 there were 9,237. Smallpox reared its insidious head for the first time in five years, 9 cases being reported during 1924. It is pointed out, however, that all these cases originated in outside sources and were brought here by sailors or other strangers. There was a very appreciable decrease in influenza, 95 cases being reported last year as compared with 377 in 1923. Summing up, Dr. Boucher, Director of Health, reports decreases last year in more

than fifty per cent. of the diseases reported.

THE THUGS ARE STILL OPERATING.

Even in the early hours of the evening thugs still take a chance.

Three thugs, each holding a gun, held up and robbed Wilfrid Benard, driver for Ekers Brewery, while he was on his way home at 6 o'clock. He was relieved of \$180 cash and a \$33 cheque.

The hold-up occurred at the corner of St. Norbert Street and City Hall Avenue.

THE COLD WAS INTENSE DURING A PART OF JANUARY.

Whew! Cold and very, very cold. The middle of the month of January started with a cold spell that was simply trying in many respects. Snow storms, a high, biting wind, fog, which increased the severity of the temperature, and sub-zero weather for a week, made life uncomfortable for thousands, especially the poor. The glittering frost shone like myriads of jewels, and grew resplendent with the sun's rays, or the electric lights, but the populace still shivered. Yes, a penetrating frost, mingled with the dampness that defied the heaviest clothing as proof against it. Plumbers had to work day and night thawing out frozen pipes and repairing radiators. Furnace men worked overtime to try and supply the necessary heat in houses and apartments.

Here are some of the places and the temperature:—Montreal, 15 below; Westmount, 10 below; St. Lambert, 22 to 27 below; Verdun, 20 below; Lachine, 32 below; St. Anne's, 17 below; Carterville, 38 below; Montreal East, 40 below. Lennoxville capped the climax at 45 below. In other parts of the Province, the temperature ranged from 30 to 38 below.

ALL THE HOSPITALS ARE OVERCROWDED.

The city hospitals are taxed to capacity and hundreds of patients cannot be accommodated. In the last few days some institutions here had to absolutely refuse emergency and ambulance calls for the want of accommodation. Dr. Hayward, Supt. of the Montreal General says that the hospitals in Montreal have not been growing in proportion to the population and that the situation is growing worse and worse every year and now a climax has been reached.

HE HAD LOST HIS BEST FRIEND AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

"In all the world—go where you will—You'll never find another. Who'll stick to you through good or ill. And love you like a mother."

Love for his best friend, his mother, and grieved at his loss, for she had passed away only six weeks ago, made a 16 year old High School boy so lonely and despondent, that he attempted suicide by sending a bullet from a 32 calibre pistol crashing through to his heart. A rib deflected the course of the bullet, and he was found in a dying condition. As his brother gathered the youth in his arms, he asked him what he had done. "I'm dying," murmured the boy lifting up his head. "I did it because I want to be with my mother." The doctors at the Montreal General Hospital say that his chances for recovery are slim.

THE PROVINCIAL GOVT. SHOW A SURPLUS.

Under the heading of "The Provincial Finances," the Montreal Herald says editorially:—

"The Hon. Mr. Taschereau, in his reply to the Speech from the Throne, had some words of warning as well as of congratulation, in regard to the state of the Provincial finances. His remarks in alluding to the surplus of nearly \$1,500,000 for the past year deserve special emphasis at this time." He said:

"We closed the last fiscal year with a surplus of about a million and a half. We have ground for congratulations in this fact, especially when we notice that the last fiscal year in the rich and great province of Ontario closed with a deficit of \$15,000,000, and that the Treasurer of that province expects a deficit of \$8,000,000 for this year, and that the other provinces of Canada could not make ends meet. During the 28 years that the Liberal party has been in power, there has been constant succession of surpluses, the result being that our credit in the money markets is of the highest. At the same time we have not spared needed expenditures for our roads, for public instruction in all its ramifications, for agriculture, colonization, for forest protection, and for steel bridges. The only danger to-day for us is that our very prosperity results in appeals and demands from all sides, so much so that we should fail to be good administrators if we granted them all."

"The crisis is still acute, times are still hard, the European markets are almost closed and there is in some directions a vicious pessimism which stops initiative and paralyzes efforts. All this requires prudence and economy on our part."

"The people of Canada are crushed under taxes. It is hard for a young country. I have no wish to seek the causes nor to place the blame, but if new demands require new taxes, I say without hesitation, no. I would

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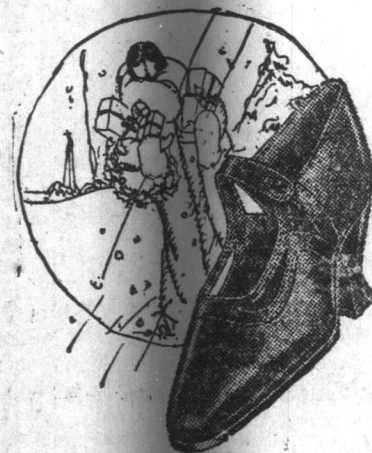
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 Dance Music and Novelty program by Ev. Jones and his WTAM Dance Orchestra and assisting artists.

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