

on the electors' lists in force, or to the real estate owners only on such lists, any matter or question affecting the interests of the City, upon which the Council may deem it desirable to ascertain the opinion of the electors generally or of the real estate owners, as the case may be; but the Council shall not pass any by-law or resolution in virtue of any opinion of the electors or real estate owners so ascertained, that shall not be subject in all respects to the provisions of this charter.

Articles 343, 344, 348 confer upon Council the power to effect a loan provided the proprietors to be taxed approve of the by-law previously adopted by two-thirds of the Council.

Consequently the ratepayers have full liberty to take part in deciding whether or not the debt is to be increased, and, should they consent to an increase, they have the right to indicate the special purposes to which the loan is to be devoted.

A majority of the present council is in favour of improving the City with the object of raising the property valuation, increasing the population of our City and placing Montreal in the first rank of American cities. But, taught by the lessons of the past, this majority does not wish to increase the debt without consulting the citizens. If the proprietors ask for a loan, as they have the power to do according to the charter, the reorganizers of our municipal administration are prepared to submit a by-law for their examination.

Is it advisable to Amend the Present Charter?

The Charter granted to the City of Montreal is not a new document. It is the result of sixty years of improvement to our civil law and it is the safeguard of the rights of citizens. It has been successively modified in the general interest and it would be imprudent to change it for the advantage of individuals. Some people may find that the restrictions interfere with their personal enterprises and they demand that it be amended. But it must not be forgotten that the Charter is our constitution and that every modification to it, unless maturely considered, may be prejudicial to the ratepayers in general. The first trip to Quebec to have certain articles changed, launches us upon a dangerous journey. Electors may always be consulted by means of a referendum as to the necessity of modifying the Charter, and, according to their decision, the Council can ask the Legislature to sanction the