

# The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1912.

## THE CITY LANDS.

The Civic Commissioners are considering the question of the management of the city lands. Some time ago a policy was adopted of selling the lands to the leaseholders and quite a large block of the freehold owned by the city has passed into the hands of private holders, some of it at prices which are not beyond criticism. The management of corporation land is one of the incidents of civic government that no one who understands the question regards with any degree of pride. It has been about as bad as it could be and anyone who doubts this statement should make an examination of the civic rent roll. Who can explain why lots of the same size and on the same street have been leased to the original holders at rentals varying from fifty cents to twelve or fifteen dollars per annum. It is true that not many of the lots have been leased at the low figure but there are instances. It is not uncommon to find lots, one leased at five dollars and the other at ten, and what is more remarkable the leases were effected at the same date.

The large number of leases outstanding and the fact that the holders did not desire any change and were ready to oppose any member of the Council who suggested an improvement in the management of the property of the people had an important influence in preventing action on the part of the Common Council. In the majority of instances the city would have been money in pocket by handing over the fee simple of the land and by taxing it at its full value. This is the opinion of those who have given the question some consideration. The assessors hold a different view and assert that in considering the value of the property for assessment purposes the rental paid for city lots was a factor. It may have been but the returns do not show it. Indeed it may be said that the valuation of property for assessment purposes has not been conducted on a very scientific basis. It has been rather haphazard and the result has been far from satisfactory.

Sales of city property so far conducted have not always resulted in the interests of the city financially, and no more should be made until some better plan has been adopted. St. John has a splendid asset in its real estate, but the system under which it has been and is being managed must be revolutionized before the city will get anything like the revenue it should get from its present holdings. The problem is not so easy of solution as most people suppose. As the city has parted from the control of much of the land not under lease to the Federal Government, or the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the consideration being improved harbor facilities, the greater part remaining in the hands of rental holders, the city practically at the mercy of the leaseholders. A very large block of the most valuable real estate owned by the city is held under perpetual lease at startlingly low rentals.

There are ways of dealing with the city leaseholders, but the most practical one is through the assessment law. The public will watch with interest the method the Commissioners will suggest in dealing with this question. It was too much for the old Common Council and kept that body guessing for years. It has also proved a power for city officials who have been called upon to administer the estate, and they have been chiefly concerned about how much of the street account expenditure could be charged with safety to the public lands account. In past years the revenues of both the lands and the harbor have helped out the street account, but the present Commissioners will no doubt be above the employment of such questionable transactions even to help out a badly overtaxed account.

## THE TREND OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT.

As an indication of the growing strength of the Government, it is instructive to note the returns in the seven bye-elections held since Mr. Borden took office, a little more than a year ago. Taken as a whole the bye-elections show that Conservative majorities have risen from 1,323 to 2,390, and Liberal majorities have fallen from 1,518 to 462. It was a favorite argument of the organs of the Opposition, smarting under defeat, that the general election was won by "flag waving" and similar appeals to public sentiment. The steady gains which the Government has made in the bye-elections leaves no room for doubt that the great majority of the electors were and are in favor of the principles laid down in Mr. Borden's platform.

In South Renfrew, where the first bye-election was held, on the resignation of Mr. T. A. Low, to provide a seat for Mr. Graham, the Liberal majority was reduced from 619 to 223. Kootenay, the next constituency opened, when Mr. Goodeve was appointed a member of the Railway Commission, went to his successor, Mr. R. T. Green, by acclamation. South Simcoe, where a bye-election became necessary on the elevation of Mr. Haughton Lennox to the bench, also returned a Conservative, Mr. W. A. Boys, by acclamation. In Richelieu, the Liberal majority in Macdonald was increased from 156 to 194. Carleton returned a Conservative by acclamation. In Hochelaga, which went to the Liberal party in 1908 by 155, Mr. Coderre increased his majority from 1,362 to 2,206.

While it is true that in Hochelaga the Liberals did not enter a candidate, and Mr. Doyon ran as an independent with Nationalist support, the result was nevertheless a stinging rebuke to the views frequently expressed in the Liberal press that there should be no emergency contribution to Naval Defence. Mr. Coderre ran his election on this issue. Every French division in the constituency gave him a good majority and in Westmount he received a vote of 39 to 1. Mr. Doyon lost his deposit. From the result in Hochelaga it is clear that no plebiscite is necessary upon the present navy question. Canadians of all creeds and races are prepared to support the recommendations of the Government, realizing that Mr. Borden and his colleagues have full knowledge of the needs of the situation.

## WHEAT AND FLOUR.

The anxiety of the millers of the United States to have the people of Canada adopt the Taft-Fletcher Reciprocity treaty was one of the features of the campaign of last year. This anxiety is quite recently explained by the returns laid before a committee of the United States Senate relating to the milling industry in that country. The evidence shows that in 1900 the United States exported 15,700,000 barrels of flour and in 1910 only 9,041,000 barrels, a falling off of more than 50 per cent. The ex-

ports of Canadian flour in 1900 was 771,000 barrels and in 1910 3,064,000 barrels. These facts lead the Toronto News to observe: "In a decade United States exports have been cut in half and ours have multiplied four times. In 1900 American flour exports were only three times as great as ours. In the ten-year period the Canadian industry has developed amazingly and its product has secured a growing hold on the British and European market. In short, Canadian and United States flour are strong rivals in the old world, and our own brands are getting the upper hand."

Hence the panicky eagerness of the Minneapolis and Duluth millers to control the Canadian wheat crop. Hence the fight for Reciprocity which they put up on both sides of the international border. Hence their intense disappointment over its defeat. If they could once get control of our wheat yield the American export milling trade would be saved. With our abundant raw material at their command they would meet the products of our own mills in Great Britain.

Surely we should not pay the United States to take its duty off our wheat. Surely it will be wiser to do all we can to take advantage of our favored natural position, and to build up in our own territory the world's greatest milling industry. Under the National Policy we are travelling rapidly in that direction. Americans are beginning to transfer their mills to Canada. One is to be erected at Moose Jaw and another at Kenora. It may even be found wise for the Government to bonus flour mills as a means of keeping the by-products of Canadian wheat as far as possible on Canadian soil. The retention of these by-products means that the Western Canadian livestock industry will be stimulated and that Western Canadian farm lands will be continually re-fertilized.

"Only a few years ago Canada entered into competition with the United States in the production of cheese for export. For a while it was a stern chase, but we soon overtook and passed the Republic, which now trails far behind. If we stick to the National Policy and remain true to our own interests, we shall soon have the commanding position as a shipper of wheat flour to Great Britain and other consuming countries. At present the United States is increasing its wheat production, but if it decides hence the Republic should cease to export and begin to import wheat and flour, we should take care to supply the shortage as far as possible in flour, rather than in raw wheat. The national ideal should always be to manufacture here at home and to keep as much as possible of the work, the by-products and the profits for our own people."

There seems to be a general consensus of opinion that St. John needs a new building law. There is no doubt on this question, but the question should not rest there. The city needs a new charter. The existing charter has been changed in so many ways and these changes are spread over so many Acts of Assembly that it is safe to assert that the Recorder is about the only civic official who has anything like an exact knowledge of the number and extent of the important alterations made in the charter or of laws under which the city is governed. It is too much to expect the Commissioners to undertake the revision of the charter, but they should appoint a commission to frame a new charter on modern lines.

A recent despatch from Seattle conveys the interesting information that the oldest tree on the North American continent is dead from natural causes. The great fir stood in Ravenna Park and has existed longer than the Christian era. A fir stump forty feet from this big tree has enough ring growths to show that its age must be more than 1,000 years. The rings are from eleven to sixteen to the inch. The diameter of this tree was about twelve, while that of the giant fir is close to twenty feet. The radius of this diameter is ten feet, and counting an average of 16 annual ring growths per inch would make its age from 1,700 to 2,000 years.

Judge Crane of Brooklyn, New York, who was recently called upon to impose sentence on a man convicted of manslaughter, has established a new precedent. Instead of imposing a sentence of a short term in prison, or a fine, he made an order that the convicted man should make a weekly contribution towards the support of the family of the man he killed. This is good common sense—no matter how lawyers may view the case.

Those who adopt the White Slave trade as a livelihood in Great Britain will in future run considerable personal risk. Parliament has recently passed a new law which fixes whipping as the punishment for the crime of inducing women to enter upon a life of immorality, and the penalty is imposed for the first as well as for subsequent offences.

## Current Comment

The Real Reason.  
(Moose Jaw News.)

Charles W. Elliott, ex-president of Harvard University, is of the opinion that the existing social unrest on this continent is attributable to defects in the public school system of education. If this a contributing factor it is only a minor one. For the social unrest proceeds really from an effort to turn the world right side up, there being an impression that it is now upside down.

Annexing Troubles.  
(Ottawa Citizen.)

While it is stated that less than half a hundred cases of divorce will come before the Canadian Parliament this season, it must not be forgotten that many Canadians settle their matrimonial troubles on the other side of the line. Between 1887 and 1906 there were 455 Canadian cases a year in the United States, or an aggregate of 8,645.

In Unity There is Cash.  
(Hamilton Spectator.)

A difference of \$2 per barrel on apples sold by co-operative methods in Lambton county, over those disposed of by independent growers, should furnish the most convincing argument to farmers that, as in other lines of industry, in unity there is not only strength, but increased money in pocket.

The Universal Language.  
(St. Thomas Times.)

A Hungarian young man and an American girl have just been married, neither understanding the speech of the other. Love is still the only universal language.

Is Marriage a Failure?  
(Montreal Province.)

A convict who escaped from the Chicago jail in order to get married, returned voluntarily the next week and asked for his old cell.

The Progress of Peace.  
(Bangor News.)

The American Navy is about to present, with its compliments, another \$10,000,000 argument to the ardent propagandists of peace.

The Waste of War.  
(Saskatoon Phoenix.)

It has been estimated that the war in Tripoli cost Italy one million dollars a day. And all she is likely to get is a heap of trouble abroad, and discontent at home.

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## DR. O. B. PRICE, M.P.P. KEEPS HIS PROMISES

(Moncton Times.)

It will be remembered that previous to the recent local election Dr. O. B. Price promised the I. C. R. employees at the new shops, that a lease would be secured from the Federal government for the extension of the street railway over government property to a point in close proximity to the new works. Since that time Dr. Price has met with considerable opposition, but through his persistent efforts has at last been successful in securing a lease from the government.

Yesterday Dr. Price received the following telegram from the Hon. J. D. Hazen:

Ottawa, Ont., Nov. 21, 1912.

Dr. O. B. Price,

Moncton, N. B.

Your letter fourteenth received has been signed and will be sent you by secretary department always and canals.

(Signed) J. D. HAZEN.

This announcement will be gratifying to the men as it will place the car service much nearer to their work and save them a three minute walk to the city boundary.

Dr. Price stated that the work of extension will begin the first of next week.

## AMUSING FOR MEN OF SECRET SERVICE

When President-elect Wilson Occupies White House They Will Dig Greek Roots and Split Infinitives.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 22.—Under the new law requiring the secret service to provide for the protection of the president-elect three sleuths have been despatched to Princeton to become the guard of Governor Wilson. Those inclined at first to envy them, the jobs should pause, for under the best administration the lot of the policeman to use the generic term, will not be a happy one.

At present their jobs are snags, as President Taft rarely plays more than 18 holes, and a golf course makes an enjoyable promenade. But under the new regime all will be changed.

Mr. Wilson is a passionate pedestrian, and probably will have a private speedway built on the back porch of the White House, where he can enjoy his sport under cover. The secret service men who will accompany him on these hikes, some of which will doubtless be stretched to 15 or 20 minutes at a time, will be required to pass a sentence or conjugate a verb with equal ease, discuss the interesting phases of anthropology, dip into the nebular hypothesis, exchange views on economic problems and argue at length questions in history, geography, Latin, algebra and politics.

Excise at the White House promises to be a serious thing, indeed, calculated to tire even the most athletic of Chief White's men. The new president will probably start the day digging Greek roots, and wind it up by going out where the tennis court used to be and splitting a few infinitives.

The secret service men should receive good pay. They will earn it.

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