

## REPORTS SHOW FINANCIAL POSITION OF CITY IS GOOD

Statement by Mayor Frink and Annual Reports of Chamberlain and Comptroller Submitted to Council Yesterday.

At the meeting of the common council yesterday the mayor submitted an interesting statement on the financial position of the city, and the reports of the comptroller and chamberlain were received. The reports showed that the city had maintained the exemplary financial position it has enjoyed for years, but indicated that the citizens want public improvements they must expect to pay for them.

His worship said: Gentlemen—The reports of the chamberlain and those of the comptroller and auditor have been presented to me today, and I now submit them to the council. It has been customary for some years for the chairman of the treasury board to present in connection with these reports an additional one embodying his individual opinion as to their value, and to make comparisons with previous years. Without making any elaborate statement, I think it is perhaps desirable that I should make some comment. The items of receipts and expenditures on various sources are fully set forth; the bonds and debentures issued, and all financial obligations upon which the city has entered, are listed and systematically arranged in a plain simple way so that anyone who may desire can have full information in a few moments. The same applies to the sinking funds which have been set aside from year to year, as the law directs, so that at the due date when the bonds and debentures fall in they can be paid and the debt wiped off the slate. It is gratifying to know that for all the debentures issued since the union with Portland, in 1889, with the exception of the ten year loan of 1905, of \$255,000 at 5 per cent, bonds, there exists sinking funds to provide for their redemption. The same provision was not made for all the issues prior to the last mentioned year and not yet matured; these amount to \$891,488.85. The sinking fund has now reached the large sum of \$1,046,580.92, and as the amount in excess of that required to provide for the redemption of certain issues, and as other large issues, particularly sewerage and water, are inadequately provided for, it has been decided to replenish them from this source. To establish this a bill has been ordered for presentation to the legislature, which will perhaps be passed in the near future as it has been ascertained within a few days that within the confines of a simple short act of the legislature, rather than by a long and costly bill, the city could be given the power to dispose of all the city's lands and property and do whatever it will with the proceeds. Pretty clear evidence that all bills presented to the legislature should receive careful scrutiny and supervision, no matter how democratic the legislature may be, particularly those acts having important bearing on the financial interests of the city.

The bonded indebtedness now stands \$5,028,785.51 an increase for the year of \$25,000, a portion of which was incurred in the year 1911. From the general outlook for 1913 it would appear that a material increase would be made in the funded debt to meet needed civic improvements of a permanent nature, street paving, schools, hospitals and the like; and while the debt is certainly increasing, it will be a favorable comparison with those cities of the west that have gone into existence within the last decade and whose financial obligations are mounting up. This spirit has been so successfully invaded the extreme east as yet. There is a sensible and rational increase in values in the city and immediate suburbs; a perceptible increase in population is best evidenced by the number of taxable polls compiled in the assessors' office, a most accurate indicator.

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In lieu of this, the idea or view is prevalent, that systems which prevail in the extreme west of Canada, and which within a few months have apparently taken a strong hold in the Province of Ontario, should prevail here, through the single tax or land tax, that the land should be the burden and that the individual not possessed of land should bear his indirect tax by increased rentals, etc., as the case may be, for whatever system be adopted, the city has to meet its fixed charges and requirements, no matter who pays, and there can be no escape. There are a great many people in the community today who are of the opinion that the single tax should be applied with the greatest speed, as it is their opinion that it would prove a sovereign remedy for many civic troubles. Yet, the statement made to me by the critic of the British Columbia government a few months ago concerning the land tax question in Vancouver and vicinity impresses me as well as its joys and was quite capable of being overdone. However, following this determination or expression of popular feeling I believe it is the intention of the Commissioners to put the system on trial in St. John this coming year, and have an adjustment of valuations furnished by the Chamberlain and Comptroller, it will be unnecessary for me to further dwell on many of the matters submitted, and conclude with the statement that I have endeavored to keep in close touch with the financial interests and conditions of the city, and the task has been made light by the daily information applied and reported by the chief executive officers in my department, the Chamberlain,

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## MISS LUCY TONGE IS GLAD TO RETURN HOME

"The Little Girl with the Big Voice" Tells of Her Experience on the Road—Pleased with St. John.

"Glad to get back to dear old St. John?—well I guess so."

This is how Miss Lucy Tonge answered The Standard man when he called upon her between shows at the Nickel last evening. The wee woman with the almost baritone voice was fondling two huge bouquets that had just been handed over the footlights, and added to her remark: "Why shouldn't I be tickled to get back home? Just look how the home folks treat me."

"You know my coming here this time is purely an accident, for I was booked for engagements in the Middle States. My literary brought me to Portland and when I saw the fact became known to Mr. Golding, the Nickel manager, he pestered the office to death until I was sent further down the line into Maine, playing Lewiston, Bangor and then I was jumped over the boundary. I return to the larger cities via Waterville and Brunswick, however, and will support the tour."

"Do I like this jumping about sort of life? Well hardly. Still a person sees a lot of the world and if you are at all general you will always manage to get along with your work-fellows and your managers. You see I am booked by my agents and the Keith people have been using my little act for quite a while. I find most fun in sizing up different audiences, sort of studying their temperaments, comparing them with those of other towns."

"What do you think of St. John audiences, as far as your experience goes?" The Standard man ventured. "Well now that's hardly a fair question to ask me, St. John girl, but now that you've asked me I'll try to tell you. St. John people are awfully severe critics. They almost bore me to death with their questions, and extremely cautious with their commendations. They are good judges of music. I have been told they cordially hate vulgarities and vulgarity, but they try to keep their programs free from 'smart stuff'."

"It's funny too, to hear the comments of people, those long wavy hair, you know I am billed everywhere as 'The Little Girl with the Big Voice,' but some people lose sight of that, imagining, I suppose, I should take some Telexian notes, but when I sink lower and lower to almost bass tones, they claim I am a man in woman's clothing and all that sort of thing. I should look more deeply into the matter."

Not a Fair Test. Com. Wigmore said the length of the pipe line was not a fair basis of comparison. On the basis of families assessed if Lancaster was to have the same proportion as the whole service, its water rates would be \$10,000 instead of only \$6,335. On the basis of the number of service pipes the city would be paying \$2,510 instead of \$6,335. Besides the people of the city had to pay general taxes. Under the proposed rates, Lancaster people would not be paying as much as the citizens of St. John as valuations in Lancaster were much lower than in the city. Com. McLeellan's figures for Lancaster were \$100 for the proportion of the cost of superintendence, commission-er's salary, etc.

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## COUNCIL GIVES LANCASTER SAME WATER RATES AS CITY

Commissioners, However, Decline to Guarantee Bonds to Help Street Railway Company Pave Street Along Proposed Extension to Kane's Corner.

The city commissioners yesterday decided not to guarantee bonds to help the street railway company to pave the street along the proposed extension to Kane's Corner, fixed the water rates in Lancaster the same as in the city, and decided to sell occupied city lands in the Parish of Lancaster as soon as possible.

The commissioner of water and sewerage recommended that the rates for assessment for water supply for the Parish of Lancaster in the city and county of St. John, for the present year, which were fixed and determined by this council on the 16th day of September last, be modified so as to provide, that the rates of valuation on real estate and stocks in trade, under schedule B, be made one-half of one per cent, and that the rates under schedule C, and all other supply rates be the same as those fixed and determined for the city of St. John on the 28th day of December last.

A Word for Lancaster. Com. McLeellan said the statement that Lancaster was showing a deficit deserved consideration. He found the pipe line in Lancaster, adding the mileage from Manchester to the Borga corner, was 29,761 feet; the pipe line of Carleton was 51,816 feet. The total revenue from Carleton, including steamers and meters, was \$16,528; the revenue in Lancaster was \$11,643. This meant that the Lancaster service paid 39 cents per foot, while that of Carleton only paid 31 1/2 cents. He thought the people of Lancaster should be treated as well as those of Carleton.

Com. Golding opposed the proposition to make the rate one-half of one per cent. He read a letter from the Fairville board of trade saying investigation showed that the city was making a surplus of \$1100 from Lancaster after paying interest, sinking fund, etc., and opposing any increases in the rates.

Com. Bryant said the alternative proposition would be worse than the 50 per cent. increase. He strongly opposed any increase.

Com. Schofield said the people of Carleton had to pay interest and sinking fund on a bond issue of \$130,000, but in view of Com. McLeellan's statement he thought the city should look more deeply into the matter.

Not a Fair Test. Com. Wigmore said the length of the pipe line was not a fair basis of comparison. On the basis of families assessed if Lancaster was to have the same proportion as the whole service, its water rates would be \$10,000 instead of only \$6,335. On the basis of the number of service pipes the city would be paying \$2,510 instead of \$6,335. Besides the people of the city had to pay general taxes. Under the proposed rates, Lancaster people would not be paying as much as the citizens of St. John as valuations in Lancaster were much lower than in the city. Com. McLeellan's figures for Lancaster were \$100 for the proportion of the cost of superintendence, commission-er's salary, etc.

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