The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, APRIL 24, 1922.

THE WISER COURSE.

It is to be regretted that the impression should be abroad that every one who is not rabidly in favor of the acquisition of the Musquash current and its distribution through a publicly owned system, is playing into the hands of the N. B. Power Company. And it is even more to be regretted that our Canterbury Street contemporaries should have done their utmost to foster this impression, well knowing all the while, as they did, that they were disseminating a gross misrepresentation, which has not one jot or tittle of truth in it.

Citizens have been told that if the Musquash current should be distributed over the Power Company's system the strangle hold that our contemporaries are alleging the Company has upon the city, will be clinched even more firmly. Why should it? If the City undertakes to buy current from Musquash, it can offer the Company the chance to distribute it on its, the City's, own terms. If the Company does no like the terms offered by the City, it can refuse to have anything to do with the matter, and the City can then proceed to instal its own distribution system.

It is now announced that the Hydro Commission will be in a position to turn on the current in a month's time The City will have to make up its mind at once if it is going to take this current or not, and if it does, payment for the same will commence on signing the agreement, whether the current is being used or not. Interest on the construction bonds is running all the time now, and has been for a year or more, and the Provincial Government wants someone to pay it, and also the sinking fund and replacement charges. The City cannot put off paying for the current it has agreed to take until the distribution plant is in working order; that will be the best part of a year yet, and the Government cannot, and will not, foot the interest and other charges all that time.

If current is to be available in a month or so's time at 1.2 cents, it is the height of folly not to take advantage of the Power Company's wires to distribute it. The Company has offered to distribute the current at cost and the only profit it would be permitted to make would be the rental of its wire system. A two years' trial of this plan could hardly strengthen that "strangle-hold; and surely the City Council has business ability enough to make a bargain with the Company which would be sufficiently advantageous to the City to make it worth while?

There is another thing to be taken into consideration. The City will have to contract for 10,000,000 kilowatts, and will have sale for less than half that quantity, if it took every customer the Company has. But the whole 10,000,000 has to be paid for, whether sold or not, which, if only half is sold, will make the cost 2.4, not 1.2 cents. If the Power Company distributes the current, it will itself take the other 5,000,000, for its railway and other services, so that the City would suffer no loss at all. Where is the sense of the City buying and paying for 10,000,000 kilowatts when it could under any circumstances have a market for less than half that quantity only? And if the Power Company decides to compete with the City, the latter won't sell even a quarter of the quantity.

Common sense says make terms with the Power Company to distribute the current, and take over such part of it as the general body of consumers do not need. Let the City Council go to the Company and find out the lowest figure it will undertake to distribute for. If the figure named is reasonable, let it be accepted.

The Telegraph and The Times are deliberately befogging the issue when they talk about current at 1.2. It is not the initial cost of the current that makes the price high to the consumer, but the cost of distribution And the city will not be able to distribute it at much, if any, less cost than the Company is now able to do; for it must not be forgotten that it costs just as much to distribute one million kilowatts as ten million. Our contemporaries "forget" to point this out. Mr. Herbert Philips says the Company can distribute Musquash current at 6.22, whereas the City cannot do it for less than 6.53. And let it not be forgotten that Mr. F. R. Taylor, on behalf of the Company, offered to distribute it at 6.22.

Citizens who are wise will support Mayor Schofield today, for his policy is "Go slow until you are sure you're going to get all you are promised. When you find you are right, then go ahead." This is a safe and sane policy to follow, if the City is to keep its feet dry.

A ROTTEN CANVASS.

No despairing politician, reduced to the most desperate straits, ever put up a meaner or more dishonest canvass, than that which The Telegraph and The Times have chosen to fall back on in an effort to defeat Mayor Schofield. And the most regrettable feature of it all is that those newspapers are fully aware of its falsity, while persisting in it. They know perfectly well that His Worship has no interest nor object in taking any course that will benefit the Power Company, except in-so-far as that course will benefit the City most. His suggestion that a two years' agreement be made with the Company to distribute the Musquash current at cost, is one that the saner element in the community must endorse.

His Worship realizes that current has to be paid for from the moment the agreement to take it is signed; that it cannot be sold till a distributing system has been erected, which will take several months; that when the system is erected, with the Power Company as a competitor, only a portion—25 per cent Mr. Philips says—of the 4,900,000 k.w.h. now sold to the public by the Company, will fall to the City. There are here three sources of loss (1) cost of purchase of current at 1.2 cents, until the City is ready to distribute it; (2) interest on cost of distributing system for nearly a year while it is being constructed; and (3) the cost of the balance of unsold currrent. By entering into a tentative agreement with the Power Company, not one of these losses will be incurred. The moment the Commission is ready to supply current, it can come through the Company's system on terms satisfactory to the City Council, and at the end of twelve months some idea will be gained as to how the scheme is likely to work out. If it is not satisfactory, there will still be a year in which the City can erect its own system and be ready for operation when the two year agreement with the Company has expired. And there will be no unsold current to pay for. The Company can use up all that is left of the City's purchase of ten millions—and then some.

THE NEW BALANCE OF POWER.

America's aloofness from European affairs, signalized by its non-participation in the Genoa Conference, has left entirely free those forces which for many centuries have turned the old continent over to rival combinations of power. The unifying principle of the League of Nations must be set to work if Europe is not again to become the victim of the alliance habit. The Russo-German treaty, whether it is scrapped or not, is the most definite sign we have yet had that Europe will finally settle down to the old ways.

A combination between Germany and Russia, which has been predicted by some and dreaded by others since the end of the war, is in plain sight. No actual alliance between Berlin and Moscow has yet been consummated, yet anything is possible in view of the immense power of attraction the two countries now have for each other. Their coming together at Genoa was more significant in what it symbolizes than in what it immediately accomplished. The chief consequences relate to the "imponderables" of the future rather than to the present manoeuvres of old world diplomatists.

The regrouping of Europe into antagonistic alliances is inevitable if the unification principle of Wilson's doctrine of world co-operation is to be inoperative. For the conditions which have always made the balance of power principle dominant must continue to make it dominant so long as those conditions prevail. By its present policy of isolation America has withdrawn from Europe the one new and powerful influence that might have counteracted the historical drive of the nations of the continent into hostile camps—a drive which hitherto they have never been able to obstruct.

If Europe settles down to the old ways, after vast tribulation America will have no right to complain. The old Europe simply obeys the law of its being, with America putting a new Europe beyond the range of achievement.

The Times says that with civic distribution of hydro current "the rates will be and remain so low as to enable factories in St. John to compete with those of other places served by hydro-electric power." If The Times is going to talk like that, it is of little use Maritime Provinces interests trying to get a reduction in freight rates, which, up to now, are what The Times has been blaming for transporting industrial expansion to this City and Province.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Public Ownership Gone Mad.

(Financial Post.)

An outline of the power situation in St. John, N. B., has been given in The Financial Post; the city proposes to go into the distribution business with a duplicating system, forcing the N. B. Power Company to continue to give street car and gas service at losing rates while competing in the lighting and power field and to not only take over these plants in the event of the service not being satisfactory but to confiscate the properties to cover any deficits which may result from municipal operation.

The St. John Standard declares that citizens realize that they now pay the Power Company higher rates than warranted for light and power, but appreciate that cheap street car and gas services are adequate compensation; condemns the proposed course as confiscation of the investment of $3,000,000 by the company's shareholders. The Standard continues:

"If the city wants the benefits, let it assume the burdens also. The bill sent up to the Legislature aims at permitting the city to take all the former, and leave the company in full possession of the latter. And if the company declines to be made so much of a goat, the city wants to sell its property as a punishment.

"Never in the history of Canada has such a bare-faced steal been suggested as this is. The Bolsheviks' plans in force now in Russia have nothing on this thing. In Nova Scotia where some time ago exactly the same conditions prevailed, sane and sensible business men got together and worked out a plan fair and satisfactory to all concerned. The Legislature of this Province is elected to deal fairly with all classes of citizens, and to see that justice is dealt out to all alike.

"The Public Utilities Act is based upon well-established usage all over this continent. It can penalize any public utility to the point where such utility must obey the ruling of its administrators. The city's bill is designed not to penalize, but to annihilate."

The high-handed course proposed by the council is not in accordance with the common-sense recommendations of R. A. Ross, Montreal, expert engineer called in by the city. Mr. Ross recently appeared before the people of St. John to publicly stand by his recommendations that as the Power Company and the city could buy the power from the Utilities Commission for the same price it was an economic waste for the city to build a new distribution plant. Further, however, Mr. Ross declares that the Musquash development—by the Government—is not a sound business proposition and that "I could put in a steam plant here which would knock Musquash all to pieces." Mr. Ross has been recognized as one of the highest authorities in this field.

The New Brunswick Government has made a mistake in trying to develop power where there is not sufficient water flow to provide a supply without huge storage capacity. The city is tied up to a contract to take this power. It would be poor business to make another mistake and build a second distribution system when there is no evidence that a reasonable arrangement cannot be made with the Power Company to give service.

Homes for the Birds.

(Ottawa Journal.)

When Mr. Stewart McClenaghan conceived the idea a year ago of offering a series of prizes for birds' nests constructed by boys and girls over sixteen years of age, he started something that was well worth while. Mr. Hoyes Lloyd, Dominion Supervisor of Wild Life, indicates a finer feature of the competition than the display of mechanical ability among the youngsters when he says:

"The boys of Ottawa are learning that it is more fun to build a home for the birds and watch them nest and bring out their little families than to go out with a .22 rifle or a catapult and slaughter them. I understand that few of the houses build last year were long without tenants, and it will be the same this year."

It is hard to believe that a boy who has gone to the trouble of studying the specifications for and construction of a scientifically built nest, properly ventilated and in every way satisfactory to attract observant and fastidious tenants, will wantonly destroy bird life to satisfy a passing whim. We are told that nearly two thousand boys have entered this year's contest and that two hundred of the nests are to be exhibited in the Two Macs store. This means a distinct advance in the educational campaign looking to the preservation of bird life.

There are great economic advantages pertaining to that preservation of bird life; but we are inclined to believe that the practical effects of such a competition are much wider than any economic advantage that may accrue. The study of wild life, the close observation of nature, must engender sympathy, and sympathy and kindness are dominating phases in good character. The Journal hopes that Mr. McClenaghan will continue his competition from year to year. The cumulative results will be beyond accurate estimate; but he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he is achieving something for the general advantage.

It is rather a pity that greater interest has not been taken in the contest by the girls. A little propaganda in that direction might be a development worth consideration by Mr. McClenaghan and the gentlemen who are assisting him in the contest.

Women Jurors.

(Vancouver World.)

Mixed juries in California have disagreed in several noted criminal trials because any twelve men and women will disagree on sex questions. This is the statement of a prominent criminal lawyer in San Francisco. The cases he referred to have all related to so-called sex-crimes involving moral issues of a much-discussed nature. Only recently, three Supreme Court judges in California were unable to agree on the status, of the eternal triangle.

In discussing the matter, the lawyer in question said there have been no disagreements in California trials where there were no fine points of sex morals. His views, briefly, may be summarized as follows:

"Women generally is either very liberal or very strict on sex and morals. On this subject she forms a very decided opinion, a personal code that she sticks to through thick and thin. Men usually are more tolerant, more flexible in their viewpoint about the deviations of sex from accepted normal. It is this flexibility, often indifference, among men that has compelled women to formulate a strict code of opinion for her own protection. In a sex trial, women jurors are harder to sway from personal conviction, men more open to argument."

The discussion emphasizes one difficulty of trial by mixed jury, that jurors usually are inclined to give less weight to law than to personal views and self-created regulations that should govern sex questions. The fact that women, by an average superior moral character, are inclined to disagree with male jurors is a good reason why they should be included in a jury that hears a sex case. A woman is always involved in such cases, and it is only right that the feminine code should be represented in the verdict. In the great majority of cases across the border women jurors appear to be even firmer for law enforcement than men, and the enforcement of the law is what the courts are for.

The Man With the Wrench.

(St. Louis Globe-Democrat.)

When a farm hand comes along the rural highway looking for a job it is likely that he will hereafter carry a monkey wrench with him. That will be his only implement. 'Tis the way a farm is run in these days tractors, patent harvesters, threshers, cow-milkers and so on. Not yet does the farmer turn on the lacteal stream with a wrench, but the vacuum thingumbob that takes the place of the operation once done by fingers and thumbs sometimes needs it.

The first thing one hears in the morning down on the dear old farm, mingling with chanticleer's shouts in the hen coop, is the clank, clank, clank and rattle, rattle, rattle of machinery. As for chanticleer, he may by and by wear a silencer on his neck and the last sound of nature be extinguished.

The man with the hoe is something of an antique. We see the sulky cultivator in the corn field, and the hay loader waves its arms at us from the hay field. Nobody goes down the well "to see what's the matter down there." One lowers a 75-candle power electric light and looks down. And even that kind of a well is a survival. How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood, where the old oaken windmill, the iron-bound windmill, hoists the water from the depths instead of a pair of muscular, freckled arms.

THE LAUGH LINE

Both in the Swim.

"My daughter sprang from a line of peers," said the ardent father.

"Well," said her feller, "I jumped off a dock once myself."—The Naval Monthly.

Long Hours.

A negro never fails to have an amusing answer, more particularly to a northerner. And a northerner never fails to draw a southern darkey out. A recently arrived northerner in Louisiana had begun a conversation where he was visiting.

"Tell me, uncle," he asked, "what kind of hours do you work here? How long do you work?"

"Well, sah, we works from can't see to can't see."—Judge.

Claim Adjuster Fainted.

Out in Wyoming a train ran over the cow of a Swede farmer named Ole Oleson. The claim adjuster went out to the home of Ole to adjust the claim likely to be made by Ole for the loss of his cow.

"Well, Mr. Oleson," said the claim adjuster, "I came out to see you about your cow being killed on our track. What are you expecting to do about it?"

"Vell," said Ole, stolidly, "I ban a poor man, an' I cannot do much because I ban so poor, but I will try to pay you five dollars."—Judge.

Lost Bliss.

"How did it happen that Miss Singleton refused to marry the young clergyman?"

"Why, when he proposed to her, she, being a little deaf, thought he was asking her to subscribe to the organ fund. So she told him she had promised her money to some other mission."

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

THE PARK AVE. NEWS.

Weather. Too damp.

Sports. A chest expansion contest took place last Sattiday in Sid Hunts back yard, Puds Simkins winning it by ixpanding 2 inches, and sints then he's bin going erround with his motherers tape messure in his pockit to prove it to peeple.

Society. Mr. Sid Hunt had a berthday party last Friday after suppir, amung the presents reseeved by the host being a 50 cent pitchers glove from Mr. Sam Cross, a Boy Scout hatchit with slite nicks from Mr. Benny Potts, a nickel plated watch from Mr. Leroy Shooster, and a mouth organ from Mr. Leroy Shooster, sipposed to be new.

Pome by Skinny Martin.

BUT JEST SIPPOSE.

If I was a flee as big as me
I could jump 10 miles, G wiz,
But sutch is not my ambition
For Im sattisfied as it is.

Intristing Facks About Intristing Peeple. Sam Crosses baby sister Udeen is crawling allreddy, Sam saying nobody tawt her espeshilly and she jest seemed to pick it up by herself.

Bum Joak by Lew Davis. Wen Sid Hunts fox terrier Teddy drinks a hole pan full of watter it certeny makes him look swell.

Lost and Found. Nuthing.

FIFTEEN BOILS ON NECK AT ONE TIME

Any one who has suffered from boils can sympathize with poor old Job.

There was no Burdock Blood Bitters in those days, so Job had to suffer in silence. Now-a-days no one need endure the misery of boils.

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