

that have taken place, and get back to the consolidated Charter and work under it.

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All expropriations, street widenings and such like should be stopped.

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The debt limit and borrowing powers as now fixed, should be unalterable. For the credit of the city and the credit of the province these should not be tampered with.

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If for any reason more money is needed than can be borrowed under existing limits, the city should follow the permission granted in the Charter, namely, that of submitting a by-law to the rate-payers, to meet any extraordinary expenditures by a special tax—spread over a term of years if necessary—to wipe out any special loan which may be voted by those who have to foot the Bill.

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A wealthy city such as Montreal should devise some scheme of paying its way. Civic administrators should hesitate a good deal before going to Quebec for powers which involve increased burdens on the ratepayers, or the carrying out of special works without first consulting the tax-payers, and the Quebec Legislature should not only hesitate, but refuse to grant any such legislation, except on condition that it be submitted to and approved of by the rate-payers.

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The most urgent needs of the city to-day seem to be made a sort of side-show, namely, keeping our streets and sidewalks in proper condition. Surely some means could and should be devised to meet this need, or the commercial business of the city will suffer irretrievably; real estate will depreciate in value, and instead of being the most favourite city for tourists, it will be avoided.

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The more money that is borrowed, the less there will be for street cleaning or repairs, or any other administration purposes.

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Then the Fire Brigade and some of the water-mains want attention. Our merchants are paying increased rates because of the neglect, to a large extent, of these requirements.

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Some attention should be given to a large amount of exemptions which, to-day, amount to over forty millions. While we do not advocate that churches, charitable institutions and such like, as far as the buildings are concerned, should be taxed, yet it would be a good plan to tax all real estate in the city, except that on which the building actually stands, or at all events, not to allow more than a certain limited area in connection therewith. Why should large tracts of property be held in this city

practically free from taxation, which are increasing in value all the time, that will eventually be disposed of at enormous profits? It seems like discrimination.

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As far as conduits are concerned, it would be unwise and unbusiness-like to start in with this work without counting the entire cost, preparing every detail or scheme which would be workable, making some arrangement with the companies here as to the payment of a rental, and placing matters on a comprehensive business basis. The idea of borrowing a million and a-half for what may be of little or no value, and not knowing how much more would be required to be expended, is not wise or in accordance with business methods.

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In Boston there are several Companies, and the majority of them have placed their own conduits under of course proper regulations, and for the privilege of building these conduits they are compelled to keep the streets not only immediately over the conduits, but for several yards on each side in proper repair for a period, we think, of ten years. It must be remembered that the Bell Telephone Co. has practically completed a system of conduits. That the Standard Light & Power Co., which is now owned and operated by the Montreal Light Heat & Power Co. has several miles of conduits in the streets, without any restrictions whatever, for the city refused to recognize their rights to put them down and the case was carried to the Privy Council where the Company won. All these matters would have to be considered very carefully.

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Then comes the all absorbing question. "The people want cheap Light," and any person who for a moment doubts, or even has the hardihood to suggest that it is questionable whether cheaper light could be had under civic administration than that from private enterprise, must necessarily be interested in the Montreal Gas Co. There are some great minds in this city, nevertheless there are those who are not afraid to express their opinion, and we unhesitatingly say that we do not believe the time is ripe yet in the city of Montreal for civic ownership of industries. But let us look at the proposition which has been made to the Quebec Legislature. The City Council asks for unlimited borrowing powers for the purpose of acquiring by purchase, or otherwise, the existing Gas Co.'s entire plant. What fun there might be in arranging this matter! We are under the impression that gas as far as lighting is concerned is not gaining much headway. It is being superseded by other means of lighting. Its chief utility is for heating and cooking purposes, and to a large extent at all events, the price that the Company can charge for this is regulated by the cost of coals and other