

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 1922

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THE POISON AT WORK

A deliberate attempt is being made to secure for the New Brunswick Power Company the benefit of the expenditure made by the provincial government at Musquash. The Musquash development was undertaken at public expense in response to a public demand for cheap light and power for the people. The New Brunswick Power Company had no part in the expenditure and should have no part in the benefit. The tactics pursued by the friends of the power company are such as might be expected. They begin by seeking to create a fear in the public mind that there is not sufficient power at Musquash, and that it is not constant in which case the city would run the risk of being suddenly deprived of light and power. Then they proceed to argue that even if the power is there the cost of a cheap distribution plant would be prohibitive, and competition by the New Brunswick Power Company would restrict the market, and the whole thing would prove a white elephant on the hands of the city. Again, in the legislature in Fredericton opponents of the government make speeches seeking to discredit the Musquash development as a waste of effort and a most ill-advised use of public money. The engineers on whose advice the government acted are entirely disregarded and Mr. R. A. Ross is held up as the only reliable authority—although Mr. Ross did not even take the trouble to visit Musquash.

If the citizens of St. John permit themselves to be tied up again to the New Brunswick Power Company, giving it the benefit of the expenditure that was made at Musquash in their behalf alone, they may as well say good-bye to all hope of the industrial expansion of the city. If they permit power company advocates to play upon their fears and prevent them from reaping the benefits of hydro, they will deserve to be exploited to the limit. If St. John has any faith in itself, now is the time to demonstrate the fact. Never has a finer opportunity been offered to relieve itself of a burden that has grown heavier with years of manipulation for the benefit of a corporation which is now fighting to retain its supremacy. Now, if ever, is the time to have faith and go forward.

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The paper read by Mrs. W. Edmond Raymond at the Natural History Society on Tuesday evening was of exceptional interest and value because it brought before the listeners in a clear and graphic manner the history of the Society and the work of those devoted scientists who laid the foundations of the remarkable collection now in the museum, and made available a mass of information of the highest value. From very small beginnings, and always confronted by the problem of insufficient financial support, the work has gone on through the years because there were always men and women whose devotion to some branch or branches of science kept alive the spirit of enthusiasm and enlarged their usefulness of the institution. Mrs. Raymond paid a highly deserved tribute to Dr. Mcintosh, the curator, and made clear the value and value of the educational service now rendered, not only in the city but for the benefit of the schools of the province. While it is true that great numbers of citizens visit the museum, and especially young people, making it a centre of educational value; and while scientists from other countries come to view the splendid collections, it is nevertheless true that the great mass of the citizens do not appreciate the importance of the modest building in Union Street as one of the valuable institutions of the city and province. The tributes paid by Mrs. Raymond to the founders and those who carried on the work in later years were but a modest recognition of service which will continue to bear fruit for generations to come. St. John people should get better acquainted with an institution which is to visitors one of the very interesting attractions of the city. It may be added that as an example of economical administration the volume of work done on the pitifully restricted budget of the Society should be a very notable example for governments large and small.

In a letter to the Times today Mr. W. R. Turnbull gave to his own satisfaction that the provincial government will not give satisfactory guarantees of a constant supply of power from Musquash that the constant power is probably not there; that a steam stand-by will therefore be necessary; and who so competent to step into the gap and save the city from the blunders of the government as the public-spirited New Brunswick Power Company? All of which is respectfully submitted.

The Animal Rescue League does a needed humane work in this city. It was unable to secure from the city the financial support necessary to carry on its work. The care it gives to neglected household pets and the facilities provided for finding a painless death upon those which are past relief, make it not only a beneficent but a necessary institution, deserving of such support as will enable it to do its work fully and throughout the year.

HONESTY IN SPORT.

If the sporting writers in provincial newspapers would all discuss the question of amateur athletics from the right angle they would render a most valuable service. The conclusions of the writer depend entirely upon his point of view. If he is viewing the question of athletics as it affects the youth of the country he will stand four-square for clean amateur sport. If he is thinking of the bleachers and those very selfish persons who are thinking only of their own enjoyment, and who want fast games regardless of any and all rules governing sport, then he will always be in a compromising mood, and making the way of the promoters of clean sport more difficult. It is safe to assert that if every sport writer stood for a sharp distinction between amateur and professional the difficulties that are now emphasized would disappear in a very short time. We are either to have clean sport hereafter or go back to the old discreditable conditions. The business men of every town, who are lovers of sport and who know the value of athletic training, should encourage the amateurs and exert their influence to make athletics a thing for the many instead of a contest between the few while the many look on and grumble. To say that sport cannot be made and kept clean is in effect to charge that most people are ready to wink at dishonesty for the sake of personal enjoyment at the ball field or hockey rink. The charge is not true, and its falsity should be demonstrated this year in the province of New Brunswick.

MENTAL DEFICIENCY.

Dr. Macfie Campbell, director of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital, professor in psychiatry at Harvard, and chairman of the Committee for National Education on Mental Hygiene, presented this week before the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal a strong appeal for better care of mental defectives. He discussed problems of mental defectives, as they bear upon education, upon fitness for ordinary tasks of life, upon delinquency and crime and upon subsequent insanity, and pointed out that for every patient who was so sick as to have to enter an insane hospital, there were three or four people who were partially handicapped by mild forms of mental disorder. The Gazette report of a portion of his address says:

"Dr. Campbell went on to point out the economic losses entailed to the community by the prevalence of mental defectiveness and lack of education, as well as the inconvenience caused to the community through delinquency, alcoholism and general lack of ethical conduct. There was also much suffering on the part of relatives concerned."

"The problem of defective children, both in the home and in the school, was then discussed by the speaker, who enlarged upon the hindrance to the general educational level of a class caused by the presence of one or more defective children. He insisted that these children must be studied from a proper point of view, when it would be found, for instance, in some cases that truancy was not owing to delinquency but rather to improper educational methods."

"As far as the really delinquent child was concerned, Dr. Campbell urged that it would infinitely repay the authorities to study and provide for him or her in the early stages rather than in later days, when he or she became an adult prisoner in jails and penitentiaries. Segregation of these defective or abnormal children constituted a difficult problem for any community, but he suggested that much could be done by the provision of outdoor departments of hospitals."

It has been announced that the result of a mental survey in New Brunswick will be submitted at the present session of the provincial legislature, and it will be a subject of very deep interest.

An Associated Press cable announces that April 10 has been definitely settled upon as the date for the opening of the Genoa economic conference. Italy, from which a request for delay had been expected owing to the extended cabinet crisis last month has informed the French foreign office that she would be ready on that date. Lenin, of Russia, has expressed a desire to be present and meet Mr. Lloyd George. It may be hoped the British premier will be there. The world needs his counsel at such a momentous meeting.

A Washington despatch says—"A reflection of the business revival throughout the United States was seen by the postoffice department in reports from fifty of the largest postoffices showing receipts of \$20,839,000,000 for February, an increase of 6.41 per cent. over the same month last year. Parcel post centres, such as Chicago, showed decided increases."

Fighting in Genoa.

Genoa, March 9.—Tension between the Fascist and Socialist elements, which has been smouldering for months, culminated in several pitched battles and gun and revolver duels in the streets of Genoa on Tuesday night.

DAY AND NIGHT.

"Estonia arrived at given position and there are no signs of ship or crew." Wireless from Cape Race.

All day the steamer, stricken grievously lay wallowing within a wreck of seas. That floundered her before a maddened sky. To lose her in unending depths of green. And whilst huge cascading mother-swells smothered the bow and, sweeping aft, wreathed free. The boats that were the last remaining hope. Of those despairing souls who were the crew.

And ripped the battens off the forward hatch. Wasting the labor of the groaning brims. The Wireless spluttered wildly . . . and was still.

All night in answer to that lonely cry. The stockhold of a friendly neighbor teemed. With awaiting men, and the great throbbing hull. Was hurled against the cohorts of the storm. Until a hell rasped in the engine-room. And with half-speed ahead the ship lay to. While muffled figures climbed the reeling bridges. And peered about for sign of signal fires. And seeing none still peered, until the dawn.

With one swift shaft of light, laid bare A waste of heaving waters . . . and no more.

—Andrew Merkel in Halifax Chronicle.

LIGHTER VEIN.

Woman's Wit.

(Detroit Free Press.)

Congresswoman Robertson of Oklahoma was talking about woman in politics. "Woman lacks political training as yet," she said, "but there is no reason why, in time, she shouldn't do as well in politics as men do." "Certainly in replying to hecklers she will do well. I remember stopping one chilly October evening to listen to a woman presiding some new creed to others from a soap-box. "Say! a rough shouted at her. 'Say, you look cold, baby! Why don't you turn your collar up like me?' "Well, you see, 'baby' answered sweetly from her soap-box—'well, you see, I've got a clean neck!'"

LIGHTS ON HYDRO

To the Editor of the Times. Sir,—Nobody would think of asking a corporation to handle without profit a commodity in which it trades. Consequently any possible arrangement that might be made with the N. B. Power Co. pre-supposes a profit to the company for the passing along of something produced by the expenditure of public money and the utilization of one of our great natural resources.

Why pay a commission to get something you already own? Putting it another way: why introduce into the business of hydro distribution a middle-man whose only interest is in unnecessary expense? Does the power company possess facilities for the distribution of power that we cannot duplicate? No. And we can duplicate their facilities at a cost far below any valuation that they might place on their equipment. Does the Power Company command ability, personnel or an organization that we cannot command at an equivalent figure? No. Is the equipment of the power company capable of handling economically even the present consumption? Bear in mind right here that the whole future of hydro and the assurance of cheap power depend to a great extent on increasing the consumption. Again the answer is no, if the reported transmission losses of over 30 per cent are considered.

It seems apparent that under any management the existing system would be a weak foundation on which to build the structure of our hopes for cheaper power, as it would practically have to be reconstructed before it could function properly.

In the light of facts adduced by numerous reports and in the press, why continue to ignore the wishes of the public by dissipating public time and money for the avowed purpose of seeing what can be done to help the power company.

Yours,

JOHN N. FLOOD.

LETTER FROM W. R. TURNBULL.

To the Citizens of Saint John:— I really hate to say anything in this matter, for I am considered a "prejudiced character," with a predilection for salt water. But the matter is so serious and the situation so complex, that we will soon speak of the hydro power instead of the hydro power.

It seems to me this complexity is very apparent and very unnecessary, and in this letter I just want to point out what seems to me the very obvious and only proper solution to the matter.

I must make some assumptions, I believe them to be fair—and I must rely on general data, for even the engineers who have examined the Musquash proposition have not the special data they should have, and they will not be able to get it for many years to come!

First—The market (which is undoubtedly the City of Saint John). For the sake of clearness I reduce all power figures to the basis of horse power.

St. John uses at present (for power, lighting and the street railway, which we will call for brevity "power") an average of 1,885 horse power. By the Ross report minimum, she could get from Musquash 1,375 horse power.

By the Power Commission claim, she could get 3,220 horse power from Musquash.

greatly in their opinions, and their data is apparently so meagre and insufficient. Several years ago an English engineer, who examined the Musquash, said he "wouldn't give a shilling for it." Later, an American capitalist, whose interest was induced, had the Musquash examined and turned it down as an uncommercial proposition. And later still the government, with our money, have developed the power, and on the admitted cost of developed horse power it is a very uncommercial proposition (see footnote), but "that is neither here nor there," we've got it, we'll have to pay for it (in taxes or rates remains to be seen) and we may just as well use it, for it's here.

In view of the fact (Dominion government report "Water Powers of Canada," 1911-p. 286) that the minimum discharge on the Saint John river, at Grand Falls, is 1.5 per cent of the maximum, at the same point, it is most improbable, even with the excellent system of storage basins claimed for the Musquash, that the Musquash can maintain 3,700 horse power for the use of Saint John—for in a period of drought, not only the rainfall, but the evaporation, from river and storage basins alike, is enormous. The difference between the discharge of water in the Saint John and in October, is only appreciated by those who examine the data, and in the case pointed out above, which is a case applying to the same climate and same province, the discharge varied from 103,102 cubic feet per second, in May 1909, to 1,525 cubic feet per second, in October, 1910.

Third—The Guarantees. I understand that the Power Commission, at first, would guarantee nothing to Saint John, and had later they agreed to guarantee \$2,000,000 k. w. h. per year (the average equivalent is 3,200 horse power). But the "per year" is the point that wants watching, no doubt they can deliver the amount stated per year, but Saint John wants her power per day—she doesn't want a lot of extra power in May and a shortage in October.

I have shown above that Saint John, at present, requires 1,885 h. p. (average per day) and should soon require 3,700 h. p. per day. If the Power Commission guarantee to supply, every day of the year, in and year out, 3,700 h. p. And will they even guarantee to supply 1,885 h. p. every day of every year? And will they back the guarantee by money to indemnify the city against loss from power deficiency?

I may be quite wrong, but I think the city will find that the Power Company is not ready to make these guarantees and unless they are ready to make them municipal plant is simply out of the question for it involves not only a distribution system but an auxiliary steam plant, as well as let those who advocate this figure up first the cost and also let them remember the Carleton ferry.

Fourth—the solution.—To recapitulate, Saint John can take all the Musquash power, and more—if rates are cut to about half those at present charged. Saint John should require about 3,700 h. p. It is probable that the Musquash can supply the 3,700 h. p. required, every day of the year, year in year out, for there will be times of drought when the Musquash will probably not be able to supply even the 1,885 h. p. required at present, let alone the assumed increase to 3,700 h. p.

The guarantees cited above, which are the only kind worth considering, are not likely to be made. This then is the very obvious conclusion that every thinking person must reach.—Some auxiliary steam plant will be a necessity, and if the municipality builds competitive lines, for distributing the power to customers, they must also build a competitive steam plant, to supply at least 3,700 h. p. or they cannot take care of their customers in times of drought.

Now I hold no brief for the N. B. Power Co. and I have not a single share of their stock, but would not this duplication of system, in a small city like Saint John, be simply ridiculous? Surely the very obvious thing is to let the N. B. Power Co. distribute the Musquash power over its present lines, by direct contract with the Commission, hold their steam plant in readiness for the deficiencies that are almost certain to occur, and have the rates regulated by a proper Public Utilities Commission who would safeguard the public, and obtain for them the lowest practical rates, while treating the Power Company fairly, allowing them a rate that will cover interest, depreciation, etc.

The obvious thing is for Saint John to take the Musquash power, and the equally obvious thing is for the Power Company, who have the necessary auxiliary steam plant, and existing transmission lines, to distribute the Musquash power, under regulation of rates, determined by a Public Utilities Commission—and the commission, for this purpose, should be composed of a business man, a lawyer, and an engineer, all clever men and alive, and each member should be "without fear of favor" and should command the fullest confidence of the public, as to his ability, efficiency, and integrity. Thinking you, Mr. Editor, for your space, I am,

Sincerely yours,

W. R. TURNBULL.

Foot note, referred to above.—We have at Musquash a plant for which 21,000,000 k. w. h. per year, is claimed by the government engineers, let us grant that the power is there, although it is extremely doubtful if so much is there—the equivalent of 21,000,000 k. w. h. per year is an average of 3,200 horse power, and if we divide \$2,000,000, the cost (to date) of the proposition, we get a development cost of \$625.00 per horse-power, whereas hydro-development that costs more than \$200.00 per horse-power is usually considered, by engineers, to be an uncommercial proposition.

TO PLANT BANANA TREES

First Plantation to be Started on Guatemala's Pacific Coast.

The growing of bananas on the Pacific coast of Guatemala is to be undertaken soon for the first time on a commercial scale. Consul Frost at Guatemala City, reports to Washington. An American fruit corporation, recently authorized to do business in that country, expects to have 2,000 acres planted to bananas in two months on a plantation fifteen miles west of San Jose de Guatemala.

Development of the banana industry, which has attained large proportions on the Caribbean Coast, has not been attempted on the Pacific side hitherto because of insufficient rainfall, lack of port facilities and lack of proper means of transportation to the western markets of the United States.

The new company expects to overcome the difficulty of water supply through irrigation. Arrangements are being completed for the transportation of the fruit to Los Angeles and other western ports of the United States.

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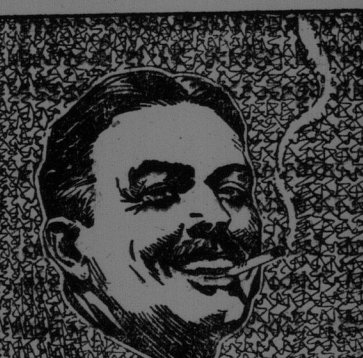

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