

MONTREAL CHAT

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

MONTREAL, FEB. 15th.

Last week, which promised to be a dull one toward the close however, managed to turn up something that was of public interest and gave the newspapers some material for a little readable matter. The principal topic of conversation has been the case of Ald. Tansey against Mr. Hugh Graham, proprietor of the "Star," for an alleged libel. The case rose out of about the following circumstances. Ald. Tansey was thought to have been elected last year to the Civic Council, but his election was contested by his opponent. The trial on account of technicalities was postponed until late in the year and Ald Tansey continued to occupy a seat which was not his. When the trial did come off Tansey was unseated and a new election was called. While sitting in the Council Ald. Tansey was placed on the Board of Health. How important were the duties and how responsible the positions of those comprising this board may be imagined when a view is taken of the epidemic that has just passed over the city. The health board as it originally stood, with perhaps the exception of its chairman Ald. Gray, was not at all remarkable for brilliancy or ability adapted to the duties that devolved upon it; and the city, scourged by the plague that was fast giving it the name of a pest hole. (ably assisted by some native and imported especial correspondents) was being gradually ruined in a commercial way, not to speak of the misery, if not absolute starvation, that looked the poorer classes in the face, if the natural results of the plague—the shutting down of factories etc.—followed. Such would undoubtedly have been the case, had not the business men of the city, who have some stake in its welfare, appointed a citizens committee, and they in turn, formed an addition to the Health board. The infusion of new blood and some brains soon had a marked effect and the energetic and untiring effort of the new members were awarded by the almost phenomenal success met with, and now the city is practically freed from the presence of smallpox. When Mr. Tansey offered himself for re-election he was opposed by his former antagonist Mr. Malone. Mr. Hugh Graham, one of the citizens who was added to the board of health took an active part in opposing Ald. Tansey in his paper and also sent the following letter to a number of electors.

MONTREAL, November 18

DEAR SIR,—Will you permit me to draw your attention to a matter of very particular gravity relative to the contest in St. Ann's ward, in which you have a vote. Ald. Tansey has proved himself a perfect cypher on the Board of Health. He is often absent, frequently remains but a few minutes, and has persistently refused to act on any of the sub-committees. The fact that Ald. Tansey and three of the old members have proved inactive, in the crusade against smallpox is a source of great weakness. If Mr. Tansey should unfortunately be re-elected he will be put back on the board whereas if he is defeated it will give a chance for the appointment of a much better man from among the aldermen. Personally, I may say I do not know Mr. Malone, Tansey's opponent, but such men as Mr. C. Cassels and Mr. Green tell me that he is an honest, intelligent, industrious man. If Mr. Malone is elected, being a new member, he will not likely be put on any important committee until he has proved what his aptitude is. The smallpox is by no means over yet, and I think you will agree with me in saying that the possibility of cholera makes it the imperative duty of every citizen to see that the Health board is strengthened rather than weakened. Kindly think of this.

Yours,

HUGH GRAHAM.

On the strength of this document was the suit for libel brought, and the trial took place on Friday and Saturday, with the generally expected and hoped for result of a verdict in favor of Mr. Graham. As no one was better able to judge of Mr. Tansey's efficiency than Mr. Graham, from his experience on the Health board, aside from his opportunities as a journalist, it will at once appear to the unprejudiced mind that Mr. Graham simply exercised the inalienable right of every citizen to criticize a public man in his actions in a public capacity, and this view was taken by Judge Johnson: who in his charge to the jury said:—The law at all times has drawn a wide distinction between libel and slander respecting private character and criticisms no matter how severe, upon men in their public capacity. In the one case the law imposes a strong check. But the tendency of all modern legislation and thought has been that where the intention of the writer is honest, where the criticism is intended to be fair, the writer is protected by the law even if his own opinion be mistaken. The rule laid down is that the private character is sacred. But as for public men and their conduct, if we could not discuss them freely we would become a nation of slaves. Such discussion, even if it does hit rather hard sometimes, or use strong expressions is not a breach of the law. The jury after 40 minutes deliberating brought in a verdict for the defendant two of their number dissenting.

An instance has lately taken place

shows how much of the slime of unscrupulousness the skirts of municipal politics gather in some of the desperate attempts made by ward healers to boost their candidate. The papers have time and again been loaded with "bribery and corruption" "false bottoms" "stuffed ballot boxes" and other useful devices to defeat an opponent, but it remained for a Montrealer to leave behind these methods as antique and old fashioned things, very serviceable in their day, but hardly in keeping with the extraordinary progress made in improved political machinery in the past couple of years. It was the simplest thing in the world, too, as all great inventions and discoveries have turned out to be as soon as found out. It was nothing less than going to the city Clerk's office, where the voters lists are kept for public information. After the lists are made up and the board of revisors have got through with them, they are handsomely decorated with such initials as "W. T.," "S. L." etc, which means that such a person is disqualified as a voter for not paying his water tax or statute labor tax. It was beyond the realms of the imagination of our simple minded and innocent citizens that any one would ever dream of such a thing as tampering with these lists. But faith in humanity has again been rudely shaken, and the list has been tampered with and some twenty five names have been discovered who have been qualified by a much easier method than paying their taxes, to wit the simple process of erasing the tell tale disqualifying letters. This new lever in the practical engine was used in the case of the centre ward where Louis Perrault and Mr. Hamilton are the candidates for civic honors. Of course as in all such cases, the tide of popular suspicion runs in a particular direction but as nothing definite can yet be known I refrain from writing more explicitly. An investigation is to take place and some interesting developments may be expected for the general public, but I am afraid it will not be quite so amusing to the parties implicated.

NOTES.

On Friday last the Rev. Father Dowd, pastor of St. Patrick's, who has been ill for some time, had a relapse, but is now improving.

His Lordship Mgr. Fabre, is at the time of writing also seriously ill.

The thaw of the last few days has again given rise to grand apprehensions with regard to a coming flood, and if our late experiences are repeated a sorry time is in store both for the warehousemen along the river front, but more particularly for the poor people who live in Griffintown and Point St. Charles. The Relief Committee were appointed to look after the wants of the sufferers by the late flood have rendered valuable assistance, but such efforts are as a drop in a bucket. There has been a commission appointed to build flood gates at the mouth of the sewers, and a wall is to be built composed of sawdust and ashes mixed with water. This looks strange in print, but then some eminent engineers say the scheme is feasible, and I suppose they know what they are talking about.

The Rev. Dr. Robertson, a Presbyterian missionary from the Northwest in the course of a sermon here on Sunday paid a high compliment to the work done by the Catholic missionaries and their influence for good over the Indians.

The societies are already beginning to make preparations for St. Patrick's day celebration and at the regular meeting of St. Patrick's T. A. & B. society action was taken in the matter yesterday.

Since Christmas upwards of 70 young ladies have taken the veil at the different convents in the city.

Fifteen persons including 9 priests have announced their intention of taking part in the pilgrimage to the Holy Land under the guidance of Abbe Provencher of Quebec.

There is considerable agitation at the present time on the statute labor tax and legal action will be taken this week, when it is hoped the matter will be definitely settled.

J. R.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA

London, Feb. 17.—Your correspondent obtained an interview to-day with the late Vicar-General of the Roman Catholic Church in China. The prelate expressed himself as delighted with the progress of the Church in China, and the cordial manner of the authorities in their intercourse with the priesthood. He reports that the court at Peking has urgently requested the establishment of an Apostolic Legate in China, and a commission of cardinals is now considering the advisability of complying with the request

JOHN MORLEY'S VIEWS.

London Feb. 8.—John Morley, speaking at Newcastle this evening, refused to be drawn into giving an exposition of the government's Irish plans, which, he said were left with Mr. Gladstone. He said that further coercion was possible, but that the price would be too great, as coercive measures would mean an impotent Parliament, secret societies, refusal to pay rent and dynamite. The government would make an earnest effort to find a better way. The day of half measures had gone—a final settlement must be effected.

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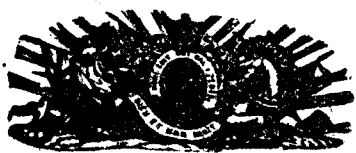
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SEALED TENDERS, accompanied by One Hundred Pound Samples, and endorsed "Tender for Flour," will be received at the undermentioned Indian Agencies, in the North-West Territories, up to noon of Thursday, the twenty-ninth of April, 1886.

AGENTS. H. Martineau . . . The Narrows, Lake Manitoba.

J. A. Markle . . . Birtle.
A. McDonald . . . Crooked Lakes.
W. S. Grant . . . Assiniboine Reserve.

P. J. Williams . . . File Hills.
J. B. Lash . . . Muscowpetung's Reserve

H. Keith . . . Touchwood Hills.
J. M. Rae . . . Prince Albert.
J. P. Wright . . . Battleford.

J. A. Mitchell . . . Victoria.
W. Anderson . . . Edmonton.
S. B. Lucas . . . Peace Hills.

W. Pocklington . . . Fort McLeod.
M. Begg . . . Blackfoot Crossing.
W. C. de Ballinhard . . . Sarcee Reserve.

Forms of tender, giving full particulars relative to the quality, quantity and points of delivery of the flour required, may be had on application to any of the above-named Agents, or from the Indian Commissioner for Manitoba and the North-West Territories, Regina; and no tender will be entertained which is not made out on one of the forms in the hands of the Agents or of the Indian Commissioner for distribution to intending tenderers. Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted cheque, approved by the Indian Agent for the District, for at least five per cent. of the amount thereof, which will be forfeited if the tenderer declines to enter into a contract when called upon to do so, or if he fails to fulfil his contract to the satisfaction of the Department. If the tenderer prefers to do so he may deposit with the Agent, in lieu of an accepted cheque, the notes of any Chartered Bank in Canada to an equal amount. Cheques or cash accompanying tenders not accepted will be returned, but a cheque deposited by a successful tenderer will be retained until the satisfactory completion of his contract. Each tenderer is required to show in his tender the full value of all the flour which he is prepared to deliver under contract or his tender will not be entertained. Each tender must, in addition to the signature of the tenderer, be signed by two sureties acceptable to the Department, for the proper performance of the contract.

Tenders will be entertained for a portion of the whole quantity of flour required at any given point.

Tenderers residing near one Agency but desiring to tender for delivery within another Agency further distant, may deposit the tender and sample for the most distant at the nearest of the Agencies specified above, or with the Indian Commissioner at Regina.

Samples of flour will be returned, if desired, to unsuccessful tenderers on their application, and the sample submitted by a successful tenderer may be counted by him as a delivery on account of his contract.

In all cases where transportation may be only partial by rail, contractors must make proper arrangements for their flour to be forwarded at once from railway stations to its destination in the Government Warehouse at the point of delivery.

The lowest, or any tender, not necessarily accepted.

L. VANKOUGHNET,
Deputy of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs,
Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, 30th Jan., 1886.

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