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The Chronicle.

With this present issue THE CHRONICLE completes its twenty-sixth year of its existence and we take the occasion to wish all its friends a HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

The Harbour Commission.

With the retirement of the old Harbour Commissioners on Monday next, the old Harbour Board which administered the affairs of the Port of Montreal, as a Trust, representing the Government, the City of Montreal, the shipping interests, the Montreal Board of Trade, La Chambre de Commerce and the Corn Exchange, practically goes out of existence. The three new commissioners will represent the Dominion Government alone, and the change marks the transition of the Port into a Canadian National Port. For some years the state of affairs at the Harbour Commissioners' office has been somewhat anomalous. The Government having assumed a large share of the financial responsibility for the cost of the harbour improvements it was natural and inevitable that it should make considerable use of its practical veto power over all the administrative acts of the Board. The result has been considerable delays, friction and bickering. By transferring the whole responsibility for the control of the harbour to a small board of Government appointees, the only solution of the difficulties growing out of an anomalous condition has been arrived at. The new commissioners have an exceptional opportunity for public usefulness. The old Commission which has been in existence since 1830, has numbered among its members many of the most honoured citizens of Montreal, men who in the capacity of Harbour Commissioners and not in that capacity alone have rendered most valuable service to Montreal and to all Canada.

Has the City of Montreal no voice in the future of its harbour. Is it at the mercy of political parties who may, because of political exigencies ruin the future of this city. Surely Montreal has some voice in the future of its harbour.

The Gas and Electric Light Question.

The aldermen who are opposed to granting an exclusive contract to the Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company held a caucus on Sunday last, and marvellous are the lines upon which they propose to settle the gas question. According to a published interview with one of the leaders, there will be no need for gas, if electric light is cheap in Montreal, and they have several schemes for cheapening electricity. Plan number one is: to "develop the aqueduct system" and get from four to six thousand horse power to light the streets and squares. Plan number two is to follow the lead of Westmount—burn the garbage and get therefrom "a certain amount of electric energy." Plan number three is for the city to have a central plant and distribute power, obtained from the Beauharnois Canal, the Sault Ste. Louis Company, "and other places that nature has abundantly provided."

Is it not about time for every alderman to begin to discuss this question seriously, from a practical point of view? Men who talk about the gas and electric light question on the lines reported are simply playing with a serious subject. No man in his senses could imagine for one moment that either of the plans suggested offers the slightest possible hope of a practical solution. The only common sense proposal that has come from the council yet is embodied in Alderman Payette's motion. He has evidently bestowed a great deal of thought and work upon the preparation of a business-like proposition, and it will be quite time to discuss impracticable alternatives when the motion has been discussed seriously upon its merits. Alderman Payette's plan provides for a reduction in the prices of gas and electricity, for the city sharing in the profits of the company, and for reasonable restrictions upon the dividends. Neither of the proposed alternatives offers the slightest hope of either.