

The Civic Hospital Question. According to the daily press, an important discussion took place yesterday at the City Hall, regarding the Civic Hospital, and a phase of it which occasioned much controversy was whether there should be two hospitals or one only. Many reasons were adduced on both sides. The writer had some experience in connection with the Civic Hospital management a couple of years ago, and has no hesitation in recommending that it be divided into two sections. To make the new Hospital effective, it must first have the confidence of the public, and this can only be gained by having it under the management of our present excellently conducted hospitals. Then we must not forget that we have two classes of citizens—French and English speaking—and it will probably be found that the French Canadians, or the majority of them, would prefer to be placed in the French section, and the same applies to the English speaking people as regards their section. It has happened heretofore that patients who could not speak one word of French were, for instance, looked after by nurses who could not speak a word of English, and vice versa. It could be so arranged that patients could always have the choice of going to either section: but we think it would be well to have separate sections, and if for any reason one section was over-crowded, it should be distinctly understood that patients were to be taken into the other.

INSPECTING RISKS.

Most of the fire insurance managers here left for Cardinal, Ont., yesterday morning by special car to inspect the Edwardsburg Starch Works and Glucose Factory for the purpose of new rating. The amount of insurance involved is about \$500,000.

FALSE ECONOMY IN THE CONDUCT OF CITY AFFAIRS.

We are prepared to commend most heartily every effort of our present City Council to effect a wise, steady and uniform economy in the conduct of Civic affairs, and citizens generally will feel grateful for sound reforms in this connection. But the Aldermen of Montreal, who are evidently earnestly striving to improve the financial position of the City, are not likely to receive the approbation of citizens generally by rash and ill-considered acts of so-called economy, nor by unwise and hasty declarations of civic bankruptcy. That some of the past expenditure is indefensible, is generally admitted. But the credit and reputation of the Metropolitan City of Canada must not be assailed by those to whom the citizens are looking for suggestions which will place Montreal where it ought to be, in the van of progressive and well-governed cities, and while no one will be found to condemn our representatives for re-

moving every unnecessary or inefficient employee, yet few, if any, business men will approve of the policy that is being pursued in respect to the reduction of the salaries of the chief officials in the City's employ. A great statesman, Burke, has said: "Expense, and great expense, may be an essential part of true economy." The important positions of City Treasurer, City Clerk, City Comptroller, City Solicitors, City Engineer and suchlike, should necessarily be filled by the most capable men available, and surely the City of Montreal can afford to pay as much to its City Treasurer, for instance, as a small bank would pay to a cashier. The responsibilities of the position occupied by Mr. Robb, who has been in the employ of the City for nearly forty years, we believe, are great. The dignity and responsibility of the City Clerk's position must not be underestimated. The same applies to the Law Department, as well as others, and we should also include the position of City Comptroller. In order to command good men for these positions, it is necessary that a proper remuneration attach to them, but surely if the miserable policy recently adopted of reducing the salaries of faithful officials be continued, no properly qualified parties will be available, or seek such positions in the future. Every business man knows that it would be cheaper to pay one man \$10,000 than another \$3,000, and in this connection we have no hesitation in saying that it would be in the interest of the City if it paid \$10,000 to \$15,000 or even \$20,000 each per annum to three commissioners who would look after the general administration of affairs, and relieve the aldermen of this onerous duty, simply letting them (the aldermen) act as a legislative body. Reducing the salaries of those officials in the manner in which it has been done, is not from any standpoint commendable, and it is a mistake which should be rectified without delay; indeed it is very questionable whether it is legal. Of course the Council has the power to dismiss the officials, but if certain contracts are made with them, as no doubt has been the case, whether it be by resolution of Council or otherwise, they should be adhered to. Referring to the Law Department—we would like to know what first-class lawyer could be found in this City, who can command any sort of a practice, who would accept less than \$5,000 or \$6,000 a year for his services in the City. Where so many cases crop up it is possible that \$20,000, by having incompetent officials, could be lost at one stroke of the pen.

Montreal has a reputation to maintain in the treatment of her employees, as well as otherwise, and the matter of saving a few thousand dollars by cutting down the salaries of the heads of departments, and making them feel humiliated and dissatisfied, and pro-