

last report of the Dominion Government was made by the Provincial Government through the Hon. Mr. Cushing. The value of the well has been decreased tremendously in thirteen years, and it is robbing the entire district of gas which may be used in the future.

The Government, at the time the gas flow was struck at Pelican Rapids, was boring for petroleum. They went within sixty miles of where Mr. Hamerstein's parties were once drilling. At a depth of 860 feet they struck a tremendous flow of natural gas, which hindered them from boring any further. They thought the well would exhaust itself. Going back the next year to resume the boring operation, they found that the gas had not exhausted itself. It is still burning.

A gas expert, a Mr. Chamberlain, from Petrolia, has stated that it is the biggest well in the world. Mr. Chamberlain operates in Indiana, Kansas, and all over the United States, and is the largest operator in the natural gas business.

Along the Peace River also there is evidence of natural gas, tar, and petroleum. It is put to practical use by exploration parties, who light their camps with it and do their blacksmithing with its aid. Then there are large deposits of asphaltum. It does not resemble that of Trinidad, for there it comes from a crater. The Alberta product is an oil gum, out of which asphalt can be manufactured. Petroleum is apparently abundant. It has been tested, and paraffine has been obtained therefrom. Its practical utilization only awaits transportation. So much for a few of the products. Undoubtedly the value of the resources of this vast region cannot be fairly estimated. Only the railroad can make them of real use to Canada.

SOMETHING FOR LITTLE.

It is nearly time that Canadian towns and cities, large and small, considered their correct attitude relative to a prospective manufacturer with eyes upon a particular locality. For many years, municipalities have competed to give away much for almost anything in the shape of a new industry. Tax exemptions have been granted for periods of half a century. Land has been given away and money bonuses dispensed with lavishness. To the civic participants in this competition, the excitement of beating a rival has been intense, and may prove expensive. The immediate present often has been the only consideration.

Messrs. Dippolo Mattic and Company, iron bed manufacturers, Feathertown, Ohio, desire to locate a branch factory in Canada. Their decision is reached for several reasons. Possibilities are recognized with new business in sight. The company do not consider that Canada is fond of capital and enterprise. Obviously, the motive for locating a branch factory in this country is an entirely selfish one.

After inquiries it is decided to favor a certain town with the industry. On the announcement being made, half a dozen municipalities jumped forward with better offers. The transformation of the prospective manufacturer is immediate and complete. He is no longer a self-interested captain of industry. The garb of philanthropist is his; Canadian municipalities bow with reverence. The position of both parties is absurd. This kind of happening every week almost has created a bonus fever. The time has come for its cessation.

A new Western town, for instance, may grant tax exemption for fifty years, give a money bonus of fifty thousand dollars and a free grant of land. In half that time, the town will probably have become important. The industry, making big dividends for its shareholders perhaps, remains exempt from taxation. The municipality is burdened with the bonus; the manufacturer holds real estate which will have appreciated materially in value. It is a big price to pay for a new industry.

What doth it profit a city if it gain a dozen manufacturers and lose its character and independence?

GAS IN THE TORONTO COUNCIL.

Gas formed one of the chief topics for debate at a recent meeting of the Toronto City Council. A member of the council thinks that the bills rendered Torontonians by the Consumers' Gas Company are excessive; that the meters are too inaccurate. Recommendations were made that the Dominion Government consider the subject at the next session of Parliament, and pass laws requiring greater accuracy in testing meters.

The discussion in the council was very trifling. A voluminous report had been previously made by an "expert" engaged by the council, in an effort to prove that the gas company should not be allowed to use meters found, upon having been tested, to be more than two per cent. fast. The present law forbids the company to use any meters that are more than three per cent. fast. And according to the Government report only one-third of all gas meters are fast at all, and all these are verified as coming within the error allowed by law, while thirteen out of every twenty-seven are slow. Out of 7,503 meters tested in Toronto during the nine months ending March 31st, 1907, 954 were found absolutely correct, 2,629 fast (verified as coming within the error allowed by law), and 3,895 slow (verified as coming within the error allowed by law). Only twenty-five were rejected as being too fast, too slow, or unsound.

The meters are tested before being installed, and are rejected if they are over three per cent. too fast or four per cent. too slow. They are tested every six years after installation. If at the subsequent tests the meters are found slow, the company can collect the difference between four per cent. and the percentage of slowness found; if found too fast, the consumer can collect the difference between three per cent. and the percentage of fastness found. The Toronto council discovered that in Massachusetts the percentage figures are two for fast and three for slow. Therefore they recommend that the figures for Canada be fixed at two per cent fast and four per cent. slow.

The significance of this attempt to turn the proverbial molehill into a summit is apparent only because it shows the petty hectoring spirit borne by some municipal councils toward public-service corporations. When a public-service corporation has shown that it is also a public-spirited corporation, as has the Consumers' Gas Company time and again; when the public-service corporation is dispensing its commodity with such efficient and effective management that the prices for that commodity are lower than anywhere else on the continent with only one or two exceptions; when for many years the company has made its motto "cheaper and better gas," and has worked with limited dividends; when these things are true, as they are in Toronto, such hectoring by publicity-loving politicians should be discouraged by the business men of the community and by the members of Parliament.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Farmers in the north of Prince Edward Island are receiving (5th May) 50 cents per bushel for oats, which sold in the previous week for 40 cents, owing to the demand from the North-West. If the United States duty be put up from 25 cents to 45 cents it will be a blow to Prince Edward Island trade.

* * * *

The average fire loss per capita in Chicago for the past five years has been \$3.15, which is larger than that of 252 American cities, which was \$3.10, and larger than that of the United States as a whole, which was \$3.02.