

"City of Montreal, went to Westmount and made speeches against the annexation of this municipality to Montreal. Do you think that this entitled him to our support?"

"You say 'it is very evident that the liquor party has an influence with the Citizens' Committee.' I must protest energetically against such an insinuation, the liquor party, as you call it, has no more influence on our Association than has the temperance party. Had you called on any of my colleagues mentioned in your article, I am convinced that you would not have made such a statement."

Very truly yours,

CHAS. CHAPUT,

President.

[In reply to the above letter we wish to state that we have nothing to retract. The SHAREHOLDER believes that it voiced the sentiments and opinions of a great many people in Montreal when it expressed its disappointment with the work accomplished by the Citizens' Committee prior to and during the late elections. Its half-hearted support of certain candidates and its failure to endorse one other whom it had endorsed two years before, left its work open to criticism.—EDITOR SHAREHOLDER.]

BOARD OF CONTROL'S SECOND ANNUAL REPORT.

THE second annual report of the Board of Control, recently made public, is in the main a very satisfactory document. We do not agree with everything said and done by the Board of Control, but it is too much to expect perfection. The Commission form of government is certainly vastly superior to the old ward system and the showing made by the Board of Control must be regarded as very satisfactory. The report shows that the revenue for the city during 1911 amounted to \$8,185,000, as compared with \$6,615,000 in 1910. The net increase was therefore \$1,570,000. Amounts accruing from the Loan Fund amounted to close upon \$10,000,000, making in all a total revenue of approximately \$18,000,000.

Of this sum expenditures in connection with the administration on Revenue Account amounted to \$7,200,000, while disbursements on account of the Loan Fund amounted to \$9,000,000, which was some \$200,000 more than last year.

The report of the Finance Department also contains a lengthy reference to the appointment by the Board of Control of a financial agent in London, England, the advantage of the innovation being commented upon. Other important measures instituted by the Board during 1911 embraced the renewal of contracts for the aqueduct, the completion of the civic filtration plant, the renewal of contracts with industrial schools, and the laying by the Water Depart-

ment of a large main to supply the water needs of Longue Pointe Ward.

The purchase of new appliances for the fire brigade, amounting to over \$20,000, the increasing of the civic police force by fifty men, the opening of new public parks in St. Henri and Laurier Wards, and the recommendation of the Board, adopted by the City Council this week, to expend the sum of \$25,000 on the installation of a refrigerating plant in the Bonsecours Market, are also mentioned by the Controllers, who take occasion to remark that the reorganization of departments undertaken when they entered office two years ago has proved to be most successful.

In the report of the Building Department is shown that during the year 1911 no fewer than 5,000 building permits were issued, an increase of 1,493 over those commenced in 1910, which numbered 3,507. The value of the buildings for which permits were issued amounted to \$24,000,000, an increase of nearly \$9,000,000, the figures for 1910 being \$15,715,000.

While the majority of the buildings started during the year were of the residential class the number of costly structures actually put up or commenced last year showed a remarkable advance over the figures of the preceding twelve months.

Commenting upon the new code of building by-laws at present being drawn up by a board of experts, the Board of Control expresses the hope that their rigid enforcement, when completed, will tend to greatly reduce the number of fires which not only occurred during 1910 but which also marked the opening weeks of the present year.

Summed up, the work of the Board of Control shows that the city received vastly more for their money than was the case heretofore. More streets have been paved, more sidewalks put down, and many other forms of public work have been undertaken and successfully carried out. In addition, the staff of the fire brigade has been added to and new equipment secured, the police force strengthened, and many other departments of the civic administration reorganized. It is now imperative that a competent business man should be secured to take the place of Mr. WANKLYN, who has resigned from the Board. There are still many big problems to be grappled with and the city cannot afford to entrust them to the care of a second rate man.

THE THREATENED COAL STRIKE IN BRITAIN.

THE threatened coal strike in Great Britain is throwing that country into a state almost akin to panic, while many other countries of the world are awaiting the outcome with more than ordinary uneasiness. Coming, as it does, at a time of social and economic unrest, the strike assumes more than ordinary importance.

A month ago the coal miners of Great Britain voted 445,000 to 116,000 to strike on March 1st., unless the principle of an individual minimum wage for each miner should be conceded. Conferences have been held between the operators and the miners, and more recently between the heads of the Government and the two parties, but the prospects are that it will be impossible to bring the warring factions together. If a strike occurs it will mean that between 800,000 and 1,000,000 men will be thrown out of work, a sufficient number to paralyze the whole trade of the country. The coal miners have enlisted the dock laborers, railway employees, and men employed in shipping on their side, which makes it practically impossible for supplies of coal to be imported from outside nations. That there has been a great deal of social unrest in Great Britain during recent years, is shown by the fact that in 1911 the number of the workers involved in labor disputes was 931,000 against the yearly average of but 221,000 for the preceding decade. The aggregate of lost days in 1911 was 10,247,000 against a yearly average of 4,260,000 for the previous decade. Minor troubles in the coal trade were responsible for 40 per cent. of all this time lost. Other big strikes held throughout the year were in connection with the railway men and dock laborers, and among textile workmen.

The British coal miner has been getting in the neighborhood of \$1.75 per day when he has mined a given quantity of coal. The men now ask a minimum wage to provide against the occasions when the miner has failed to earn it at the tonnage rate because of mining conditions or causes due to the management and not to himself. The big problem is how to find a way to accomplish this by which the employer will be protected against a worker's inefficiency.

Coal mining is England's third most important industry and constitutes nearly one-third of her total export trade. Mine owners have already lost in the neighborhood of 250,000 tons by their inability to make contracts ahead owing to fear of a strike. It is, however, not in the coal trade alone that danger arises, but through the paralyzing of the nation's activities. Should the worst fears of the officials be realized, it will mean not only the complete paralyzing of Great Britain's trade, but will have a serious economic effect upon practically every civilized country in the world, and possibly involve other countries in similar trade disputes. It is a well known fact that in the United States anthracite operators are seriously contemplating a strike, while in both France and Germany the miners are far from being satisfied with present conditions. It is probable that a strike among the British operators would provide the necessary incentive for a similar strike among coal operators elsewhere. It is to be hoped that some way of effecting a conciliation will be found.