

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by
the Boarders.

"What persuasion and argument, petitions and agitation failed to accomplish," said Brown, "will eventually be brought about by individual greed and rapacity. For years the labor organizations of this city have demanded that all municipal work shall be done by day work under the supervision of the chiefs of the different departments; again and again have they pointed out that all such work could in this way be done cheaper and better than under the present system, but all in vain. Whether the majority of our aldermen really thought that the city could not do its own work as well and as cheap as a contractor, or whether most of them were directly or indirectly interested in the financial success of some of their friends who are contractors, is an open question which the aldermen themselves would hardly care to have investigated; be that as it may, the contractor ruled the roast and must have made a good thing of it. The aldermen had proved so docile and the people so patient and forbearing in connection with other deals which have in the past been worked through the Council that it is not at all surprising to see the contractor for the Tail Race bridge trying to make such a fat job of it. The way he went ahead with it almost leads one to the conclusion that his intentions were to retire on a competency after the job was completed; at any rate he became such an expensive 'friend' that for very shame the Council could not do otherwise than stop his mad career and have the work completed by its own official. I have heard it said that had the Council done this in the first place it might have saved the people some forty thousand dollars. Expensive and all as the lesson is that St. Louis taught the Council and the people of Montreal by his exorbitant charges, if it abolishes contract work on municipal jobs in future it will be cheap at twice the price. He has done more to bring this about than all else put together, and if the labor organizations of this city don't present him with a testimonial for his services in this connection it is certainly not because he don't deserve it."

"I don't blame St. Louis at all," said Phil, "but I do blame the noodles who gave him the work upon those conditions, and if the people of this city had any spunk they would demand the immediate resignation of every member of the Water Committee—they are no more fit to do the work delegated to them than I am to be Archbishop of Canterbury—and they know it. I wouldn't trust them with the administration of a two-horse western village, much less a city like Montreal. Their chairman is at the seaside, and my advice to the rest of them is to join him at once and stop there—not for their own pleasure, but for the benefit of this community."

"As long as you permit the contract system on municipal work," said Gaskill, "so long will you have blunders of this kind. The members of the Water Committee know absolutely nothing of the practical work of their Department, and in this respect they are no worse than the members of the other civic committees. What you require is competent heads for all your departments. Secure the best men and pay them a good salary—give them full powers as far as their department is concerned and hold them personally responsible for the working of it—and above all things do not allow any alderman or yet the mayor to engage or discharge a single man on your public works; that power should only be held by the different chiefs, then you could justly hold them responsible for the actions of every man under them, now you can't. It is because our aldermen have constituted themselves employment agents and have run their friends, whether competent or not, on every

corporation job done by the city, that corporation work done by day's work has seldom proved satisfactory. The different departments must be placed beyond the reach of these men, who to catch votes would not hesitate to carry men on the pay-roll of the city who are unable to do a day's work. Now, every ward heeler and log roller either for himself or his friends wants a place at the public manger—this must be stopped—the corporation is not a pension bureau, and least of all for needy wire pullers. If they have during an election served any successful candidate let him pay their claim, and not the city. It must be self-evident to any intelligent man that as long as you allow aldermen to engage or discharge any civic employee over the heads of the chief of the department your staff becomes demoralized. And let me say right here that any head of a department who submits to aldermanic bulldozing is not the man for the position he occupies, and ought to be replaced. A really competent man is far too independent to be dragooned by a set of men who know as little about the practical workings of their different departments as the majority of the aldermen of Montreal. Only officials who have been 'pitchforked' into their position submit to it and they should be got rid of at any price, no matter to what nationality they belong. There has been far too much national sentiment and too little common sense in the appointment of employees of the city for the staff to amount to much. It don't matter a rap whether a public servant in any capacity is English, Irish or Scotch, all that the people should insist on is that he thoroughly understands his work and compel him to do it.

BILL BLADES.

"SCRAPS" FOR CIGARMAKERS

The interpretation of the clause relating to travelling cards as given by one of the executive of Union 226 was simply absurd. The delegate to the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress ought to be instructed by his union to bring before that body a resolution asking for an amendment to the excise laws whereby cigars could be manufactured and retailed on the same premises. This would be of a great benefit to cigarmakers and of more importance than a reduction of license.

Union 226 has become affiliated with the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress. The move is a good one and ought to be of practical benefit to the cigarmakers in general.

For the fiscal year of 1890-91 Montreal manufactured more cigars than the whole of the rest of Canada combined. Total manufactured in Canada, 100,260,970; in Montreal, 54,122,865. More than three-fourths of this quantity are manufactured by boys, girls and machinery, a fact which is not very creditable to organized labor.

I hear that an ex-cigarmaker, while looking on at the show corner of Guy and St. James streets, was relieved of his watch. He has my sympathy.

The appeal taken by one of the officers of 226 in reference to the receiving of travelling cards promises to be interesting, and I hope will settle a vexed question and be of some benefit to the members in this city. A decision will be anxiously looked for, as it will determine just exactly what rights they have under the constitution.

The delegates to the Trades Council, representing unions 58 and 226, should attend more regularly, and see that the proper number of representatives are elected.

After a lay-off of two weeks of the hand workers in Havana Cigar Co., owing to the impossibility of getting cigar packers, work was resumed Friday, much to the satisfaction of the men, who find that holidays at their own expense are not a luxury to crave after.

Owing to a clerical error in last week's "Scraps" the name of the deceased member was omitted, namely, A. Robichon.

SCRAPS.

MONTREAL NEWS.

Andrew Hudson, an employee of H. R. Ives & Co., who was putting up some iron work at the Royal Victoria hospital, fell from a scaffold to the ground, a distance of twenty feet, on Thursday morning. He was picked up in an unconscious state and sent to the General hospital, where it was found that no bones were broken. His condition is serious.

Arrangements for the Printers' picnic to Otterburn Park are progressing favorably and there is every prospect that it will be the most successful which has yet been held under their auspices. Full particulars will be given the public in a short time, meantime everybody is advised not to make other arrangements for the 22nd.

Col. Howard Vincent, the delegate from the United Empire Trade League, and Messrs. R. C. Weldon, C. N. Skinner and John F. Stairs, M. P.'s, will arrive from Ottawa this morning to address the meeting in the evening in the public hall of the Windsor. The reception committee will meet to-day at noon to complete arrangements for the visitors.

SHINE, SIX!—A Saturday shine or a Sunday shine. Well, let us dress you for an afternoon walk with the girl of your heart. Silk Stripe Shirt, \$2.00; Windsor Silk Tie, 25c; Waist Belt, 25c; Boating Cap or Straw Hat, 50c; Tan or Patent Leather Shoes, \$1.50; China China Handkerchiefs, 50c; \$5.00. All goods are these. Get them at John Allan's, Central Emporium for Men's Outfitting Goods, 659, 661, 663 and 665 Craig Street.

LABOR DAY NOTES.

From present appearances the forthcoming demonstration on Labor Day will be the largest ever held here. A great number of organizations have already signified their intention of being present and others are expected to follow suit. The committee are energetically working to secure attractions for the picnic, which they hope to make the attraction of the season. There will be a grand display of Japanese fireworks, a balloon ascension and parachute descent, wood sawing competition, etc.

The official programme is now under way and will be issued in good time. It will be a great improvement on previous efforts, and besides the official arrangements for that day will contain other interesting matter. Thirty thousand copies will be distributed gratuitously.

An extensive and attractive programme of games is being prepared, for which the committee will be enabled, through the kindness of many friends, to set aside handsome prizes. The canvassers report gratifying success, having been met with courtesy everywhere, and have collected so far over \$700 worth of prizes.

A committee shortly intend waiting upon employers of labor asking them to close down on Labor Day, so as to allow their hands to participate in the proceedings.

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