

THE ANNUAL CIVIC MEETING

(Continued from Page One)

the greater part of last year the city was more efficiently policed than it has been for many years. If I have not accomplished anything else during the past year I have given the city the best police chief it ever had. The city is cleaner today physically and morally than it ever was, and a mighty sight cleaner, morally at least, than any of the adjoining cities. I do not hesitate to say that Mr. Lawson is one of the best police officers in Western Canada today. He is not a grafter. He is clean, honest and efficient.

The city hall and office expense in 1919 amounted to \$2584. In 1920 to \$2040 or \$544 less than in the previous year. In this connection I wish to say that the city has a valuable man in the city clerk, A. J. Moffatt. In 1919 the city paid the bank \$3156 in interest on current account overdraft. In 1920 this amounted to but \$758—a saving of \$2398 over the previous year.

For the past six or eight years, almost every department of the city's affairs closed the year with large deficits, until at the end of 1919 the current account overdraft at the bank amounted to \$30,000 in round figures, on which the city was paying interest. In 1920 every department closed the year with a surplus in place of the usual deficit. All these savings have naturally made a big difference in the financial standing of the city. A year ago when I was elected mayor, the city had an overdraft at the bank of approximately \$30,000. Today the city has a credit balance at the bank of \$14,715—a difference in favor of last year of over \$44,000.

It is true that the tax rate for 1919 was about 4 mills less than last year. It is also true that the city's general tax rate, which is the only rate over which the city council has any control, was two mills less than in 1919. The net increase of four mills in the total rate was due solely to the very large increase in school rates, which was six mills more than in 1919.

In order to enable the 1919 council to place the tax rate at what it was they used \$5385 of sinking fund interest which had been accruing for several years and which should never have been used for this purpose. They also used for the same purpose some \$2360 profit derived from the sale of short term War Bonds.

Another matter which clearly demonstrates that the 1919 council were poor financiers is the fact that they used \$5000 more from the city's sinking fund to buy War Bonds than there was available for this purpose, and in May last we had to dispose of these at a loss of eight points in order to meet matured debentures.

During the past year the city bought back \$80,000 worth of City of Fernie bonds at 78 cents on the dollar. By doing this the city will eventually save \$33,700. This may appear somewhat amazing but it is a fact nevertheless. When money is borrowed on long terms the interest invariably amounts to more than the principal.

There are many other matters I would like to touch on but you have several speakers to hear after me.

For 1921, the new council should make provision for considerable repairs to those streets already paved and also for the graveling of those streets already graded. For this purpose I am sure the city will save money by buying a good motor truck. Work of this kind done with horses is too expensive. Provision should also be made for a place to shelter the tools, implements and such like belonging to the city. At present most of them lie out year in and year out. During the next two or three years if the affairs of the city are properly looked after, with the assistance promised by the government Fernie can be made a different looking place. Streets can be graded and gravelled, sidewalks built, sewers extended and such like, and the ratepayers feel it but very little, in fact even less than at present.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, if you approve of the way in which the affairs of the city have been conducted during the past year, it is up to you to see to it that a mayor and council are nominated and elected who are possessed of business ability and experience and who will take a wholesome interest in the city's affairs. I understand that Archie Corrie, Harry Douglas and Wm. Currie have been prevailed upon to allow their names to be placed in nomination. These are all good men and should be elected. If any of them will agree to run for mayor I will gladly retire, but I am not prepared to make way for some one with no business ability who will allow things to go on in the same old come easy go easy way.

Following the Mayor's speech Ald. McEwan very briefly addressed the meeting, devoting his remarks chiefly to lauding the work performed by the Mayor, whom he said was the best Fernie had ever had. Mr. McEwan will be a candidate for re-election.

Ald. Tully defended his attitude as

member of the Health committee on council and the Garbage Disposal Bylaw, over which there has been endless criticism and complaints from various ratepayers, which to a large degree may be characterized as some people considering the 50c per month charged for this service of greater moment to them than their own general health and the maintaining of proper sanitary conditions within the municipality. Ald. Tully said he was proud of having been instrumental in enacting such regulations and while there might exist some defects and discriminations in certain instances, these in time would be remedied. Mr. Tully will allow his name to go before the electors again. Ald. Harrison followed and reiterated the views of Mr. Tully in connection with enforcement of the health regulations. He said this committee had virtually policed the city in this connection and during the past year had been subject to more abuse than during the preceding 16 years he had resided here. He has not definitely decided whether he will stand for re-election.

Ald. John Bean in opening stated he had not made up his mind whether he would run or not. He compared the cost of producing electrical energy during 1920 to that for 1919, which showed a favorable decrease. He also pointed out that for the year just closed only \$1.20 had been paid for overtime at the plant while in years gone by extravagant sums had been expended in this manner. He suggested that his personal knowledge of the practical end in this department was to some extent responsible for the more economic operation.

Ald. Rutledge thanked the electors for past favors and forthwith took issue with His Worship in connection with certain figures quoted by him, the effect of which was to depreciate the accomplishments the Mayor had endeavored to show the 1920 council had brought about. Mr. Rutledge's remarks against the mayor were of the nature that his strong dislike was due to the fact that Mayor Henderson wanted to be the whole cheese, in other words the mayor had been boss and not nominally holding the office.

Ald. Robichaud received a warm reception and addressed the meeting in his usual manner and will be back for another term if wanted.

The Chairman called upon prospective candidates, H. E. Douglas and A. Corrie, who were present, the former only, however, responding. Mr. Douglas stated if he allowed his name to go before the ratepayers it was with the view he had certain knowledge pertaining to figures and accounting and he would do his best for honest and upright administration of civic affairs.

The Mayor replied to the criticism of Ald. Bean and Ald. Rutledge, following which a crossfire arose. Reflections upon the 1919 council brought Mr. Uphill, M.L.A., and mayor during the term mentioned, to his feet with a vehement explanation, to which Mayor Henderson replied by reiterating his former statements and emphasizing these by producing additional facts to support his contention. Mr. Bryant directed a number of questions to the Mayor to which replies were made. Other speakers directed questions to the mayor and some of the aldermen and the meeting adjourned.

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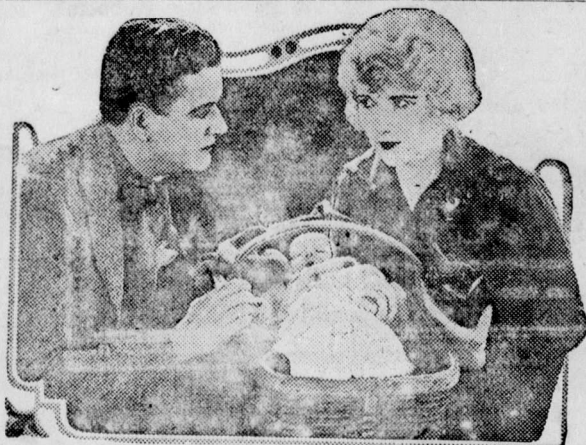
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