

The Evening Times-Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY 12, 1924

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THE CASE OF HALIFAX

The Halifax Ratepayers' Association has adopted a resolution calling for the adoption of the council-manager system of city government, as the best way out of the mess revealed by the Montreal firm of auditors. There was a good deal of opposition to the resolution, but it was finally adopted. Mayor Hawkins has made matters more interesting by asserting that the conditions now revealed were common knowledge to every City Council and the Board of Control for years. They knew there was stealing and graft but got no chance to prove it; and four times when the council asked for funds for an independent audit the city officials got the Legislature to kill the appropriation. If this is correct it reveals an amazing condition of helplessness on the part of the taxpayers. The Evening Mail thus summarizes the situation:—

"Ninety thousand dollars of public money have been stolen. Uncollected taxes, assessments, etc., total nearly three million dollars. City bank loans are found to be in the vicinity of two-and-a-half million dollars. Methods of banking, book-keeping, and the general conduct of civic business, are so loose, inefficient, and unreliable, that complete re-organization is necessary in practically every department." "The Mail says that the need of the time is leadership, and it wonders if Mayor Murphy is the man to lead. It advises him and the Council to select three or four of the most influential business men of the city, consult with them, and devise plans for a complete civic re-organization, to be submitted to the people. Whether the council-manager plan will make any headway remains to be seen. Those who oppose it say it is drawing a red herring across the trail, and that the thing to do is to get a stronger City Council at the April elections. It is clear that in their own interest the citizens must take the grip with the situation. The lesson is for other cities as well. Only a keen general interest on the part of the taxpayers will ensure good government."

CENTRAL HEATING PLANTS

The city of Winnipeg is to make an experiment with a central heating system for its business district. It will cost nearly two millions, and the city council is empowered to raise \$885,190 as a beginning. The manager of the city's hydro-electric system will manage this new utility. Before work is begun thirty per cent. of the business in the specified districts must sign up and if they do so the work of construction will be started in the spring. A Winnipeg letter says:—

"The money to be raised under the present by-law is expected to provide conduits for two areas and boilers for four districts. It is estimated that the system will take five years to complete, and will involve a total capital investment of \$1,795,250. While no other Canadian cities have adopted the plan to date, a number of United States cities, including New York, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis, have done so. Experts claim the plan is an economical one."

If such a system can be made effective in a business district it would seem to be only a question of time when it would be extended to residential districts. Apparently, however, it has not yet wholly passed the experimental stage.

The Ottawa Citizen gives these illustrations of overlapping and duplication in the Civil Service:—"Two Departments carry establishments for precise levelling; three Departments have establishments in connection with topographical maps; seven Departments have photostat establishments; five Departments also support establishment and equipment for the purpose of blue-printing and reproductions. One Department has five distinct engineering branches, and it has been said that only one of these operates under the departmental chief engineer. Dredging, with its costly overhead engineering establishments, is carried on in three different Departments. Surveying work is carried on in three different branches of one Department. The height of duplications and overlapping is reached in one Department which has seven distinct branches dealing with lands, each having its own expensive overhead establishment."

The Owen Sound Sun-Times, apparently, is not greatly impressed by the Montreal Star's outcry about the need of a strong man in Canadian public affairs at this time. We quote:—"Who is The (Montreal) Star's strong man, who would need to be as wise and brave as Moses and Joshua combined to deliver Canada from the bondage of public debt, and lead it to the promised land of general and perpetual prosperity? If The Star knows a man who can do it how can it justify its concealment of him?"

Press Comment

MISSIONARY WORK.

(Winnipeg Tribune.) The St. Catharines Standard says: "Montreal may be strong against public ownership, but Sir Henry Thornton insists on sending out his glowing reports from that city. He is probably doing excellent missionary work at home."

WHERE SOME SUCCEED

(Trail News.) Right where one man fails, another man succeeds. Right where the farmer starved, the Standard Oil started. Right where the inactive, lazy, indifferent neighbors said it couldn't be done, the wide-awake workers went ahead and did it. If people hated wars as they do paying for them, perfect peace would prevail.

The prosperity of our country is largely founded upon so much down. Too many men would rather be applauded than right. Words of wise men oft remind us that now and then a wise man can talk like a jackass.

SMOOTHING THE WAY

(London News.) A temporary trade boom cannot solve the heavy problem of British unemployment. It will be solved only if it is solved at all, in a world at peace and to plenty, ready to be seized, in the heart of Europe. Great Britain has stood up to the poverty and distress of the post-war years with the same calm courage and self-restraint that her soldiers displayed when they received punishment in the trenches without flinching. The people as a whole will now look to their new leaders, not for miracles, but for a sane, strong, consistently followed policy of appeasement, which is the only hope of a happy issue from their present economic affliction.

PLACE ENGLISH FIRST.

(Rochester Times-Union.) English is compulsory in Japanese schools above the primary grade. In Japan the language of commerce is English, and more and more students are being turned out each year with a working knowledge of that language. Artificial languages designed as mediums of universal communication have so far had little success. No other language holds the same strategic position as English.

French, German and Russian have passed their period of greatest relative extension. For English the period of expansion has only begun.

Inevitably the United States, Canada, South Africa and Australia will gain in population and wealth. Great Britain will always have a dense population and an extensive trade. More and more natives of the British Empire will learn to speak the tongue of the dominant race.

The shrewd Japanese know what they are about in making English the preferred foreign language.

LABOR LORDS.

(Toronto Globe.) Many British peers must have been shivering with apprehension since Labor's accession to office. The House of Lords has been a select club, though its social exclusiveness was sometimes violated by Mr. Lloyd George's habit of demanding admission for friends who had no passports but long purses. What rude protests would be raised into the charmed circle under the present regime? The first Labor appointments have been made, and the blue-bloods have a feeling of relief. Sydney Arnold, Sydney Olivier and Brigadier-General Thomson, are at least not shocking challenges to the old order. Two are trained administrators, and one is a distinguished soldier. Each can take the title of Baron without inviting the derisive laughter that would follow a sudden jump from the mine or the workshop to the cushions of the gilded Chamber.

The three new Lords had no seats in the House of Commons, and their elevation will save the trouble of opening constituencies for them. The Government will now have half a dozen spokesmen there and they will serve all its purposes, short of a majority. As it cannot alter the House, it will make use of it in the practical British way. The Tory Peers know that the Chamber as at present constituted is not last, but they intend that the changes shall be made only by a Tory Government. There will be a fight on that issue some day, but the Labor Administration will probably not invite it, until they control the other chamber.

THE REAL PRICE ON THE COVER

(New York Times.) Publishers of 95 per cent. of the total output of standard sheet music have conferred with Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission on the matter of marking musical publications at fictitious prices. For many years it has been the practice of music publishers to print sheet music at prices marked usually about one-third higher than the real selling price. The origin of this practice was the habit of granting to music teachers a discount which was usually one-third of the price printed on the publication.

The theory of this reduction was the supposed trouble which teachers took to select the music. After a while pupils of these music teachers began to ask for the same reduction from the printed prices, and it was not long before the general public came to request the same terms. Who was ever stamped on the cover of the music? The actual price of the music sold today is, as a result of these practices, substantially less than the amount printed on the cover.

For some time past dealers as well as publishers have been discussing the possibility of abolishing the use of a fictitious price and have urged the printing of what the music is really intended to sell for at retail under conditions of normal competition. No date has been fixed at which the change will be put into operation, but that will be only a matter of time. The publishers are almost unanimously in favor of it.

THE MODERN BABEL.

(Stanton A. Coblenz.) I saw a field where men in antilike swarms Gathered to rear a tower of rare design. They fashioned stones of countless hues and forms And piled them up in many a zigzag line. Among their scattered bands was never one To plan the perfect structure of the whole, And all they did was aimlessly undone While each man struggled to a separate goal.

The tower rose with watchwork, jagged walls Whose mountainous height attracted but now with every wind a timber falls. With every storm a spire comes crashing down. For never yet have architects combined To build the House of Civilized Mankind.

LIGHTER VEIN.

A Real Artist. First Judge (before painting)—A capable piece of work, what does it really represent? Second Judge—Well, that's just the heck of it. The artist writes that he leaves that for the judges to decide.

Distant. "So your name is McCarthy," said Hogan. "Are you related in any way to Dinna McCarthy?" "Dinna is a distant relative," replied McCarthy. "Distant?" asked Hogan. "Yes," replied McCarthy. "Dinna was me mother's first child. I wuz the fourteenth."

Saw Through It. "Father," said the student, "I want to talk to you about changing my course of study."

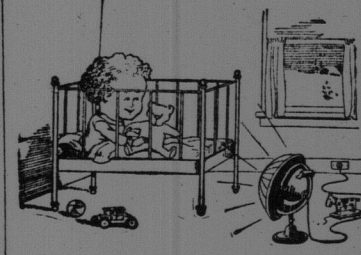
"Talk to your mother, son," directed the father, who was reading the paper. "Mother," said the son, "I made a mistake when I selected chemistry. But it is not too late to change even yet. I want to take astronomy instead."

The mother searched the eyes of her son sharply. Then she said: "No! You'll have to think of some better excuse for staying out at night!"

Golf in the Garden. Mistress—"Good heavens, Jane, what was that crash?" Jane (the maid)—"Please, ma'am, it wasn't me. 'Twas master practicing in the garden. 'E've been and done the scullery window in one."

Prima Facie. Employer—"I need a very truthful man for this position." Applicant—"Well, I'm single."

Exposure. Doctor—"How did your husband take pneumonia?" Dovey Dawson—"Doctah, he bought himself a diamond shirt stud."



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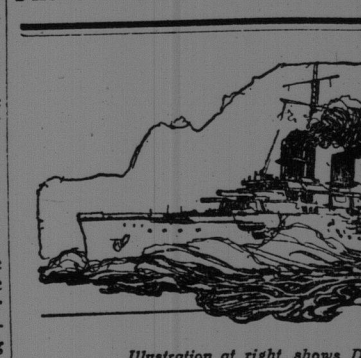


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IS DISTINGUISHED

In England One of Every 72 People So Signs Name.

London, Feb. 12.—The man who signs his name "Smith" has every right to be proud of his signature for it is that, beyond a doubt, of the world's most distinguished family.

The Smiths head the clan lists. Even Jones, Brown, and Robinson must pay their homage to them. In England one of every 72 persons writes his name "Smith"; in Scotland the proportion is still greater—1 to every 70; while even in Ireland the name takes fifth place on the list. In England there are twice as many Smiths as there are people of all names in Oxfordshire; and, in Scotland there are Smiths enough to repeople the four counties of Bute, Kinross, Nairn and Sutherland.

Of the Smiths in the United Kingdom the boys and bachelors number 162,000; the girls and spinsters 167,000; and 180,000 bear more or less gladly the yoke of matrimony. There are 25,000 widows, many of them very attractive, and 9,000 Smith widowers. The man who seeks a wife will find an embarrassing choice in this wonderful family; for there are no fewer than 18,000 Misses Smith—many of them very charming—between the tempting ages of 20 and 24; and a further 15,000 who have still to see their 34th birthday.

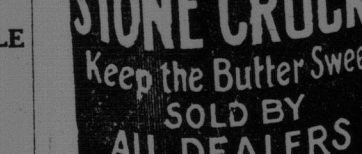
Certainly no other family has produced so many men and women of distinction. It has been borne by great soldiers and sailors, scholars and statesmen, writers and so on through all the varied fields of man's activities ever since (and no doubt long before) Sir Thomas Smith, statesman and Greek scholar, flourished in Tudor days.

Open any dictionary of biography and you will see Smiths by the hundred—from Sir John, a famous 16th century soldier, to Donald Smith, Empire-founder, who died in Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.

And there are many Smiths living today to carry on this great family tradition, a glance at the pages of "Who's Who" will reveal their names, with their achievements, by the hundred. There is, too, no social circle that cannot point with pride to its Smiths.

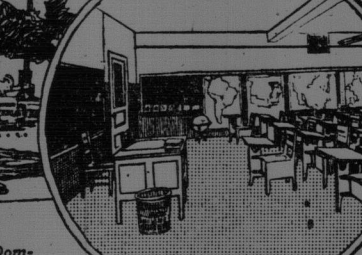
CHILDREN WARNED.

The grave danger to which school children expose themselves in using the railway tracks at Haymarket Square was drawn to the attention of the Board of School Trustees at its meeting last night in a letter received from L. E. Ross, superintendent of terminals. The Board decided to ask the teachers of Aberdeen and St. Thomas schools to warn the children and it also decided to ask the chief of police to have a special policeman stationed at that place for about 20 minutes around the time of the dismissal of school.



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HERE'S A CRAFTY SWINDLING GAME

Rome, Feb. 12.—How to get money without working for it found original expression in Rome recently. Some men in this city are ingenious, and not behind operators in other countries in thinking up ways to get lire quickly and safely, from someone else's pocket into their own. A handsome plate glass window in a fine shop is shattered by a stone. The proprietor rushes out and finds many hands pointing to a small boy, cowering and afraid, and evidently guilty. He grabs the boy and vents his anger, lurching Roman words and cuffs. A well dressed gentleman, passing by, reproves the store keeper. The unfortunate boy puts up a pathetic tale, and arouses the interest of the wealthy stranger who, out of the greatness

of his heart, finally offers to pay the store keeper for the damage, which has been estimated at 200 lire. He peels off a 1,000 lire note from the top of a thick roll, gives it to the owner of the shop, and gets 800 lire in change. The crowd melts, the boy slinks away, the wealthy stranger calls a cab, and in the time the store keeper learns that the 1,000 lire note is counterfeit.

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