

## The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1922.

## LAST NIGHT'S MEETING.

The information laid before the meeting at the Imperial Theatre last night showed conclusively that the position that The Standard has taken all along in regard to the distribution of the Musquash current is the correct one and wholly justified. We have urged the City should not touch the proposition at all until it had been proved beyond all doubt that the project is going to measure up to expectations and what is promised for it. Mayor Schofield apparently has grave doubts on this score; and Mr. Ross, whose report on the subject has been subjected to a lot of very hostile criticism, was present to substantiate all that he has said on the subject. As he pointed out, the prospective output of the plant must be calculated on the basis of its minimum capacity, and that minimum is only just sufficient for the bare power and light needs of the City and leaves no surplus for expansion. Some auxiliary power is therefore absolutely essential, unless the City is to be able to tie up at any time. There is no such surplus of water flowage as there is in the sources of power supply in Ontario. The City is asked to act upon the opinions and reports of engineers of no particular standing; and unless the citizens wish to lay up in store for themselves troubles galore in the future, they will advise that the City have nothing whatever to do with the proposal. If the City must take the Musquash current, let it be done through the medium of the N. B. Power Company, on such terms as the Public Utilities Commission shall consider fair for all parties.

## WHERE IS THE ETHIOPIAN?

The Telegraph and The Times are very anxious to have the City take for granted the sufficiency of the Musquash development and without any evidence at all demand it to assume that there is adequate water power there to supply the City of St. John as well as all of the territory between St. John and Moncton, and the latter city.

Whilst naturally this paper cannot be supposed to be unduly friendly to the Foster Government, it is willing to give credit for anything that they have done in the public interest; and if the Musquash project had been conceived after proper investigation, and could be of benefit to the public commensurate with its stupendous cost, The Standard would say so.

Unfortunately there has been displayed in the Musquash enterprise from first to last a singular lack of the precautions that an ordinary business man would use in any important transaction. For many years private companies have investigated the availability for water power development of the rivers near St. John. These rivers are the Mispic, the Musquash, the Lepreau, the Magaguadavic and the St. Croix. The first two of these—the Mispic and the Musquash—received scant attention because of their inadequate drainage area and low head. The Dominion Government water power branch, which investigates and reports on streams possibly available for water power development, did not even bother to make flowage tests of these two streams.

Investigation by the St. John Railway Company when the whole Musquash property was offered to it at 50 per cent. of the price now asked for the water power only, after the great Musquash fire, showed that it could not produce power as cheaply as by steam.

The Government had available the data on these water powers which we understand was freely furnished by the New Brunswick Power Company, and also had the independent investigation made of the Lepreau and a report on that river, we believe, from Mr. Holgate. Before the Musquash development therefore was begun there was adequate data available for the Lepreau and the Magaguadavic, and nothing but unfavorable reports as to the Musquash. The Musquash development was barred by the Government without the investigation and report of any engineer of standing. At all events no such report has so far been produced.

As Mayor Schofield pointed out last night, in the report of the Hydro Commission for 1920, Mr. Holgate recommended the development of the Lepreau, but made no mention whatsoever of the Musquash. Now why the change from the former to the latter? What was the reason for the Government's haste before a general election? Who were the owners of the Musquash? What pressure did they bring upon the Government compelling it to expend several million dollars of the Province's money on a project that after the City has paid the Hydro Commission twelve per cent. on an outlay of two millions, and spent another million and a half in installing a distribution plant, and has paid all the cost and expenses in carrying on the business, it will be able to supply consumers of light and power with current at a price considerably below the figure they pay to the N. B. Power Company at the present time. Incidentally it may be noted that there is not a single particle of evidence to sustain this

contention, but on the contrary Messrs. Kirby and Phillips report says that while the Company could sell at \$2.50 the City would have to charge \$5.50.

Then again our contemporaries tell the public that as a consequence of the great reduction in cost under civic distribution, there would be a large increase in the amount of current used, and that when the volume had reached 8,000,000 k.w.h., the price would be reduced to 4 cents. To begin with, who is going to use so much more current? Every consumer uses about all he needs at the present time, regardless of price, and no one is going to use more current than is actually required just because the price has been cut in two. No one is going to burn more light than he actually needs simply because it's cheap. If there is any saving to be made, it will go into the consumer's pocket and not into the City coffers.

If there is going to be an additional consumption of light and power it will have to be through the agency of new industries, and where are these to come from? Not from within the city, because there isn't enterprise enough in it to start up any new industry of any magnitude; and even if there were, the present cost of light and power would not deter the promoters in the least. Any new industries developing must therefore come from outside capital, and we would like to ask, What outside capital is likely to come into St. John if it ever gets known that under sanction of law industrial enterprises are liable to have their plant and property confiscated by the municipalities in which they are situated? It will be an excellent advertisement for St. John for outside investors to know that this city demands the right to step in and relieve the bond holders in any industrial corporation of their security should it feel inclined. When an investor puts his money into the first mortgage bonds of any concern, he generally regards himself as having the chief assets of the concern as his security; but when the municipality is able to walk in, lay violent hands on these assets without any with-you-leave or by-you-leave, there is hardly likely to be any great rush to invest money there. The passage of the bill which an effort is to be made to bring into the Legislature today, will give St. John a black eye that will be talked about all over the North American continent.

## A BAD PRECEDENT.

The situation as between the City and the Power Company seems to be something like this. The Company supplies the light, power, street railway and gas services. The two last named cannot be carried on by a remunerative basis except by charging a scale of prices that people would not pay, and the consequences would probably be such a loss of customers as would compel the discontinuance of these services altogether. The Company makes up the loss on these two services by a slightly increased price on the supply of light and power. The great majority of the citizens—and particularly the larger mercantile houses who use large quantities of light and power—have not minded and do not mind this at all. They appreciate the fact that the street railway lands customers at their doors, and that gas is quite largely used for heating and cooking purposes in their homes and that what they lose in one way, they gain in another. They know that the cost of light and power could be reduced quite materially, but only at the expense of the other services, which would suffer in consequence.

Now, the City is offered current for light and power, at a price below that which the Company can supply it at as long as it has to maintain the railway and gas services. A section of the citizens want the benefit of this reduction in cost, but they also want the Power Company to continue to carry on its railway and gas services, even after it has been robbed of the only remunerative factor in its business; the factor which alone permits of those services being continued. What sort of business is this? Is it fair? Is it even honest? It is sheer deception to promise the citizens' rights in the way that is being done. Have the investors who put \$3,000,000 of their money into the Power Company's business no rights? If the City wants the benefits, let it assume the burdens also. The bill sent up to the Legislature aims at permitting the City to take all the former, and leave the Company in full possession of the latter. And if the Company declines to be made so much of a goat, the City wants to sell its property as a punishment.

Never in the history of Canada has such a baited steel been suggested as this is. The Bolsheviks' plans in force now in Russia have nothing on this thing. In Nova Scotia where some time ago, exactly the same conditions prevailed, sane and sensible business men got together and worked out a plan fair and satisfactory to all concerned. The Legislature of this Province is elected to deal fairly with all classes of citizens, and to see that justice is done to all alike. The Public Utilities Act is based upon well-established usage all over this continent. It can penalize any public utility to the point where such utility must obey the ruling of its administrators. The City's bill is designed not to penalize, but to annihilate. It should be cut aside as utterly preposterous and without a shadow of justice to sustain this monstrous contention.

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

Pop was reading the sporting page after supper and I sat, Hay, pop, wats you think, I saw a fly in the house today and I swatted it.  
Good, and pop, and I said, Yes sir, I bet that fly wout lay any more eggs around here all rite.  
O, do you think thats wat it had bin doing? sed pop.  
Sure, I sed, holey smoke, pop, goah, G, dont you know frys lay about 3 millions eggs if you dont swat them, and look at all the frys we'd of had around the house.  
I cant bare to look at them, sed pop, thats jest wat that fly mite of done, perviding it was that kind of a fly.  
I did rite to swat it all rite, didnt I, pop? I sed, and pop sed, You did more than rite, the way you describe it you performed a fine deed, I mite even say a noble act, and you'll get your reward in heaven, for I havent any change jest now.  
Well wats you think I swatted it with, pop? I sed, there wasent any regular swatter around so I swatted it with your folding shaving mirror with the 3 sides, and only one side brook, wassent that lucky, pop?  
Wich judging by pops expression he didnt think it was, and judging by all the ferece cracks he gave me with his slipper some place I didnt think so eny more either.

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## Dorothy E. Eldridge A Wonderful Child

Only Five Years Old and Gives Exhibition of Remarkable Genius.

A child prodigy, namely Dorothy Eldridge, the five year old daughter of Professor and Mrs. A. B. Eldridge, of Sydney, N. S., visited the Standard with her father yesterday and gave an exhibition of her remarkable genius. Whether it be mental telepathy, intuition, second sight, or hypnotic influence, her performance was a marvelous one, and it is safe to say that there are few if any children in the world possessed of as highly developed mental faculties as five year-old Dorothy.

At her father's bidding, the little girl without the least prompting, recited the premiers of Canada and the presidents of the United States. She told the parts of the human brain and its weight. The numbers of plays written by Shakespeare, and the total number of acts of all his plays. The number of words in the Bible, and recited several passages from the new Testament.

As a spelling test, the little girl spelt such words as Nebuchadnezzar, New York, Montreal, Moncton, St. John, and many others. Being somewhat of an authority on etymology, the little girl told one of the reporters how to spell Mississippi. According to Dorothy it is "M. I. crooked letter, crooked letter, I, crooked letter, crooked letter, I, P. S. I." She then completed that part of her exhibition by reciting the alphabet backwards.

To demonstrate her power of mental telepathy, one of the reporters was asked to write the name of the month he was born in on a sheet of paper and to concentrate his thoughts on the name. This was done and Dorothy after a little thought, named the month. She then told which of those present were married and which single.

One of the reporters thought he had a question that would baffle the child, and asked what else was doing besides reporting, and he was annoyed to hear the child reply "studying law." Her father said the little girl had first given evidence of her remarkable powers at the age of two years. He believed that a natural gift coupled with her training on a psychological basis is responsible for her wonderful knowledge. According to Professor Eldridge, his daughter is either whipped, or at least never above the knees. In training a child, an effort should be made to see what the child likes most, and deny it that till it does what it is told, and reward it with it when it has obeyed to the best of its ability.

Dorothy is a Scotch French Canadian and was born near Three Rivers. Her mother is a devout Catholic, and she ascribes her child's remarkable gifts to a blessing invoked by a Catholic nursing sister. When the child was about two months old, her mother was taken seriously ill, and removed to a Hospital maintained by the nuns. The mother thinking her end was near, proaching asked the good sisters to

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