

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 1922

### WEST SIDE STRONG FOR CHEAP POWER

Enthusiastic Reception to Messrs. McLellan and Phillips

POWER AT LOWEST POSSIBLE COST

Hydro Opponents' Bombshell Exposed—Audience Keenly Resents Attempt of Power Company's Friends to Place Mr. McLellan and Mr. Phillips in False Light—No Increased Taxation, It is Explained.

The documents prepared by the opponents of the distribution of the Musquash hydro-electric energy came in for a severe shattering at the public meeting in the west side city hall last evening at the hands of H. R. McLellan and Herbert Phillips. The first was the mayor's statement of his policy, published last evening, and the second was a circular letter making a personal attack on Mr. McLellan, 10,000 copies of which, it was said, were scheduled for release by the opposition some time today.

Mr. Phillips, in dealing with the mayor's intimation that he was presumptuous in identifying himself as

prominently with the power question, pointed out that W. G. Chase, an engineer who came to the city only four or five months ago and who professed to be eager to warn the people against being "stung" had been welcomed by the mayor and had sat with him at discussions of the subject in city hall. The second document, which consisted entirely of a recital of Mr. Schofield's fitness for the mayoralty and of Mr. McLellan's alleged unfitness for the position, was taken up in detail by Mr. McLellan. He refuted insinuation after insinuation and turned point after point directed against him back upon the opposition itself. The plan to broadcast the document which Mr. McLellan produced last evening was keenly resented by those present when they learned of the proposal.

Both speakers were given an attentive hearing. Both were roundly applauded, and, in spite of the length of the meeting, the interest in the subject was of such a compelling nature that the speakers retained the keen interest of the audience to the very end.

The Chairman, Roy Willett, president of the United Organizations, who was chairman of the meeting, said that the issue was not who should become mayor but whether the people were to receive the full benefits from the Musquash hydro-electric development. Unless the present mayor went down to defeat by a big majority at the elections on Monday the people would not receive the full benefits of the undertaking, he said.

Mr. Phillips, After being introduced by the chairman, Herbert Phillips in his opening

remarks referred to the statement issued by Mayor Schofield and published in the Globe last evening.

In reply to the mayor's intimation that it was presumptuous on the part of Mr. Phillips, a newcomer to the city, to take such a prominent part in the affair, Mr. Phillips said that some four or five months ago an engineer, named Chase, had come to the city, not professedly in connection with the hydro-electric project but in connection with a concrete pipe line from Spruce Lake. Mr. Chase injected himself into the discussion. He was said to be a hydro-electric engineer of vast experience. He was eager to see that the city did not get "stung" in the hydro-electric deal. He was welcomed by the mayor and sat at the same table with him in city hall when delegations went there to discuss the question.

At that time, he said, there was only one voice, the voice of the Hardware Clerks' Association raised in the city's defence. The clerks were fighting a lone battle against a propaganda that was designed to discredit the project. Finally the newspapers took up the demand for a clearer explanation of the situation. It was at this time that he entered the discussion. He had spent eighteen months as a contractor on the job and he felt in a position to give information regarding the subject. At the request of the newspapers he reviewed the Mayor's report. He was reluctant to enter the discussion and he felt that anything he might say might be discounted on account of his position. To make his position clear he had always signed all his communications as managing director of the New Brunswick Construction Company.

His review was hailed by the newspapers as a clear and concise statement. It was backed by indisputable figures that had never since been questioned. It was quite true that he had paid only two tax bills as a resident of St. John. He did not intend the attack upon himself so much, but he did resent the attack that was being made on Mr. McLellan. It was the meanest and most distasteful piece of propaganda he had ever seen or heard tell of anywhere. Lacking any argument the opposition had resorted to an underhanded attack on Mr. McLellan's character.

On Solid Ground.

The worst thing that the opposition had been able to say about the advocates of civic distribution was that they were visionary. If it was visionary to hope that conditions would be better in St. John than they had been, then they were visionary; if it was visionary to do all in their power for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the city, then they were visionary, Mr. Phillips said. But he declared, however visionary the advocates of civic distribution might be, they certainly had their feet on solid ground when dealing with the matter of how the taxes would be affected by civic distribution. In this matter, the united organizations were keeping their feet on the ground and dealing with conditions as they were. It was important to remember this for the strongest card the opposition was now playing in the discussion of bogies was the bogie that civic distribution meant an increased taxation on the citizens as a whole.

Hydro at 6 1/2 Cents.

Mr. Phillips then went on to show on the basis of figures already published that under a civic system of distribution power could be sold at an average price of 6 1/2 cents during the first four years. In the fifth year the price of the power would be reduced to fifty per cent of what was being charged by the New Brunswick Power Company.

The speaker felt that the mayor's statement in the Globe last evening had done something to clear up the obscurity surrounding his position. It was known now where his worship stood. He was not for municipal ownership of the Musquash current; he was stubbornly opposed to the people handing the power for their own benefit.

If the mayor was not a friend of the Power Company certainly every move he made accrued to their benefit. It was dangerous to have a man who would act as the mayor acted at city hall. At the primary power, at the least possible cost had been endorsed.

He warned against the dangers of resting on the oars at this time. The fight was not over. It would continue long

after the election and would seek to bring pressure to bear on the citizens to buy the Power Company's plant at an unreasonable cost or at a figure to be decided by arbitration. All this must be resisted.

Mr. McLellan. Mr. McLellan was given a fine reception on rising after being introduced by the chairman. Mr. Phillips' address, he said, had cleared up all doubt in the minds of the audience about civic distribution being followed by increased taxation. The fact that Mr. Phillips had paid only two tax bills in St. John made no difference. The city was ready to welcome those who were willing to come in and put their shoulders to the wheel in an endeavor to bring prosperity to the community.

Mr. McLellan criticized severely several editorials in the Globe. He referred particularly to one of April 16, entitled "A New Community." In that article it was intimated that the citizens would have an opportunity of knowing the price before they voted on the question of taking over the property of the N. B. Power Company. That was a direct misrepresentation, he charged. No such arrangement was provided for in the bill recently passed at Fredericton. Moreover, he charged that the veracity of the Globe in its interviews with Mayor Schofield recently was contradicted by the statement of the mayor himself last evening.

That New Legislation. The recent bill put through the legislature, he said, was the most ridiculous piece of legislation ever put on the statute books. It was framed for the New Brunswick Power Company and for no one else. Arbitration was the Ethiopian in the woodpile in that bill. In the plebiscite for which the act provided an opportunity would be given to the people to say whether or not they

favoured taking over the property of the Power Company, the price to be fixed by arbitration afterwards. They would have no say whatever about the price. This was a sample of the convenient legislation of which the question must be kept clear.

It had been said that Mayor Schofield was the most democratic mayor the city ever had. He denied that and he thought he could show that his worship's conduct had been, on the contrary, autocratic. During the last eighteen months the mayor had been undemocratic; he had taken the whole hydro matter on his own shoulders. With the exception of one commissioner, the council members had not been consulted three times during that period even in the matter of the city's hiring a consulting engineer.

Mr. McLellan briefly reviewed his former service at City Hall. His feat of returning \$115,000 in unexpended balances to the city in six years had not been duplicated in the Canada, he declared. He had introduced many improvements into the town.

He dealt, in passing, with other issues such as the taxicab question, a bridge over the harbor, the advisory council of sixty-five and other matters.

Hydro Opponents' Bomb Shell Exploded.

Mr. McLellan read the document, 10,000 copies of which, he said, the opposition were intending to circulate today. The document asked why Mr. McLellan should want any truck or trade with the power company when he had no house or home, business or industry. It asked why he should worry about taxation when he was practically exempt and out of employment. It declared that the city wanted a mayor that could be trusted to carry out the people's wishes without any desire of self-enrichment or self-promotion. It intimated that Mayor Schofield was a friend of labor. It intimated that the city would be plunged into financial depths if it embarked on a civic system of distribution. It accused Mr. McLellan of falling down on the promises to divide the city with a skating arena and a new hotel. It charged him with wanting a job. It intimated that the Mayor was opposed to the Power Company, basing the contention on the bill passed last week. It painted a contrast between Mr. McLellan and Mr. Schofield that was meant to be unfavorable to Mr. McLellan.

A Strong Comeback.

Mr. McLellan took the document sentence by sentence, and refuted it, much to the delight of the audience. It would be fine to know one was exempt from taxation, he said, but he was not such a one, so he exhibited his tax receipt for \$104.38 for last year. He reminded his audience that his previous six years' work as a commissioner at City Hall had not enriched him any. This statement was warmly applauded. He read from a letter which said that Mayor Schofield fell down on the out-of-work question by failing to provide something big in the shape of work for men who wanted work and not charity.

In regard to whether civic distribution meant increased taxation, Mr. McLellan referred to the case made out on this matter by Mr. Phillips. He had advanced a \$80,000 arena, such a one as he thought the city should afford. The committee was unable to raise the money. Mayor Schofield came along and said he could build one for \$20,000. But even this much smaller deal his worship had not been able to complete, and the city was still without its skating rink.

Mr. McLellan said he had nothing whatever to do with the hotel proposition except in a minor capacity, but he did know that the controller of the common stock of the New Brunswick Power

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Company and one of the promoters of the hotel idea had subscribed for \$1,000 in a proposition that would have amounted to more than \$1,000,000.

If he were looking for a job the last place he would go for it would be City Hall, Mr. McLellan said. He did not want to be a candidate but had become one at the urging of the United Organizations and in response to a petition bearing about 1,500 names. It was a job all right and a big job, too, that the mayor would have to tackle.

In regard to the mayor and his attitude to the Power Company, Mr. McLellan said the writer of the circular had unwittingly spoken the truth when he wrote: "Yes, he showed how friendly disposed he was to them at Fredericton last week."

Schofield cannot be corrupted or swayed by the Power Company or any other private interest," Mr. McLellan read. "I don't know anything about Mr. Schofield," he said, "but I say McLellan cannot be corrupted by the Power Company or any other private interest."

This caused prolonged applause. He was glad that the circular writer had acknowledged he had at least some ability, Mr. McLellan continued. To the circular question: "If not Schofield—who?" Pointing to himself, the speaker answered: "I'll tell them who—McLellan." This was greeted by further sustained applause.

The concluding paragraph of the circular referred to Mr. Phillips. It read: He had made money out of the Musquash contract or else he would not be in the city now, but would be moved off elsewhere." Mr. McLellan invited Mr. Phillips to explain what he really did say at the board of trade meeting to which the article referred.

Mr. Phillips' Reply.

Mr. Phillips stepped forward and said that at the meeting referred to he was talking hydro at cost. The mayor had asked him whether he, as a contractor, had made any money out of the job, for if he had he did not see how it could be hydro at cost. Mr. Phillips had replied that he had spent eighteen months of

his time and had used all the resources of his company on the job for a year and a half and if he had not succeeded in making a profit he would not be talking that evening at the board of trade but would have already moved on to some other place. This explanation was applauded and the audience clearly showed that it understood how an attempt had been made to place Mr. Phillips in a false light.

Mr. McLellan said that if the mayor was opposed to an employer anticipating a profit he could not be a friend of labor for without profits the employer could make no work for the employees. The workers in the audience applauded this statement warmly.

All Cards on the Table.

In response to the intimation that he was not placing all his cards on the table Mr. McLellan declared that that was exactly what he had done. He had instead of putting them all on the table he might now be occupying a political position of higher importance than the one to which he was now aspiring.

At the conclusion of his address, Mr. McLellan was given prolonged applause. In spite of the fact that twenty-five extra gangs of men were working at the winter port last evening there were more than 800 people in the hall to hear the addresses. Under ordinary conditions the house would no doubt have been crowded.

The singing of the national anthem brought the meeting to a close.

### FOUR WEEKS TO SELECT A JURY

Los Angeles, Cal., April 19.—Four weeks of effort to obtain a jury to try Arthur Burch, charged with the murder here last August of J. Belmont Kennedy, resulted in success today when four women and eight men in the jury box were accepted by both defense and prosecution, although the defense had two preemptory challenges remaining and the state had one.

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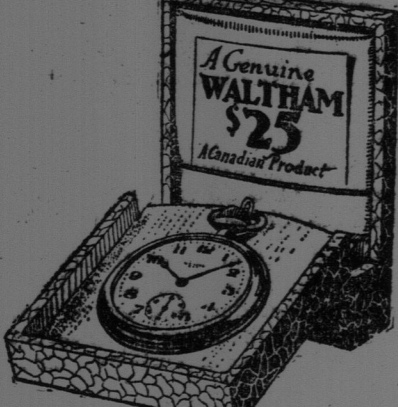
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