

their nostrils through dread of contamination and inability to stand the sickening odors, the council has been idle. This week, excavations on Government street brought to the surface heaps of soil, filling the air with poisonous gases. Here is another instance of civic short-sightedness. I understand that no attempt is being made to enforce connection with the sewers. What economy! When connections are made, the streets will be torn up again. The work on Government street shows that the city council are doing the job with perfect knowledge of the relation in which it stands to sewer connection and pavement. Would it have depleted the exchequer to scatter chloride of lime along Government street? Both hospitals are full. A meeting was held on Thursday to arrange for additional accommodation. Ye gods, what a spectacle of a city Victoria presents with its grass-grown streets, its microbe incubating water supply, its incomplete, botched sewage system, and over all the superlative enlightenment and incarnation of collective wisdom of the council board!

Fires have been so frequent in and around the city of late that we are almost hourly in expectation of hearing an alarm sounded. The code is an excellent one, and one which is so thoroughly understood that, the number once obtained, the seat of danger can be immediately located. With the object, no doubt of facilitating the brigade and the general public in proclaiming the danger, the good people of the Victoria-Phoenix Brewery set their steam whistle a-tooting; but, unfortunately, they do not always get the correct number, and so far from rendering a service, they do the reverse. By all means, let us have the advantage of the whistle, but I would respectfully suggest that it should not be sounded until the series of alarms from the Fire Hall have ceased.

The Guardian Publishing Company, an enterprise which is understood to be in process of incubation, has approached His Worship the Mayor and City Council with a proposition to aid in the establishment of an independent daily paper to be run for and in the interests of the City of Victoria. The Guardian Company, in return for supplying the city with such a paper, ask that the Council guarantee the interest upon \$30,000 for a period covering twenty years. In support of the scheme, the company submit that the city will have security for the interest as follows: "The publication may be made the official organ of the city, and from the advertising bill (which is to be paid for at the present rates) the interest can be deducted monthly."

The petitioner may be a madman or an

idiot, as the *Times* insinuates, but many will be inclined to believe that there is method in his madness. It has cost the City of Victoria a large sum of money in the past for its advertising, and an official organ under the control of the council would receive the profit which now goes to the two daily papers in the city. Besides, there is a well defined suspicion that Victoria is in dire need of a newspaper or so more. The publishers of the papers already here have grown enormously fat and sleek from their monopoly, and, it is believed, suffer from that disease which is known to medical men as *caput magnus*.

All this admitted, I must, however, take exception to one statement of the petitioner. He says: "Your petitioner submits that there is not a journal published in the City of Victoria which dares call a spade a spade without first consulting with Tom, Dick or Harry—in other words, the profits which measures are to yield to certain persons are always considered, and the poor sheep that yields the wool is never thought of."

In this respect, the petitioner is in grievous error. THE HOME JOURNAL, which is now the recognized leading moulder of public opinion in Western Canada, is not skilled "to crook the pregnant hinges of the knee that thrift may follow fawning." I only speak for one paper. There are publications in this city of whom it can truthfully be said they dare not call a spade a spade without first consulting Tom Dick or Harry, but this great family newspaper is not one of them.

While on the subject of newspapers, the following from an exchange may not prove uninteresting: "Were there among journalists some infallible pope, who could define plainly and clearly just where the boundary line between liberty and license lies, it would then be an easy matter to consign to purgatorial and other fires the newspapers that lay on the license side of the line. It is only when the liberty of the press runs riot into extreme license that a sleepy public rubs its eyes, awakening with a determination to stop that noise and to restore order. Were a choice imperative between resigning complete liberty along with the abolition of liberty's misdirection and misapplication, or retaining full liberty along with the attendant evils of unrestrained license, there is no doubt more evil would result from the curtailment of the liberty of the press than good could come from the prevention of possibilities of wrong. Without any subtle distinctions of right and wrong, there are some newspaper sins so startlingly prominent as to stand condemned from their very nature. No one would hesitate to de-

nounce using a paper as a vehicle of personal spite, inflaming class, sectional hatred, the sensational lie, the cloaking of wrong, the ridicule of right, the circulating of slander, and especially the reporting of horrors, misdeeds and vices in such a way that sympathies are brutalized and evil is stimulated in the heart of some readers. Whether newspapers mould or reflect public opinion is immaterial. What is important, whether they mould right principles or reflect the best and most elevated kind of public opinion. Under cover that they are only reflectors, many a scurvy column is printed. This is but a poor excuse whereby a poor paper tacitly confesses that it reflects only the meanest of human thought and caters to only the lowest of human emotions. Not going into poetic flights over ideal duties, thinking people can yet appreciate the first-class work and understand how important are the functions of a good journal; to turn on the light in haunts of vice and wrongdoing and yet not scatter the germs of vice nor reveal the mysteries of evil, to be uninfluenced by the corruption of bribery and gain, to be perfectly just and yet a terror to wrongdoers, to give an impartial statement of facts, to supply interesting accurate news, either to mould public opinion to the highest standards, or to reflect the best public opinion—to do all this fairly and promptly, to present the whole in attractive simple style; such are some of the aims of a good journal."

There is a screw loose somewhere in business law or business economy, when a man can deliberately run bills, and deliberately refuse to pay them, still keeping himself at a safe distance from the clutches of the law. An aggravated case of this kind came under my notice this week. A merchant of this city, whom I will call Smith, sold flour to a bakery run by a firm whose name for convenience will be Brown & Green. The firm was well recommended to Smith by a merchant whom he knew. The baker asked Smith to let them have flour on thirty days time, and everything seeming fair, he did this. The pay came promptly for a long enough period to put Smith off his guard, when the bakers asked the favor of paying but half of the money due, and continuing for another month. This was done, as the circumstances seemed to warrant an extension. At the end of the next month an arrangement was made to pay the whole bill in a few days, but it was not paid, and Smith shut off the flour supply, with a slow account of \$115 to collect. Then Brown dropped out of the bakery quietly, and stole off to some other town to begin business in another name. Green declared himself not responsible for the debts