

The Evening Times and Star

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NO TIME TO LOSE.

When the dangerously unsanitary condition of the Marsh creek was referred to the Board of Health by the civil department of water and sewerage, the former body showed commendable promptness in giving consideration to the subject. A preliminary report was submitted to the last meeting of the board by the district health officer and in this report he showed his appreciation of the need for extensive reforms in that district. Official recognition of the situation there presented was given in the action of the board in appointing a committee to investigate and report, and probably this report will be before the board at the next meeting.

Among the recommendations made by the health officer was the suggestion that the city sewerage mains which enter the creek should be extended so that their contents would be discharged into the waters of the creek at all times, instead of being permitted to flow down over the banks. Conditions in the rear of houses and factories located on the banks of the creek also were indicated for investigation. The wide area of muddy banks on which successive tides leaves its accumulation, and which even if clean still would produce unpleasant odors, also needs attention. The recommendation to meet this phase of the matter was that the banks should be filled in, by establishing public dumps along them until the width of the creek bed was reduced to sixty feet or so. The new banks thus built up could be seeded and in due time would be covered with a grass sod which would preserve the surface and add much to the appearance of the surroundings of the creek. The contrast between the conditions following such improvements and conditions as they exist at present easily can be imagined. Instead of remaining an eyesore, with every appearance of being a source of contagion, the creek would be converted into a landscape feature rather attractive than otherwise.

The only reason why this programme might not be feasible, according to the report of the health officer, is the possibility that some of the changes suggested might constitute an infringement upon private rights and that the owners of property along the creek might raise objections. It is hardly likely that any property owner would stand in the way of such improvements, which would add considerably to the value of the property affected, without cost to the owner, and if any such were found some method to deal with them probably could be found also. Whatever is to be done should be done promptly. Before long, winter will be here and it will be impossible to do the work required. The time which intervenes should be used to the utmost advantage in order that the conditions which have furnished grounds for such vigorous and well justified complaints should not continue to exist another year. When the recommendations of the board of health are presented in full, the city and any other authorities who may be interested should lose no time in showing practical co-operation, by aiding in putting the recommendations into effect.

THE AIR FORCE.

We are not likely to forget the gallant deeds of the Canadian aviators during the war, nor the special service of the men for the fact that by the time the armistice was signed Canadians formed seventy-five per cent of the British flying forces. With such a record, it was expected that the Canadian government would pay particular attention to aviation in the after-war plans of the department of militia and defence and considerable. The action of the government in insisting upon the breaking up of the Canadian Air Force of two squadrons which was established overseas during the war.

The Overseas Ministry disagreed with the policy of the home government and for several months struggled to arrange for the return of the squadrons to Canada intact. The Ottawa idea has prevailed and the Canadian air force has ceased to exist.

What the future policy of the government is to be has not been announced, but it is difficult to believe, as some critics seem to think, that the government does not intend to perpetuate this branch of the Canadian army in some form. It is to be expected rather that the action taken in disbanding the overseas squadrons is merely preliminary to re-organization. Other branches are being retained in the permanent forces and some progress has been made in the re-organization of the militia and Canada cannot afford to overlook the value of the air force in plans for future defence.

Other branches of the militia did not give so much return for the money spent on them in times of peace, except their value as a means towards preparedness for war, which of course is the chief consideration, but the air force would pay an extra dividend on the expenditure in the training it would furnish for commercial flying. The vast extent of Canada, the widely separated centres of population and the rich natural resources in many places not easily accessible otherwise combine in furnishing conditions which should make the development of aviation of peculiar value to this country. The importance of the air force in time of war was too deeply impressed upon every one during the great war, to require argument in its support in that field and if we are to continue to spend money on the militia, department there is no branch for which the public would contribute more readily than for the air service.

We have the men already trained for the work, many of whom have re-established themselves in civil life, but who would be eager to continue flying under military organization, and many would be glad of an opportunity to enter a permanent force. So many of the air men were youngsters fresh from school and college that a large proportion of them had little or no training which would make it easy for them to find a suitable place in civil life and among these there would be little difficulty in recruiting all the men required.

There is no lack of equipment for present needs at least, as airplanes and other material to the value of \$2,500,000 were presented to Canada by the British government and most of this still would be available.

The suburban residents and members of the summer colonies along the Kennebecasis who are planning to continue next summer the interest in rowing, which developed rather late but with surprising results this year, deserve every encouragement. There is no better sport, either for the participant or for the spectator, than rowing, and the breed which made St. John rowmen world champions in years gone by has not died out. To West Side men much go much of the credit for this year's boom in the sport and undoubtedly they will be ready to try conclusions again with the Kennebecasis crews. The suburban resorts along the main river will not want to be left out of it if racing becomes popular again and from among the various crews which might be trained there would be little difficulty in picking at least one crew which would be able to uphold the honor of St. John against all comers.

The generosity shown by St. John in placing the exhibition plant unreservedly and without charge at the disposal of the military authorities for use during the war period made it impossible for St. John to continue exhibitions while the war was in progress or even to resume again this year. While the buildings have been in the hands of the militia department considerable depreciation has taken place in some of them and when the time comes for their return to the control of the exhibition association, the military authorities will be expected to show an equally generous spirit in the matter of repairs. Some of the buildings erected during the war by the government which will be of little further use to the militia department might be adapted for exhibition uses also.

The Bolsheviks continue to give out statements of successes in the fighting in Russia but the weight of evidence is in favor of announcements that their cause is fast losing ground.

The danger of serious friction between the Allies and Roumania has been lessened. Roumania must see that she cannot go too far without serious consequences.

ALCOHOL AS MEDICINE.

To the Editor of The Times: Sir,—It cannot be repeated too often that alcohol in any form is not only of no use as medicine, but that it is positively harmful. It lessens the power of the system to defend itself against the germs of disease, and when sick it lessens the power of the system to fight and conquer the germs that cause illness. The sooner the public learn these plain facts the better it will be for both nation and individual. If we persist in encouraging disease of course we shall have more of it. The fact that it has been proved by government commissions in several countries. Physicians have often wondered why so many of the children of big strong parents should either die or grow up nervous weaklings to the third and fourth generation. Dr. McNichol, head of the Roosevelt Commission, put this matter very forcibly when he said that if the United States did not soon overcome the liquor traffic "some more virile race will possess this country." That is strong language, but not too strong, and we have a pretty good idea of the people he had in his mind.

I am ashamed to say that a few of my own profession have been slow to see the baneful effects of alcohol used as a medicine. However, there are comparatively few medical men who now prescribe it. The trouble was that like bleeding or opium, it gave temporary relief. After a patient with pleurisy or pneumonia was bled until he fainted, when he came to, he was free from pain as much as if he had been given a hypodermic or morphia, but his chance of recovery was lessened by more than one-half. Alcohol lessens the chance of recovery in about the same proportion. Dr. Welsh of John Hopkins University, said at a meeting of the American Association of Physicians, "Alcohol in any form, or in any dose, lessens a patient's chance of recovery." There were present nearly 600 of the ablest medical men in the United States and Canada, and there was not a dissenting voice. The greatest boards of health and the greatest medical associations today agree that alcohol should not be used as medicine.

H. ARNOTT, M.B., M.C.P.S.,  
Board of Social Service.  
Toronto, Sept. 10.



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VANITY.

I am dyeing, comrades, dyeing, for my whiskers show up gray; the effect is rather trying, so I'd stain them dappled bay. Oh life's little day is ending, and the evening is sung, and I spend my time pretending vainly, too, that I am young. I wear reindeer brave and gaudy, and deny I have the gout, but the binges in my body, are as rusty as get out; at the least exertion tiring, I must seek the nearest chair, and my spark-plugs all miss firing every time I'd climb a stair. But I'm evermore pretending that I'm just a three-year-old; all my waking hours I'm spending proving I'm as good as gold. My old eyes are rather rheumy, and my teeth are celluloid, but I won't admit I'm gloomy, or that life's an aching void. I chirp on, like Alfred's river, telling folks how good I feel, though I have a musty liver, and rheumatics in my heel. It is vanity, dodgast it, and perhaps that's its offense, and you say I should be past it should be gifted with more sense. You denounce my empty fooling, saying I'm fake, indeed; would you rather have me drooling like a dotard gone to seed?

Hospital Matters.

(Daily Telegraph)

A short word in passing. The Globe yesterday reproduced a portion of a Telegraph editorial on hospital matters, saying that the portion so reproduced contained the reason which would make it easy for them to find a suitable place in civil life and among these there would be little difficulty in recruiting all the men required. Quite unintentionally, no question. The Telegraph's article, the Globe fell into one or two errors which are referred to here, not for controversial purposes but merely to keep the record straight. In the first place, the sentences reproduced by the Globe gave some, but by no means all, of the reasons advanced by The Telegraph in asking for a royal commission. The constructive portion of The Telegraph's article was assumed that the Globe's desire to promote hospital betterment is quite as sincere as our own. It is still necessary to point out that an injustice was done this newspaper. The Globe quoted the following from these columns:

The present Board of Hospital Commissioners long since outlived its usefulness. Its policy has been at best a compromise between the old and the new. Where progress and modern methods were urgently needed, there has been stagnation. Worse, the majority of the members, having no real policy, have resisted and resented suggestion of a progressive character. They have permitted a narrow circle to conduct hospital affairs too much as they wished, this institution, which is so intimately related to the health and the very life of the community, were the inherited private property of a favored few.

The Globe then said: "These charges, insinuations, innuendoes, constitute further and very strong reasons for the commissioners themselves taking the course already suggested to them. They should ask the provincial government to appoint a commission," etc.

We are quite in accord with the Globe's view that the commissioners would do well to ask for a royal commission, the purposes of such commission, as we have already explained, being not only to investigate hospital conditions as they exist and as they have been for some time past but what is more important, to ascertain by evidence from all interested parties, from witnesses representing every interest, just what sort of definite and comprehensive plan of hospital betterment and expansion is wise and necessary, and by a fearless and searching report to unite public opinion in support of the required action. Its policy has been at best a compromise between the old and the new. Where progress and modern methods were urgently needed, there has been stagnation. Worse, the majority of the members, having no real policy, have resisted and resented suggestion of a progressive character. They have permitted a narrow circle to conduct hospital affairs too much as they wished, this institution, which is so intimately related to the health and the very life of the community, were the inherited private property of a favored few.

Let us return now for a moment to the main question, and see if the references made to the need for immediate action along the lines suggested. Not to go back farther than 1911, we find that for some eight or nine years past the need for hospital re-organization and expansion has been clearly recognized, and yet that discussion and supposed decisions have come to nothing and the responsibility for failure after failure and futility after futility should not be difficult to establish.

In October, 1911, a committee interviewed the Municipal Council in regard to overcrowding at the General Public Hospital. A few days later the committee reported that it had been favorably received and that a promise of \$30,000 had been made to assist in the work. Nothing was done until March 12, 1912, when the medical board of the hospital outlined a large project of extension and betterment, and an engineer, certain plans which, by February, 1913, the American expert was invited to St. John. He came on February 25. His report on the situation was received on March 20, and on March 28 an architect's plans were "adopted."

The fever was subsiding, though probably not the overcrowding. Spring came. By May 20 the Municipal Council decided to survey certain property in White street which would be involved in the proposed extension. Another painful interval. By July 15 the Municipal Council had decided to expropriate land in White street. The record is bare then until November 3, 1913, when an architect presented sketch plans which, by November 10, were enlarged and "adopted." Various barren discussions of extension and improvement followed from time to time, but no definite action until, four years later, at the beginning of 1917, the board began to discuss the new power house, which was finally completed and which

has been most highly spoken of. As somebody remarked: "If they only had a hospital to go with the power house, things would be all right."

More recent hospital history is well known to all. The work of the women's association in organizing a very numerous influential and enthusiastic Ladies' Aid Association, and taking up the project of the nurses' home, an essential feature of hospital expansion, cannot be too highly commended; and it would be a misfortune of no ordinary character should the community through further hounding lose so great an asset as is to be found in the attitude of these women, their earnest and intelligent interest in hospital betterment, and their willingness to work and to raise money for the good cause.

This glance at a portion of the record of hospital affairs will, we venture to think, be recognized as additional evidence in support of the appointment of a royal commission to clear up the whole situation and concentrate public support upon a definite plan, to extend over a considerable period, such a plan as might well be worked out by the royal commissioners in the light of the evidence they would hear from witnesses representing every legitimate interest in this community. It goes without saying that the main work of the commission would be constructive, not destructive. That is, undeniably, in St. John city and county a vigorous and powerful public sentiment in favor of modern and creditable hospital conditions. That the green wide lap of May in her hand, and these it would receive from the work of a representative and impartial commission which it is the earnest hope of many that the local government, the city and the municipal council and the public generally will favor. There has been so much waste of time in the past, the need for action and wisely directed action is too clear to be ignored.

THE CHAMELEON.

(Leslie Clare Manchester, in Our Dumb Animals.)

He climbs the lattice, pauses there; He turns his graceful head! A fragrance steals through all the air By yellow jasmine shed! The skies of February bend With all the grace of June; Their arches summer softness lend; They wait a mocker's tune. And lo, the dull drab of his coat Beneath the sunny bloom Fades, oh, so softly note by note Into the leaf-laced gloom! And all the butterflies that The green wide lap of May In petal color glint and glint And touch with gold the gray.

He moves his yellow armor now; He peers with suffron eye To where his mate, pale little frau, "Come change your gown, my pretty one."

He's calling soft to her; "There's primrose gold here in the sun; Here where the blossoms stir."

LIGHTER VEIN

The man who lost the freak election bet was fully conscious of his facial deficiencies.

"What's that?" said he to the winner. "What's that?" inquired the winner. "If you're going to stand by and see that I cut all these peas with a hipkin, I want you to admit that you won the bet and are insisting on its payment. Don't you pretend that you are my keeper?"

Proud of Young Hopeful. Smiffins had been a father just five minutes. His servant entered with a letter in her hand.

"What is that?" "A letter." "Is it addressed?" "To J. Smiffins, Esq."

"How do you know, Jane, that that is not for my son?"—Pearson's.

A college professor who is absent-minded got on a crowded electric car and had to stand up. As the conductor came to take his fare the professor suddenly perceived a well-known society woman of his acquaintance. He at once put his hand in his pocket, took out a nickel and handed it nonchalantly to the woman, then, turning he made an elaborate bow and shook hands with the conductor.

"To my mind that's the main trouble with the automobile." "Why?" "They're so darned hard to buy on credit."

"Mayne changed countenance when I saw her at the beauty doctor's." "Why?" "That is what she went there for."

"I am a friend of a great orator?" "So-ho!" A cyclone blew down our house. "You mustn't cry about that. Your father is a rich man; he can easily buy another one." "So-ho!" "Aw, 'tain't that. When he comes home he'll say I did it."

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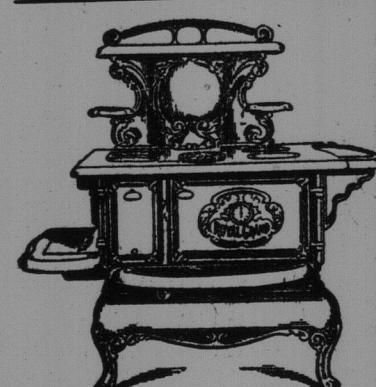
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