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OUR "OPEN-DOOR" POLICY

THE LATEST SCHEME ADVOCATED BY THE LINDSAY BOARD OF TRADE

WILL THE WATCHMAN-WARDER PLAN FOR TRADING EXCURSIONS BECOME A REALITY?

An important meeting of the Board of Trade was held in the council chamber on Friday evening and while the attendance was fairly representative, we must candidly admit there was a singular absence of the mercantile class. This was rendered more peculiar from the fact that the meeting was almost solely in the interest of that class. It is an old and true story "that the Lord helps those who help themselves," and we would impress this fact upon the minds of our business men generally. No man can live within himself, and therefore our citizens, generally, should vie with each other in their efforts to advance the town and at the same time advance the common good. The leading question before the meeting was the possibility of running cheap excursions from the different trading points along our inland waters to Lindsay. Cheap transportation is a live question today all over the world, and it is only a natural consequence to expect that it should receive the attention of live business men in our midst. Some two years ago this question was first mooted in The Watchman, and while it failed to arouse the interest at that time we confidently expected it would have done, nevertheless, the action of the Board of Trade goes to show that the seed fell in a good place and only needed time to grow. The action of the railways in cutting off the regular Saturday market fares a few years ago has not only worked disastrously to the large trading centres but we firmly believe has also militated against the railway. Be this as it may, there is no reason why an up-to-date town like Lindsay, with a population of nearly eight thousand, should sit down and mourn over the action and refuse to make an effort to restore their fallen fortunes. The Watchman-Warder therefore gladly takes any joint action by our citizens to regain our lost laurels, and trusts that every assistance will be given the committee in the efforts to carry the proposed scheme into active operation. It is by the innovation of ideas of this kind that the Board of Trade may hope to become a power in the land, and the increase in membership will steadily advance as it demonstrates its ability to handle important matters.

The meeting was called to order by the president, Mr. J. D. Flavell, who after expressing his regret at the small attendance of merchants, proceeded to read the following letter from Mr. R. J. McLaughlin:

April 18th, 1899.
J. D. FLAVELL, Esq., President of the Board of Trade, Lindsay.

Dear Sir:—It has occurred to me that an effort ought to be made this summer to take a greater advantage of our position as a centre of a large system of inland navigation, for the purpose of bringing trade to the town. I have consulted with some of the merchants and they have informed me that since the cessation of the Saturday half fare on the railway that there has been a very great decrease in the Saturday trade, one leading grocer telling me that his Saturday sales were at least \$50.00 less than they were before this change and it is probable that the total loss in trade to the town would be nearly \$1000 per week. It seems to me that this loss ought to some extent be made up if arrangements were made for Saturday excursions to be run weekly from points on Scugog, Lake Simcoe, Balsam and Cane taking in Fenelon Falls and point Pigeon lake taking in Bobcaygeon and North and South Verulam. Arrangements could probably be made with the steamboat men to run these excursions if something were done by the town to advertise them and perhaps it might require a small guarantee fund which the business men of the town might subscribe in order to secure the establishment of the service.

I think this matter is worthy of the attention of the council of the Board.

Yours truly, R. J. McLAUGHLIN.

Mr. Flavell explained that the letter had been considered by the council of the Board, and was deemed worthy of consideration by the whole Board of Trade, together with the merchants and steamboat men. It was an important matter, and he thought it should receive a free and easy discussion and not be tied down by rules of procedure like the town council. The boatmen were nearly all present and could give their views.

Mr. John Carew stated that both Capt. Crandell and Mr. Thos. Sadler, the owners of the local passenger boats, were present, and they should be heard.

Capt. Crandell related how a little over a year ago he had taken the necessary steps to form the steamboat men into a company, and just when he thought it was an assured fact the matter fell through. In going into the scheme he felt that it was a sacrifice to him, owing to the fact that his boat being a large one was able to do a profitable business when smaller crafts could not make it pay. With reference to the present scheme he was not in a position now to go in for these market excursion trips owing to the fact that his boat, the Crandella, was booked for all the Saturdays in June already.

The president enquired if the Crandella could make say one regular fortnightly trip.

Capt. Crandell said he would consider the matter and give his views later on.

Mr. J. M. Knowlson of the Alice Ethel on being called on stated he could not say much about it, as he had not time to give the matter necessary consideration. He thought that perhaps the smaller boats could run the trips to better advantage than the large steamers. He thought that if the boats picked up say 45 passengers they would be doing a pretty fair thing. They were doing their own towing with the Alice Ethel, but if it was deemed necessary they could run an excursion every Saturday.

In answer to a question by the president Captain Parkin stated that the Marie Louise would carry seventy-five passengers and was licensed for that number.

Mr. Thos. Sadler stated that the Greyhound would carry the same number.

The president invited free discussion and expressed his regret at the lack of interest shown by the merchants of the town who would reap the whole benefit if the scheme was carried through to a successful issue. He thought it was poor encouragement for the Board of Trade to bother with it.

Mr. Wm. Flavell favored the scheme and pointed out that the excursion rates should be very cheap in order to secure the very best results. He instanced the cheap trips on the Crandella to Bobcaygeon last season. He thought that perhaps the smaller boats would prove the most advantageous and that the Greyhound would be of great benefit to the town if it could be secured for say two or three excursions each week. He would like to know what the steamboat owners would require in the way of a guarantee to give the proposed scheme a trial.

Mr. Knowlson thought that they should be guaranteed the expenses of their boats at least. He pointed out that a boat calling at Gannon's Narrows would be highly acceptable to the people of Harvey.

Mr. G. H. M. Baker suggested that the whole matter be left in the hands of a committee.

Col. Deacon thought that the business men of the town were very idolent as to their own interests. They should distinguish between regular excursions and trading or market excursions. He thought more attention should be given to the upper lake. There was a great trade to be secured from Cartwright town-ship if anything like regular communication was established.

Capt. Crandell stated that he had been repeatedly urged by Bobcaygeon people to run cheap Saturday excursions to Lindsay. He thought that by taking in the Harvey shore, below Bobcaygeon, it would prove a popular trip. He thought the Board of Trade was working along the right line.

Mr. Wm. Flavell stated that a boat leaving Gannon's, say at seven o'clock, could reach Lindsay at ten o'clock.

Mr. R. J. McLaughlin stated that Lindsay merchants did not fully realize how their trade was drifting away from them. The town had increased fully twenty per cent. in population in the last ten years while the volume of trade had depreciated fully fifty per cent. This was accounted for to a certain extent by a loss of a great proportion of the fine trade formerly done here that was now going to the departmental stores in the cities, and the loss of the staple trade that was now done by the surrounding village merchants. There is no reason why this fine trade could not be done in Lindsay as it was in former years. All that is required is cheap transportation combined with united efforts on the part of our business men. Lindsay is situated in the centre of one of the best agricultural districts in Canada, and possesses vast water stretches and first-class railway facilities. By the exercise of a little enterprise on the part of our citizens Lindsay should possess a population of 15,000 in the next ten years. He then outlined several points that were tributary to Lindsay. He instanced the township of Cartwright, and pointed out that not one farmer in fifty ever came to Lindsay. This could all be changed by supplying cheap transportation. It properly advertised he did not think the steamer Greyhound could meet the requirements of the trade from the Scugog alone. He mapped out several other good routes on Sturgeon and Balsam lake, and assured his hearers that if the different trips were extensively and properly advertised the first year, that would be all that was required.

Mr. A. J. Kerr thought that the first step necessary to increase the trade of Lindsay was to improve the reputation of our market. He had time after time made inquiries from customers why they did not visit Lindsay oftener, and the reply was always "no market."

Mr. Wm. Flavell did not agree with this statement. The point to be aimed at was to furnish cheap transportation and induce the people to come to Lindsay and do their trading. They carried large stocks, and the Lindsay merchants should be able to supply them with their fine goods just as well as the departmental stores. Our market was improving, and the ladies of the town could be seen there any market day with their baskets buying the produce offered for sale. In other respects he thought the prices paid in Lindsay would compare with any other town in the district.

Col. Deacon then spoke on the advantages of cheap transportation, and referred to the trade that came to Lindsay before the market fares were done away with on the railway.

Moved by Mr. Flavell, seconded by John Carew, that Messrs James Graham, J. G. Edwards, M. J. Carter, R. J. McLaughlin, Thos. Brady and William Flavell be and are hereby appointed a

committee to investigate and report upon the feasibility of inaugurating a scheme by which excursions by steamboats or otherwise can be successfully established at cheap rates for bringing people to Lindsay to do their trading.

Mr. Baker asked if the committee could not arrange monthly railway excursions.

Mr. J. D. Flavell stated the idea was a good one and was certainly worthy of consideration.

The motion was then carried unanimously.

President Flavell then extended an invitation to any present to become members of the Board that were not already enrolled. He pointed out that much good could be accomplished for the town by such a body. The result was that some half dozen new names were received.

Geo. Lytle suggested that in connection with the excursion scheme steps should be taken to have the township councils provide suitable wharves at the most desirable points. This was very much needed on the upper lake, and he felt sure if the matter was placed before the municipal councils of Manvers and Mariposa in the proper light that the accommodation would be provided. At times it was almost impossible to land at certain points.

President Flavell thought it would be unwise to take any action in this matter at present.

Mr. Baker said as we were taking steps to increase the trade on our river we should also take steps to increase and improve our navigation.

President Flavell said we have Mr. McHugh, M.P., with us, and he was the very man to tell us all about it.

Mr. McHugh said he had received the petition and had presented it, but owing to the illness of the minister he had been unable to do anything about it. The deputy minister had agreed, however, to place it in the supplementary estimates. He had inspected the two reports prepared for the department, one dealing with an 80 foot channel and the other for a hundred foot channel. He felt if the eighty foot channel was proceeded with the additional twenty feet would be sure to follow. He informed the board that the Bobcaygeon, Lindsay and Pontypool railway charter had been revived and the bill was given the final reading.

Mr. F. C. Taylor took up the question of improving our navigation and pointed out that the increasing traffic not only required widening the channel but also deepening the same. He thought they should take steps to assist Mr. McHugh by sending down a large deputation.

President Flavell explained that the Board had made arrangements with this end in view at the last meeting.

The meeting then adjourned.

District Happenings

—Beaverton lodge of Oddfellows announces its annual excursion to Niagara Falls for June 9th.

—W. F. Campbell, one of the leading citizens of Tweed, Ont., died on Monday of last week from appendicitis.

—Robt. Lawson of Naparee recently hugged three pretty women while passing through a covered bridge in that town. For this offence he was sentenced to ten months in the Central prison.

—A couple of weeks ago a large blow-adder was noticed lying in the back yard at Mrs. Weir's place, Severn Bridge, Muskoka. The reptile was instantly de-patched. It measured fully three feet in length.

—Albert Kerr of Orillia dropped \$64 on the carload of live hogs which he shipped to Montreal recently. The loss was almost entirely due to shrinkage, which amounted to no less than fifteen hundred pounds between Orillia and Montreal.

—Mr. Alex Cameron of 6th con., Thorah, had the misfortune to have two of his fine cows killed and one seriously injured by collision with the morning mail train on Friday of last week at the crossing 7th con. The animals were valuable ones and the loss will be a heavy one.

—Mr. John Stewart, sr., a well-known and highly respected citizen of Otonabee, died on Wednesday last as a result of the injuries he sustained in a runaway accident on Sunday previous. Mr. John Stewart was sixty-two years of age and unmarried. The family is one of the best known in the county, the elder members having been among the pioneers. The death will be deeply regretted.

—Mrs. McKay, widow of the late Wm. McKay of Greenwood, Ontario county, passed away very suddenly at 4 o'clock Wednesday morning of last week in her 82nd year. She had been ill during the winter, but was improving, to all appearances. Her daughter went to her room and found her dead. She had been a resident of Greenwood for over half a century. She leaves four daughters and one son, Alex. McKay of Toronto; Mrs. H. E. Kyle of Oakville; Mrs. Jas. Elliott of Cobcook; Mrs. Melver of Chicago, Lizzie and Dora, living at home.

—The venue in the Naparee bank robbery case has again been changed. The crown was ready to go on at Toronto, and further proceedings were necessary. After consultation between crown and defence it was decided that Cobourg would more fully meet the convenience of Mr. Ponton and his counsel than Toronto. After consultation with the lawyers in the case Justice Robertson formally assented to a change of venue to Cobourg. The order will be taken out at once. Ponton's bail is continued. Thus Cobourg is to be the place where this celebrated case is to be tried, if it is ever tried, and it will take place at the fall assizes.

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