

The Highland Park News.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1897.

"ABOUT these days look out for elections," as the old almanacs would say. Look at the list of elections for us in two weeks: April 6th, East Deerfield; April 10th, High School; April 17th, Grammar School; April 20th, City of Highland Park. Is it any wonder the Irishman fresh from the Emerald Isle decides to "follow politics the year around," as his neighbor decided to make maple sugar? All the prosperity in the world could do nothing for us in such circumstances.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL?

The City Council is what? Six men with the Mayor, Clerk and Attorney. But the alderman do all the talking and voting save when there is a tie and the mayor cuts the Gordian knot. What is the work, business or duty of these six alderman? It is to manage the business affairs of the city: that is all, nothing more and nothing less. There is no politics and seldom much religion in it, but purely business matters from first to last. In this respect it is like a corporation, a railway or a manufacturing company of any kind. The citizens, that is the tax payers, are the stock holders and their "shares" are in proportion to the amount of taxable property they own in the city and the board of aldermen are really the "directors" of the municipal company. This is the real, true and business idea of a city council, the directors, or business managers of a

big business institution. Hence, party politics, religious preference and social standing have no more to do with the selection of an alderman than they have to do with the selection of a man for a director in a railway, steamship or manufacturing company. Marvin Hughitt is not made president of the Northwestern Railway Co. because he is an Elder in Dr. Withrow's Third Presbyterian church in Chicago, but on account of his preeminent business ability; that and that alone decides the whole question. So Chauncey M. Depew is put in a similar position in the New York Central, not because he is a great after dinner speaker, but from his superior administrative business talent. That is the way these big business enterprises are managed; the best men are secured as managers and then success and dividends follow.

A city council is a like institution; its alderman are the "directors" or business managers and hence, if they are capable, efficient business men, the business affairs of the city will prosper and not otherwise. The affairs of the city cannot be managed successfully by guesswork, haphazard, spasmodic efforts any more than a railroad company's affairs. The railroad or manufacturing company carefully select their best, most competent and ablest men for directors so the company can prosper, for it can't prosper in any other way.

Now fellow citizens do we select aldermen in this way? Is our board of alderman composed of the select, choicest, ablest and most conspicuously successful business men in the city? The work of the council is general business and finance: finance is the specialty. Have our aldermen made themselves conspicuous by their marked success as financiers? The assessed valuation of the city is about \$550,000; in round numbers, over a half million; the real valuation is from five to ten times that amount. That is the capital stack of the municipal enterprise, and we select our aldermen to manage it. Do they represent the highwater mark of business ability in this city?

THE THIRD WARD PROBLEM.

The voters of this ward are faced with a problem, which of two good men to elect. The south end of the ward want a representative and have selected Dr. Frank M. Ingalls; the voters of the upper end of the ward wanting someone else, chose Col. H. P. Davidson, of the Military Academy. Both are good men; both have their personal friends; both are men we would like to vote for, and we greatly regret that both men are in the field, for it is likely to develop divisions in the ward. Dr. Ingalls is not making any personal canvass, he has simply said if the ward wanted him and elected him, he would serve. He is perfectly honorable and fair about it. He was put into the field by his friends.

Now with most of the voters there is nothing personal about it; they want the man who will best serve the city and the local interests of that ward at this time. This year the great thing is the improvement of St. Johns. They tell us they want Col. Davidson because he is deeply and personally interested, because he wants the street improved thoroughly and honestly, that he has been urging it these seven years and that he will guard their interests while promoting those of the city. As to his tried and proven business ability, they point to the fact that notwithstanding the disasters from legal complications, a bank failure and the hard times, he is steadily and successfully working out of the enormous load of difficulties and will soon be completely on his feet with a property worth from \$50,000 to \$60,000 free from incumbrance.

It must be confessed that these men who are to foot the bills of that big improvement, have some right to be heard, and they call on us to elect their man. Three years ago they wanted him elected, but the voters said "No, we want St. Johns improved," and elected another man. Is St. Johns improved? That is the problem. Which man will help that improvement the most?

The six weeks' drill contest at the Military Academy is on and the cadets are enjoying it immensely.