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THE FAMILY STORE

## Improper Collection of Poll Tax Roundly Condemned

Big Delegation Attend Council Meeting and Tell Members Their Opinion. A Thrilling Meeting Last Thursday Night. One Ratepayer Said Council Should Resign for the Good of the Town. "Sand and Gravel" Fly Around

The regular meeting of the town council on Thursday evening last was one of the most exciting events held in this North Land. The present council has shown a disposition to make their public meetings a sort of show, but last Thursday's meeting was taken out of their hands and turned into one of the biggest shows ever staged here, the council being shown up from all sides, and forced to a show down. The town hall was packed to the doors and overflowing with citizens present to protest against the improper collection of poll tax from all employees of the Hollinger. The Mayor was forced to admit that the procedure had not been legal, and that the only way to right the wrong was to pay the money back. With its usual lack of foresight, however, the new council failed to properly remedy the matter by having the money paid back at the Hollinger where it was collected.

Instead the men have been forced to stand in line at the town hall to get their five dollars back. But, at least the new council knows what people think.

Before the time for the meeting the hall was jammed full. When the Mayor entered the room there were a few hand claps to greet his arrival. Councillor Longmore followed and received a regular ovation. Councillor Bacon was similarly greeted by hearty applause, and there was enthusiastic welcome for Councillor Drew. Councillor Eplett entered amid a sarcastic silence, while Councillors Brennan and Joyal took their seats before they were observed. The style of greeting indicated the attitude of the crowd to the "old" and the "new" council.

General business was first taken up, the crowd waiting quietly for the time to discuss the poll tax matter. In a discussion of the report of the Li-

brary Board Councillor Brennan set the crowd laughing and applauding when he remarked, "Some of us may not be here next year to hear the report." This, again, showed the common attitude of the citizens.

In calling upon the deputation very evidently present, Mayor E. G. Dickson said that they were very welcome as the council were always anxious for the opinions of the ratepayer, and he suggested that the spokesmen state their case.

Mr. Geo. Parsons asked what legal right the council had to insist upon every man at the Hollinger Mine having deducted \$5.00 from his pay for poll tax. He pointed out that the law was clearly against such a procedure. A reading of the law in the matter showed that Mr. Parsons was right and knew whereof he spoke. Council had clearly acted illegally, Mr. Parsons said, and unless there was prompt redress he intended to institute legal proceedings. "You cannot collect taxes from property and income tax-payers when your rate is not yet struck, and no taxes are due," he said.

Mr. S. H. Pirie asked why the Hollinger employees had been singled out for this discrimination. No other firms had been forced to collect the \$5.00 tax.

"I have been twenty-one years in the North," said Mr. R. Richards, "and this is the meanest and dirtiest trick I have ever seen." The crowd cheered to the echo. Other speakers referred to the injustice and inconvenience of the improper levy.

In his reply the Mayor said that only \$75.00 had been collected in poll tax last year and the general collection this year was to overcome this and make all pay towards the upkeep of the town. The matter had been carefully considered and all the councillors were in favour of the resolution adopted.

"I beg your pardon!" said Councillor Longmore, "I insisted at that meeting and I repeat now that any such plan as put into force is unjust and improper." The Mayor read the resolution of council, saying there were no votes recorded against it. In reply Councillor Longmore pointed out that the Mayor was well aware of the fact that no votes were recorded except when the yeas and nays were specifically called for. He mentioned also that the majority forced many resolutions through that were contrary to the opinions and beliefs of the three "old" councillors. "Good old Happy! That's the boy!" was heard more than once from the crowd as Councillor Longmore made his stand clear, and upset all attempts at misrepresentation. Once a voice in the crowd said, "That man talks good sense; he must be a mem-

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ber of the old council," referring to Councillor Longmore who for several years has given the town very generous service on the council board.

In discussing the poll tax Mr. Geo. Parsons made out a perfect case against the council showing that the plan adopted was illegal, unwise and unfair. "You have no excuse for not observing the provisions of the act," he said, pointing out that poll tax could only be collected from those who were not otherwise assessed.

Another speaker took the floor and put the matter very forcibly as follows:—

"I'd like to say something. That five dollars was stolen from us. If I went into a man's home and said that, as he may owe me some money later on in the fall, I would take the five dollars lying on the table now, and when he owed the debt give him credit for it, what would that man do? He would swear out a warrant for my arrest as a thief, and I would come up for trial. And what would Magistrate Atkinson say? ("Sixty days"—"Ten dollars and costs,"—this from the crowd). Speaker continued, "That is exactly the position you are in. I consider that you stole that five dollars from me, and you have left yourselves liable." ("If Doc McInnis was here this wouldn't happen"—this from one of the crowd.)

The Mayor explained that the assessing was late. ("Thought it was to be finished by July 15th,"—from the hall.) The Mayor agreed, but stated that they were working on a new system, and had a thorough assessment made. They were held up because the books were in bad shape. Someone in the crowd advised:—"Get Maepherson to help you." The Mayor in concluding his remarks said that the council had tried to act for the good of the town. "For the good name of the town of Timmins," said Mr. Jos. Everard, "I think the whole new council should resign at once." This remark was greeted with very hearty applause.

After some desultory discussion further, the following resolutions were passed:—

Moved by Councillors Longmore and Bacon, and carried, that the Clerk be authorized to issue a cheque for \$1,000 to be used as rebates for the poll tax which will be paid over to anyone applying to-morrow upon producing receipt and showing that he is not liable for same.

Moved by Councillor G. S. Drew, seconded by Councillor E. L. Longmore, that poll tax be returned without delay to all parties from whom it has been collected and who are not liable for same.—Carried.

Mr. Paddy Rowe now took the centre of the stage with the very evident sympathy of the crowd. He asked what action had been taken on the complaint made some weeks ago in regard to wrong charges made in collecting dog taxes. Councillor Eplett said: "As chairman of the police commission (loud laughter from the crowd) and we held a meeting ("Three weeks ago," yelled the crowd) to decide what should be done." The crowd forcibly reminded the councillor that they showed horrible enough anxiety to get rid of a good man for the alleged taking of some pipe. "Why not speed now?" they asked. Councillor Eplett fairly exploded. "Give me a chance," he cried. The gathering suggested the chance he would get. He went on to say that the Chief of Police had been ordered to check up his books and if

any money was missing the responsible party would be summarily dismissed. "We don't want dishonest men in the employ of the town," said Councillor Eplett, this remark being another signal for more laughter. Mr. Rowe proceeded to produce a petition from the returned men of the camp, protesting against the employment on the police force of a man delinquent in his duty as a British subject during the war in evading the wearing of the King's uniform, and who in times of peace should not be allowed to wear it. Another speaker among the ratepayers present called attention to the part taken in the last municipal election by the officer in question.

The discussion drifted back to the poll tax, and Councillor Longmore again made his stand clear and was loudly applauded. The suggestion was made that poll tax money should be returned to the Hollinger for disbursement. The Mayor thought this would make too much confusion. Mr. McNeill asked a pointed question when he wanted to know how the foreign-speaking citizens were going to be assured of the return of their money. They could not understand why it was taken off their pay, and they would be more difficult to reach to acquaint them of its possible return. "The council was kind enough to place signs around the mine telling us that they were going to collect the \$5.00 for poll tax," said one speaker, "would it not be well to put up similar signs telling us they are going to give it back?" Others in the crowd urged that due notice be given in The Advance. The Mayor agreed.

Mr. J. Morrison, whose brief but pointed remarks added in making the council see reason in regard to the poll tax refund, was popular with the crowd. "He'd make a good councillor for next year," was one comment. "He was a good councillor in the past," said another.

When it was suggested that the \$5.00 be held and allowed on taxes, income or property, Mr. Geo. Parsons made useful objection. "I will enter legal action against such discrimination," he said.

Use of the words, "Economy" and "Efficiency," brought a smile to the Mayor's face, but the frequent repetition of "Gravel and Sand," wiped away all smiles.

An alarm of fire attracted some away from the meeting. The "fire" was a fiery cross, emblem of the K. K. K., and was on the public school grounds. It had no connection with the fiery meeting, but made an odd diversion.

Eventually when it was understood that the poll tax would be returned at once to all not entitled to pay it, Mr. Parsons pointed out that as the council had admitted that they had acted illegally and had agreed to remedy the matter, he would not enter suit as he had intended.

Mr. Matheson spoke effectively in favour of the year-round half-holiday, and the following resolution was passed:—

Moved by Councillors Longmore and Bacon, that by-law be passed extending the Wednesday half-holiday throughout the year, with the exception of the month of December.—Carried.

Council also authorized return of some water rates, passed accounts and some estimates for concrete walks and the rock cut, as well as carrying the following resolutions:—

Moved by Councillor Eplett, seconded by Councillor Bacon, that taxi stand building be allowed to remain on present stand until April 1st, 1926.—Carried.

Moved by Councillor Drew, seconded by Councillor Longmore, that Firemen P. Jeffrey and M. Smith be appointed captains at salaries of \$160.00 per month, effective as from Sept. 1st, 1926.—Carried.

Euchre, Five Hundred and Bridge, in the Parish Hall of St. Anthony's church, Thursday evening Oct. 7th, under the auspices of the Ladies of Charity.

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