

The Porcupine Advance

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Timmins, Ont., Thursday, Aug. 30th, 1934

THE PUBLIC BE DAMNED

There is the classic story of a wealthy United States citizen who had a questionable plan to further increase his great riches. A friend suggested that the public would not approve of the scheme. "The public be damned!" was the man's rude and crude reply. That, in effect, was the reply of the four town councillors on Thursday evening last when public opinion was expressed in regard to the shabby treatment of Fire Chief Borland, who has given over seventeen years of the best of service and the most helpful of citizenship to the town. The public be damned!

The board of trade, expressing the opinion of the business men of the town; the Canadian Legion, speaking for hundreds of the best type of citizens; a petition from over 1,500 ratepayers and citizens, expressing the general public desire for the retaining of the competent and efficient work of the fire chief; letters from the volunteer firemen and the paid firemen, signed by each and every member of each of these fire-fighting forces; advice from the Temiskaming Firemen's Association, the Cochrane District Firemen's Association, and other fire departments in the district; the pleas of Mayor Richardson and Councillors J. P. Bartleman and Moise Maltais, that at least the question be given a little more consideration; all this overwhelming evidence of public opinion was swept aside by Councillors Laprairie, Chateaufort, Paquette and Belec. No one could deny the force of public opinion expressed in the matter. The answer of the four councillors can be construed in no other adequate words than "the public be damned."

Pressed for a reason for asking the retirement of Fire Chief Borland the four councillors maintained a simple silence. "If you have a spark of manhood you will at least give a reason for your attitude," said one ratepayer. Still there was no answer. It was evident enough from the attitude of the crowded council chamber that the public demanded a reason for the drastic and prejudicial action. "The public be damned!" was the answer the silence gave.

Councillor Bartleman's comments and the persistent urgings of the mayor eventually forced the four councillors to some show of giving a reason for an action much against the general wishes of the town. Councillor Laprairie was at much pains to explain just why he took the stand he did. He suggested that Fire Chief Borland was too old, but he did not have the effrontery to question his competence. A citizen of the town was present to tell the council and the citizens of the notable battle Chief Borland had put up to save his house only the day before. This citizen had the actual proof to offer of the chief's efficiency, his physical fitness and his capability. Councillor Laprairie touched on minor departmental matters, but was contradicted by the chairman of the fire and light committee in practically every particular. Councillor Chateaufort spoke of his oath of office, but did not suggest one single reason or excuse for supporting a motion to injure the town by weakening its noted fire-fighting and fire-preventing organization through the unnecessary and uncalled-for dismissal of the fire chief. Councillor Belec would give no other reason than that his reason would have been apparent had a discharged employee of the department been permitted to talk at a previous meeting. "Did I understand Councillor Belec to say he takes the opinion of one man against that of the crowd here to-night and the 1500 on the petition?" was a pertinent question which Councillor Belec refused to answer. Councillor Paquette's reply to repeated demands for a reason for supporting the motion to retire the fire chief was no more and no less than to say that there had been too much discussion of the matter already. The attitude of these four councillors could be construed only in the words:—"The public be damned."

So far as the efficiency of the fire chief is concerned there can be no question about that. The record is there for all to read. That Timmins has a lower fire loss than any other similarly situated town or city in Canada is proof enough for any fair-minded man of the efficiency of the fire chief and his brigade. To that may be added the opinion of the fire underwriters who do not hesitate to say that he is one of the best fire chiefs in the province. The opinions volunteered by the district fire brigades and associations all prove the fact of the chief's competency. The citizens themselves have reason to know how complete is his competence and that there has been no falling-off in his work. Only the spirit of "the public be damned" could disregard all this.

The public in general is more vitally interested in the matter of fire protection than in most other lines of municipal activity. The public surely has a right and a duty to let their temporary rulers know their wishes on so vital a matter as fire protection, involving as it may the property and lives of the citizens. It is difficult to coolly accept any "public-be-damned" attitude in regard to fire protection.

There is another angle to the question that should have the attention of the council without any tendency to feel that the public may be damned. Supposing that the four councillors were right in their attitude, despite the way the facts are against them! Supposing the public were wrong! The fact still remains that the public have a right even to be wrong. The council is elected simply as servants of the people. If public opinion is overwhelming along one certain line then the council has only two honorable things it may do—carry out the public wishes, or resign. Councillor Bartleman saw the force of this when he volunteered to resign and put the whole issue up to the decision of the people. To this suggestion the silent reply was again—"the public be damned."

Never before in the history of the town has public opinion been so clear and vocal as it is at the present time in regard to the matter of the retaining of the services of Fire Chief Borland. An overwhelming number of the ratepayers appear to demand that his good services be continued. To go against this expressed desire is surely to flout public opinion—to say—"The public be damned." Such an attitude makes democratic government a failure and responsibility a matter for scorn.

While the four councillors are condemned for the attitude assumed—an attitude that is not justified from any angle—there is yet time and opportunity to remedy the matter and reverse the decision to "damn the public." It would be most regrettable if the council refuses to do right simply because they have taken one particular view in the past and refuse to be big enough and broad enough to reverse their decision. It would appear that the council has its choice—to play the game, fairly, squarely, without prejudice or spite; or to remember that the public may be damned to-day, but the public has a way of refusing to stay damned very long.

WARNING TO GANGSTERS

In the last few weeks there seems to be an unusually large amount of crime in Ontario. Thuggery and disorders usually foreign to this province are noted in each day's news. Many will trace this undesirable condition of affairs to the new attorney-general of Ontario. He opened his career in office by publicly calling down the blessing of heaven on a group of alien agitators and wishing them success in their work—a work that is no more and no less than the creating of any and every kind of trouble in Canada to please a foreign foe. The action of the attorney-general in publicly opposing the authorities in Toronto in their efforts to guard the order and good government of their city also materially weakened the strength of the Toronto police force—a force that has done so much to keep the racketeer and the gangster out of Canada. The dismissal of the Toronto magistrates, and the replacing of them on the police commission by men who are expected to do the will of the attorney-general gave an appearance of political interference that must have been a great encouragement to the gangsters and the thugs. Politics is the very thing they want in the administration of justice. With politics well introduced they would feel at home and ready to carry on their nefarious work. Another encouragement to the gangster and the racketeer was the announcement that referred to the weakening of the provincial police force. For years past the foreign thug and racketeer have been unsuccessfully attempting to secure a foothold in Ontario. His every effort to establish himself in this country was unavailing with all branches of the law and the people arrayed against him. Recently he was becoming discouraged in the matter. There seemed to be no more chance of him prospering in this country than in Britain. What a joy to this class of criminal it must have been to feel that politics could over-ride public opinion and that the provincial police and even the Toronto police department were handicapped in their work. Pressure was also brought to bear on the Stratford police department and the result of this has been noted since. If the attorney-general's department appears to line up with the forces opposed to law and order, it is not at all surprising if the law-breakers feel encouraged and upheld. All the talk about new laws and harsh measures towards innocent and harassed families will not alter the situation so far as the law-breaker is concerned. What is needed more than anything else is full support of the authorities all along the line, from the attorney-general's office down. Politics and the appearance of politics must be kept out of the administration of law.

EARLIER EXAMINATIONS

It is pleasing to note that there is one outstanding decision of one department of the new provincial government that can be given unqualified endorsement, without any tinge of regret for employees dismissed or salaries reduced. This decision is the one announced by the Dept. of Education to the effect that the departmental examinations will hereafter be held earlier in the year so as to avoid the hot weather of summer. It might be thought by some that this is something that may not have special interest for the people of the North. The fact is, however, that in most years there is hot weather in the North, and too often at the examination-time it is sizzling hot weather at that. Holding examinations in July is not giving proper thought and consideration to the pupils concerned. The Advance has been pointing this out for several years past and urging upon the Government the choice of a more suitable time of the year for the departmental tests. Not only do the pupils suffer from weather conditions during the examination time in vogue in recent years, but it seems apparent that they are not able to do their best under uncomfortable conditions (then prevailing). Another point against examinations in July is that for many pupils part of their holiday time is spoiled because they cannot learn the results of their efforts until their vacation is nearly spent. To others the delay in the announcing of the results is a serious inconvenience and handicap, as they are unable to plan their future and arrange for another term at school or the entrance into other lines of activity, as the case may require. If the Dept. of Education would add to early examinations the further boon of early announcement of the departmental tests, it would be still more popular.

In the apparent special interest being given to the small rural school, the Dept. of Education also seems to be following right lines. Fairness, however, requires that it be noted that for years past the small rural school has been given special attention by the department. This is particularly true in the North where the small school has been helped in every way by the department. Hon. Dr. Simpson Minister of Education, is expected in the North next month to officiate at the opening of a new small school. It shows a fine spirit that the Minister of Education should cheerfully give some of his valuable time for the purpose noted. It is the right spirit. The little one-roomed country school has more than done its part in the matter of real education, and to the brave teachers of such schools the country owes a debt greater than it realizes.

GRAVEL AND SAND—AND PLACER

So far as The Advance can figure it out, Le Nord Ontarien desires to have "An revoir" added to the list of signs on the Hotel de Ville.

Premier Hepburn says that he is too busy to attend the Toronto Exhibition this year. It may be just as well. Such a pleasant rest as is given by a holiday at the Ex. might only send him back with renewed strength for wielding the axe.

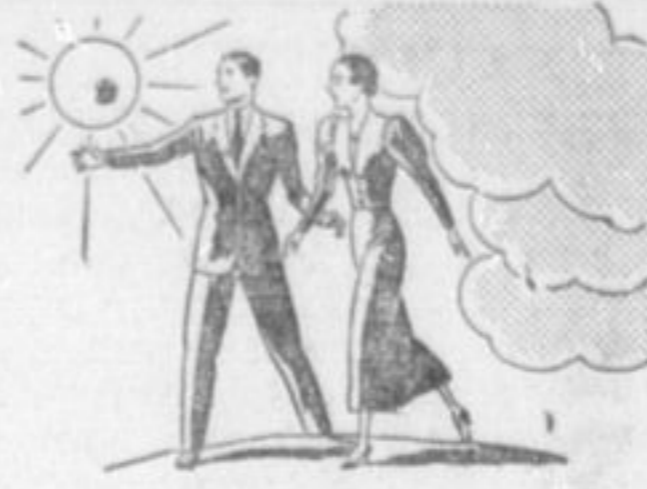
Councillor Laprairie apparently objects to firemen sitting on the only place that firemen have to sit upon.

St. Mary's Ontario, is very proud of its classical town hall building. The Journal-Argus says that it attracts the attention of all visitors to the town. "Here's something to see!" shouted one tourist visiting the Stone Town recently. Well, you ought to hear the tourists shout when they see the Hotel de Ville in Timmins.

Credit must be given to the present town council for the six miles of new cement sidewalk built this year in town. Still more credit, however, is due the Hollinger Consolidated Gold Mines for making the building of these walks possible. Had the Hollinger not financed the matter the town would have had to forego these new walks. The Hollinger shows a friendlier and more helpful spirit to the town and the council than the town and council sometimes shows to the Hollinger.

Add to smiles—"As silent as a town councillor when asked the reason why."

It is interesting and illuminating to note the reaction of some people when the fire department is mentioned. To the general public the mention of the fire department brings forward the idea of complete efficiency and faithfulness. To some of the councillors the fire department seems to rouse only petty prejudices. To some the mention of the fire department calls to mind kindly and generous help to those



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Kapuskasg Farm Weekly News Letter

Subjects for This Week—"Lime in Northern Ontario Soil"; "The Importance of Early Fall Ploughing."

Lime in Northern Ontario Soil

Since there is a movement toward colonization in Northern Ontario, the prospective settler as well as those already established would like to know the quality of the land he is going to farm or is actually farming. Lime has a close association with good pastures, good crops, comfortable homes and air of prosperity. A prosperous farming area means flourishing towns, good markets and good times. On the other hand, where lime is lacking the crops do not do well, the yields become less and less, the clover and alfalfa refuse to grow and the soil loses organic matter and produces still less.

Geological surveys have shown that Northern Ontario is almost entirely deprived of limestone from which the farmer usually gets his supply of lime to correct the acidity of his soil. But a series of tests conducted by the Kapuskasing Experimental Station, in co-operation with the Dominion Chemist have disclosed that the clay generally found in Northern Ontario contains a high percentage of carbonate of lime. Analysis of samples shows 1.85 to 12.2 per cent. at a depth of 12 inches, 16.4 to 27.8 per cent. at a depth of 12 to 24 inches and 30.2 to 33.5 per cent. at a depth of 24 to 60 inches.

That the application of lime on clay areas is not required is substantiated by the way clover and alfalfa are growing, and also by the cultural experiment which was carried at the Kapuskasing Experimental Station during the last seven years. An application of two tons of ground limestone per acre over a four-year rotation only increased the yields of oats and barley by 2.4 and 8.1 per cent. respectively and failed entirely to increase the yield of hay.

Since there are quite a number of muck areas in the district and that this soil is generally acid, one can see readily the advantage of having such calcareous subsoil so handy to correct such acidity, without having to buy lime or ground limestone and pay long transportation which would add considerably to the cost.

The Importance of Early Fall Ploughing

In a new country such as Northern Ontario, it is imperative that the seeding be done early in the spring to ensure good maturity, and unless a part of the necessary work in the preparation of a good seed-bed is started early in the fall, there is always danger of some of the work being left for the next spring.

The first step necessary is naturally that of ploughing and this operation should, whenever possible, be done in late summer as soon as possible after the hay is cut. At the Dominion Experimental Station, Kapuskasing, it has been found that land which has been ploughed early in the fall and given one or two diskings works much better in the spring and gives better yields than land ploughed late in the fall or in the spring, particularly the latter, giving a finer and more friable seed-bed.

Considering the advantages of fall ploughing, it is imperative that the farmers take advantage of every opportunity during the late summer and autumn in order to complete this important feature of the work before the ground freezes and winter sets in.

in need by the chief and his men. To some of the doctors in town the fire brigade is associated with the attitude of Chief Borland and all his men to the sick. Some years ago there was a call at the hospital for a blood transfusion. It was an immediate need with a certain type of blood essential. The worry for the surgeons was to find the right type of blood in the shortest possible time. Chief Borland and all his men volunteered to give a transfusion. The need was met that time, but the firemen went further than that. They volunteered to be tested and classified so that in case of further calls for blood transfusions there would be the right type immediately available. Since then there are

T. N. O.'s Good Work Should be Continued

Pioneering Railway Necessary for the Development of the North. Moose-see Line Should be Maintained for the North.

Lightning recently struck the office of The Northern Tribune at Kapuskasing doing considerable damage to the linotype machine which was put out of business for the time being until new parts might be secured from Montreal but even the lightning did not prevent the editorial pen from exercising its usual keenness, even though the matter had to be set up by hand. One of the editorials in the last issue of The Northern Tribune, the issue being published under difficulties such as only a newspaper in a distant town can realize, deals with the T. & N. O. Railway and the investigation in progress in regard to that railway. In times past The Northern Tribune has been critical on occasion of the T. & N. O. but that does not blind the newspaper to the fact that the railway is a vital factor in the development and progress of the North. The Northern Tribune realizes that any serious curtailment of the T. & N. O. service means a bad blow to the North. The T. & N. O. was originally designed and built as a colonization road and this fact is too often forgotten. As a colonization road it has fully justified any expenditure made on it. Bookkeeping systems may pretend to show that the railway is a losing venture and all the

rest of it but the fact remains that if the most pessimistic view of those seeking to make political capital were to be accepted as the facts of the case, it could still be said that even with an eight million dollar deficit since 1915, as the auditors for political purposes suggest, the T. & N. O. still has been well worth while in the broadest sense of the phrase. At the present moment there is grave danger that the North will be made to suffer serious handicap in its progress and development through misconceptions arising from the enquiry being conducted under political auspices. The Northern Tribune gives warning against any such handicap. In its editorial on the matter The Northern Tribune says:—"The affairs of the T. and N. O. railway are now being investigated. The commissioner will be taking evidence at North Bay all this week and most of next week, then he will proceed to Moosonee and other points in the road's territory before he concludes. We think that considerable damaging evidence will be brought to light to show that the commission was altogether too much under political thumbs, and had to be easy-going about many things that should have been on a more straight-going basis. Nevertheless, the people of the North must continue to derive good service from their only railway. Nothing should be decided upon that will impede this pioneering railroad from doing its appointed work, for it is the very life of the North. Pessimistic counsels are entirely out of place and should have little place in the commissioner's findings. Granted that reorganization will

be effected and the railway's affairs run more openly and economically, still it will be no use putting men in charge who are not "sold" thoroughly on the future of all the T. and N. O.'s territory. It wasn't the pessimists who built the C.P.R. amidst a chorus of knocking; it wasn't pessimists who settled the west, built the Hudson Bay Railway, developed our mines, established our paper mills. A man without imagination shouldn't travel a mile north of Cochrane, and no such person should be put in charge of the T. and N. O. This paper refuses to believe that the building of the James Bay extension to Moosonee was a mistake, as Premier Hepburn says it was. It believes on the contrary that a proper exploitation of the railway's existing services to that point, proper publicity for the resources of the region, and proper co-operation from the Ontario government, will entirely change the picture and "capture" another new North."

A California authoress sent a manuscript to Ambrose Bierce with the request that he give her a "criticism in one sentence and drop further comment." Something was heard to drop up and down the Pacific coast when he replied: "The covers of your book are too far apart."

This brings to mind a deft acknowledgement of William Makepeace Thackeray upon receiving a book from a notorious hack: "Your volume has arrived. I shall lose no time reading it."

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few of the firemen who have not given blood transfusions, some of them repeatedly submitting to the operation. It is well within the facts to say that many lives have been saved by the generous community spirit of the firemen in this particular. The matter is mentioned here and now to explain why unfair criticism of the fire department rouses special resentment. Many people have grateful reason to remember that the Timmins fire department is not only an efficient fire-fighting force, as the record proves, but the men of the brigade have the true community spirit—the generous spirit of helpfulness that Northerners would like to be believed, is the spirit of the North.