

THE WHIG, SEVENTY-NINTH YEAR

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MILLIONS FOR ROADS.

Nearly every province in the Dominion has caught the fever to spend large sums, many millions, on roads. Saskatchewan will spend \$5,000,000 in this way; Ontario is putting out a similar sum, and adding it to the public debt; Quebec follows suit and will invest \$5,000,000 on a system of good roads; while the federal government will give a handsome contribution to the same end, and reserving the right to distribute in accordance to the emergencies—the political emergencies—of the times.

What has so suddenly caught these legislative bodies and made them so exceedingly generous in the matter of road grants? The desire to get near to the people and to win their favour. The condition of the road appeals to all users of it. In the

spending of the money a large number of persons will be affected. They must handle the money or earn it, and fifteen or twenty millions of dollars, judiciously distributed, must affect a great many of the electors.

To be sure the investment—in roads, not votes—will be a substantial one. The good roads of ancient Rome have been used until this day. They have a quality and endurance that seem to be everlasting. The time has gone by for temporary road making, and henceforth, under a definite and abiding policy, the highways will be a comfort to the travellers.

Whatever the cause of the new movement, and affecting several provinces, the fact that it is in progress will be generally hailed with satisfaction by the people.

AVOIDING ALL TRESPASSES.

The complaint against the Bell Telephone company is well founded. It puts its poles practically where it likes, and stays them by attaching wires where it desires. It has apparently only one purpose in view, and that is to serve itself.

Now the time has come, in the history of the city, and on the eve of a new era, when there should be some regard for the eternal fitness of things. There should not be any poles up the sides of the streets. These streets are meant for the convenience of the people and the promotion of their comfort. They should not be impeded in any way. Wires may be laid in conduits in the streets with the permission of the people or of those acting in their behalf. The right to misuse them should not be

allowed.

The telephone is, of course, a great commercial and personal convenience, and its success is not to be discouraged. But in the larger cities the company does not configure the streets with its appliances. The Whig has seen the poles in the alley ways, and the wires clearing private property, and entering the houses from the rear. This is to be preferred to the plan pursued here of having the fronts of the houses and offices marked by telephonic connections.

This is not a wall against the company without a reason. The company is to be commended an its enterprise, but it should extend its business without trespassing upon any individual or property if it can be avoided.

MUST NOT BE HEARTLESS.

The legislation which Hon. Mr. Beck is promoting does not do him honor. It is understood to mean that any municipality that proposes to deal with the Hydro-Electric Commission is not under obligation to arbitrate for and buy out a local light and power plant. That obligation is implied under the present law, and it is not only a reasonable but just provision.

When Kingston acquired its power and gas plants it had to force a sale upon the local company. Having experimented with the business, amid many drawbacks, and satisfied itself that it had something which would pan out well, the company was not anxious to dispose of its property. The city insisted, and eventually became the owner of all the utilities. Not for a moment can it be questioned that its action was right. Some people, the few, may have no regard for vested interests, but most people

see the justice of buying an interest that they want in a proper way.

Had the city gone into the light and power business with new plants, and the best available, the cost of producing power would have been much lower than it is, and a large part of the money now spent in renewals would have been saved. It would have been very much to the city's advantage had it begun its history of public ownership with new gas and electric plants, but the city could not afford, apart from the requirements of the Commee Act, to crash out private enterprise after it had passed through a trying experience.

It may be that there are places in Ontario where the Hydro-Electric Commission would have a freer hand to deal with the councils regardless of the local power companies, but it must not exhibit the heartlessness of the common everyday monopolist.

MUCH NEEDED OFFICIAL.

The board of trade has discussed, curiously, perhaps but earnestly, a matter which has repeatedly engaged the attention of the Whig. The city, it is averred, should have some official who will be a sort of encyclopaedia of civic information, one who will be in touch with all public events, who will have in his office a tabulation of facts which will afford enlightenment to those who seek it from time to time. A Publicity or Industrial Commissioner has been suggested.

The average city has been in favour of the industrial commissioner. He is a valuable man, and he starts off well. But he is no sooner in a position to serve a city well than he is offered a larger salary, and, of course, he takes it. The one who would continue to represent a city for the love of it, or for the honour of it, would not be in his right mind. Hamilton has had the misfortune to lose a man who rendered it efficient service and who had no compunction of conscience about letting go a salary of \$1,500 in order to earn one of \$2,500 elsewhere. It is discouraged, as a city, but it can go back to an experiment, which was a success, and have the secretary of the board of trade represent the city in an industrial way.

This raises the question of why the

secretary of the board of trade here should not be given larger powers, and compensation also, and asked to represent the industrial interests of Kingston as far as possible. He could keep a record of all available sites, the location and size of them, their assessed and assumed value, and their owners. He can have a map of the city and on it show where these sites are. He can correspond with men of enterprise and seek to enlist their interest in local institutions. He can become the active ally or friend of any man who is best on investing his capital in the city, and can entertain that individual while engaged in his prospecting tour. He can do a thousand and one things to make himself useful, and he ought to become the most popular of officials.

The council can co-operate with the board of trade and can very reasonably contribute towards the expenses of the secretary's office, on condition that the city will be served in the manner herewith represented. The city cannot afford to engage a publicity or industrial commissioner, but it can afford to supplement the revenues of the board of trade on condition that the secretary is given an opportunity to demonstrate what he can do in the public interest.

C. B. Keenleyside, in a letter to the Christian Guardian, attacks Mr. Rowell and charges that he has dipped his flag to the liquor traffic. The Whig predicts that Mr. Keenleyside will have occasion, before long, to apologize for the insult. But all depends on the partisanship of the individual.

Mr. Cockshutt, of Brantford, favours the continuation of bounties to the iron trade. He is the mouthpiece, apparently, of the political machine, that is, willing to have any public dis-favour so long as it has its way. But the government sits still and listens to Mr. Cockshutt's song with soft pedal accompaniment.

COMMISSIONS NECESSARY.

The Hydro-Electric Commission plans that any municipality which does business with it must manage their utilities by commissions. The reason—that the utilities may be removed as far as possible from the influence of the local councils. And why? The interference of the local council is occasionally pernicious. The council is a changeable body, dealing with many interests and not following one line of action very long at a time.

The policy adopted by one set of men one year may be annulled and a new policy enunciated by a new set of men the next year. This is bad, decidedly bad, for the utilities which have to be managed with some regard for business principles and business consistency. Mr. Beck is the originator of the bill, which is before the legislature, and he had had such an experience as warrants him in projecting it.

Our council can see in the proceeding the inevitable, if the city is to make a contract with the Hydro-Electric Commission for power. Its members must make up their minds that the utilities are to be directed by a commission which the people will elect, and the representatives of which will be men of marked capacity. It may be that from our leading citizens those may be chosen who have a reputation for skill and sagacity, and that the qualified electors will select them on their merits and their merits only. The Hydro-Electric Commission wants to take no chances of failure, through dealing with incompetents.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Bro. Essery, of London, boasted that the Orangemen had built Sir Wilfrid Laurier's coffin. The nationalists boasted of the same thing. These two parties cannot surely be working in conjunction. As for Essery, who cares what he says?

Dr. Pyne, at the Grand Orange Lodge meeting in London, proclaimed himself as a supporter of English schools in the province. The whole issue is in his own hands. He is minister of education. He can abolish bilingual schools if he is desirous of doing it. But no one thinks he is.

That idea of Ames, M.P., of Montreal, is a bright one. It is that the government placate the farmers by paying half their freight rates on grain shipped eastward. If the big interests have their bounties of one kind and another, why not the farmers?

Rumour has it that Dr. San Yee-San was bribed, in a million dollars, to give up the presidency of the Chinese republic. The Whig does not believe it. The man has not been risking his life for the money that is in it. His has not been a selfish or sordid career.

Hon. Frank Oliver has exposed the canners' combine. And not at all too soon. There is not in Canada a more iniquitous institution. The farmers, or producers, are now fighting it, and with some prospects of success. But the poor consumers—they will be the victims in any case.

Good news comes from Hot Springs, and to the effect that Hon. Senator Ross is regaining his strength. Long may he live to be a credit to the public life of Canada and to cast light upon the questions of the day by the brilliancy of his thought and speech.

And so the financial agents of England are after Lloyd-George. They are after any man in public life who is not in accord with their schemes, and they are merciless when they undertake to crush an opponent. Will they succeed in their designs upon Lloyd-George? Wait and see.

The eastern deputa-tion, headed by Montreal men, would have the Georgian Bay canal undertaken before the Welland canal enlargement. The government does not commit itself. It favours both schemes, and Mr. Borden thinks the country is well able to carry them on at the same time. That is very doubtful.

Mrs. David Harris, Cherry street, has returned from Syracuse, N.Y., and Rochester, N.Y., where she has been visiting her son, Edward, and brother, William McKee.

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HORSE POISONING CASE

TO BE HEARD ON FRIDAY, 22ND OF MARCH.

George Clough Was Arrested Because He Bought Strychline on Several Occasions—He Explains What it Was For.

George Clough, who was arrested on Friday afternoon in connection with the horse poisoning case at Perth Road, will get a hearing on Friday, March 22nd. It is not known at present whether he will plead guilty or not. Mr. Clough has not attempted to secure bail. The arrest was made on the ground that strychline was purchased by Mr. Clough on a number of occasions. On two occasions he accounts for the purchase. On one occasion he claims he bought it for a friend for the purpose of poisoning foxes. The second time he claims it was to kill rats, but that he did not use it and it was returned to the drug store. It is claimed, however, that the drug was bought by him on more occasions than these, but this Mr. Clough denies. He feels his position very keenly.

DOCTORS REFUSED BAIL

Heads of Toronto College Remanded For a Week.

Toronto, March 16.—Facing the charge of conspiring to defraud the estate of John Bevell, Plympton, England, Drs. Walter Harvey and J. Gwallia Evans, the executive heads of the Empire College of Ophthalmology, 258 Queen street west, appeared in police court, Friday morning. The prisoners, who were represented by Gordon Henderson, K.C., neither pleaded nor elected when the charge was read out by Magistrate Denison, and at the request of the crown a remand was ordered for a week. The question of bail was raised, but to this the crown attorney gave an emphatic refusal.

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