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DEMOCRACY NOT SUFFERING.

Is the Canadian Courier correct in saying that Hon. Adam Beck wants to take the lighting systems of the province, with which the commission has to do, out of the hands of the people. "The mayors, aldermen and people," says our contemporary, "cannot be trusted. They do not know how so manage an electric business. Spurned, despised, trodden upon—poor old democracy. It is abandoned by those who placed it on the highest and broadest pedestal ever built in Ontario. Now, over it goes because Hon. Adam Beck has found, as every honest investigator finds, that democracy, like every human institutions has its limitations."

Now there is another side of the question, and it is not exactly Mr. Beck's. The power issue is a purely business one, and its success depends upon the infusion into all the details of a business spirit. Mr. Beck is more cognizant of this fact than most people, because he sees how some councils transact their business. Some years ago the government, through its bureau of information, undertook to publish the records of the public utilities of towns and cities, and gave up the task. Why? There was such a variety of book-keeping in connection with the utilities that comparison was out of the question, and the object of the publication was to print calculations by the municipalities with regard to cost, to earnings, to expenditure, to profits.

Mr. Beck may see, however, more clearly than the average individual, the necessity for sound financing, and if the commission can introduce order and system and uniformity into the accounts of the municipalities which do business with it a great purpose will be served, and the people will not be deprived of a voice in all this. They will still elect the commissioners, as they do now its aldermen, and they will have the assurance, which they have not at present, that the transactions of the people will be conducted fairly, regularly, with definite plans for definite results. Democracy is not, we hope, to suffer by the application of business rules in the direction of the people's affairs.

MR. MORINE'S TEMPERATE DISCOURSE.

To do Mr. Morine justice his defence, or the explanation of his connection with certain notable events in Newfoundland during the time he was a member of the local government, is written in temperate language. He had cause for irritation, and with a perturbed mind might have used emphatic language.

He passes over, of course, some things that will be remembered, especially the opinion of Mr. Chamberlain, an unbiased critic, as to the character of the legislation which he had promoted, and which was not for the good of the colony. He suggests that his colleague, Sir James Winter, had changed his mind and tribute, originally so severe and hurtful, by taking him back into the government after their quarrel. He is careful in his references to the bishop with whom he differed. But he does not dwell upon the quarrel which he had with the great railway king, Mr. Reid, and the circumstances under which he left Newfoundland to practice law in Ontario.

There will be an opportunity for futher light, for, of course, Mr. Borden will see the wisdom of letting Mr. Morine vindicate his public career before he undertakes, as the head of a special commission, to vindicate the character and career of any body else.

Mr. Morine must regret that he has one rash friend, in his former private secretary, who rushes into print and refers to members of parliament and a certain bishop in an immoderate and injudicious manner. When Mr. Morine has read this epistle, addressed to the World, he must say with so many who have suffered under similar circumstances, "Save me from my friends." The former private secretary must have learned a great deal from his master, while extending his views on public questions, but he has not learned one very great and important lesson, namely, to leave to this master the tasks and the duties for which he has the qualification.

JOCKEYING FOR A CONTRACT.

The civic power committee has had another session and given the power question a further hearing, without effect. One thing has become evident since the last appearance of Mr. Beck—that the deal of the Hydro-Electric Commission with the Seymour company is off and that the commission is not expecting any relief or assistance from the Trent power system. When Mr. Beck was last here there had been a meeting between the power representatives. They had discussed at Ottawa their rights to the use of certain dams on the Trent river. The Seymour company had offered to give the commission a complete monopoly of the power business for a consideration of several millions, and the government was disposed to accept of it. It was a big scheme, and seemingly too big for even the commission, with the province behind it.

The commission had a new scale of rates which it submitted to the committee. It was based, said the engineers, upon a revised estimate of the cost of transmission lines, etc., plus ten per cent., so that it is possible it may still be high, being on the safe side, in which case the cost of power will be less. Of course it is possible, too, that the estimate may, in spite of every check and precaution, be under the actual, in which event the rates must be adjusted. The new tariff is: For 3,000 horse-power, $33.73 per h.p. per annum; for 4,000 horse-power, $26.64 per h.p. per annum, and for 5,000 horse-power, $24.25 per h.p. per annum. The quantity in any case is much larger than Kingston can find a sale for, and at the outset, and for a very long time, the tax would be very burdensome. And the contract would be for thirty years.

The Seymour rate has not been changed. It is $25 per h.p. per annum for all the power the city wants or guarantees, up to a certain amount, from 400 horse-power upward, and over and above the specified quantity 1½c. per kilo-watt hour, according to the meter registration. The contract to be for one year, or as many years as the city may desire. There is no financial obligation. Here is a pretty safe contract, and one that cannot be ignored, notwithstanding the desire that many may have for a connection with the commission and its great power system.

There is perhaps one incentive in the commission's contract, namely, that with a large quantity of power on hand or available, a large quantity for which it must pay, it will hustle in order to dispose of it among large consumers, and it may indulge in the luxury which is common in all the western towns and cities of a brilliant street illumination. But a great white way is simply impossible in Kingston until there is a plan looking towards the removal of all the poles for telephonic and telegraphic and power purposes from Princess and King streets, and the sooner a commencement is made in this direction, and with this end in view, the better.

Both the commission and the Seymour company propose to be able, if given the contract, to deliver the power in six months. The commission will use the surplus power generated at Waddington, N.Y., until the Chats Falls' power has been developed, and the Seymour company will extend its transmission lines from Napanee to Kingston, and touch the button. By the way the Napanee people have a power contract with the Seymour company that is worth studying. It is said to be the best, for the town, that has yet been drawn, and this is the declaration of one who has been examining contracts for a certain company for years and ought to know a good one when he sees it. Let the committee procure a copy of it, and let the city solicitor examine it as an expert in his profession.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Whitney government has essayed to punish Sturgeon Falls because it returned a liberal member. It has been deprived of all aid for roads and bridges. This is the limit of political meanness.

The general manager of the Grand Trunk railway has been charged with breaking an agreement which was made with him with regard to the employment of certain men. He has a defence to make, and he cannot make it too soon.

The suffragettes of London are on another mad mission. They purpose to boycott, in business, all anti suffragists who are opposed to giving them the franchise. This may be the culminating act. Through it the London tradesmen may learn to be good.

This week, and beginning with last night, the Jews of the city will celebrate the Passover feast. It began with the Hebrews, in one place, two millions of them, in Egypt, and it has been continued by increasing multitudes scattered over the world.

The Borden government is being lauded and magnified because it insisted that if the provincial railway received aid from the federal government it should be subject to the federal railway commission. But that was the idea and contention of Hon. Mr. Graham.

The Ottawa Journal sees in the success of the McBride government a moral—that it does things. Granted. All governments do things, sometimes wisely and sometimes unwisely. It remains to be seen whether the British Columbia government were wise in handing over control of the province, politically, and for the time being, to the great corporations.

An Easy Solution.

Hamilton Times.

If Hon. Mr. Crothers expects to do away with all strikes and lockouts by the short and easy method of forbidding men to strike and forbidding employers to close their shops, why permit any labor difficulties? It's almost too easy.

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