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## LETTERS To The Editor

**The Portsmouth Controversy.**  
Portsmouth, Aug. 20.—(To the Editor):—When writing you on Aug. 16th, I did not intend to start a long controversy in the press concerning our municipal affairs, nor do I yet have any intention of so doing, but that letter of Mr. Halliday, dated Aug. 17, cannot have a free pass. In my letter, I stated nothing but facts—facts which the people of Portsmouth had a proper right to know. My letter was straightforward, and I did not make a misstatement such as Reeve Halliday has done in his letter. It has always been a trait to mine to hold my own grounds. I am not of the jolly fish class, nor am I a great bluff. This will be again proved I think ere this letter is complete.

Now to Mr. Halliday's first query: Why resign, etc. The Good Book tells us not to yoke the ox with the ass, and I think it better judgment to take the ox away from the ass when he cannot do any good because of the antics of the ass. It is not nice for a man who preaches temperance to know too much about the taste of champagne or beer, and my hat is off to the man who has learned to spend his pennies well, for he is the man who will handle his dollars with care. He will spend a dollar this year to save ten dollars next year. But the man who will spend his penny this year and have to spend a pound next year is doing bad business.

Mr. Halliday informs the people that I am not a property owner. He has spoken the truth this time, but that is a fact which I have never denied, but he forgot to tell the people that I am and have been for several years a direct taxpayer, still more I have a family being educated in Portsmouth public school. Then I am in business for myself as a market gardener and am located in the village of Portsmouth. On the other hand as we all know, Mr. Halliday is a bachelor, and his business is in the city of Kingston. Therefore I may claim to have a more lively interest in the general welfare of Portsmouth than he has.

Now Mr. Halliday has accused me of advocating lavish expenditure of the public money at the property owners' expense. This time Mr. Halliday does not speak the truth, but tell me who spent money lavishly when he engaged an overseer at fifty cents per hour to watch one man work at thirty-five cents per hour? How about the oiling of King street? Early in the spring the council unanimously expressed its desire that the reeve arrange to have it oiled at the earliest opportunity. Now here is August nearly gone, the road not oiled, but spoiled, and it will cost the village many dollars to have it placed into condition for oiling. Neglect of this sort I claim to be lavish expenditure of the public money.

Let us go back to February of last year when we were in the depth of one of the worst depressions our country has known. The bread-winners of this village upon going to town to look for work were unable to get it because they were residents of Portsmouth. Naturally they turned to their own council and looked for help. What could we do? There was not even snow to remove that winter. Would we have to give charity? (for there were some urgent cases).

The men did not want that. It was advocated that they be sent on to Hill's Block with a plow, and there to try and grade roads that were froze harder than the Rocky Mountains. Who opposed this money wasting scheme? It was Weller. Who advocated that rock work was the only feasible work as that time whereby the public would get some equivalent for their money. Who pointed out to Council that Centre street near the school was the only place where we could place our men and money to the best advantage? It was Weller. Who was it that moved information be sought from the Dominion and provincial governments regarding their unemployment scheme, thereby hoping to get more for the village without cost to those friends of the reeve who own so much property. Again it was Weller, and the truth of these statements could be verified by the number of men at those meetings anxiously awaiting our decision. What was the result of this undertaking?

The fact is that we now have a passable road over what at one time was a danger spot, thus completing a direct route to Hill's Block, the only place where the village has much room to grow. This work



DR. J. P. VROOMAN, M.P.P. Who died in Kingston General Hospital on Monday.

was done for five hundred dollars. How long would it have taken to give that sum of money in charity? and the village had nothing for its money. To-day we have the equivalent of five hundred dollars, and the men are better for not accepting charity. These were my first three months in council. I endeavored then, and have done the same ever since, to try and let our own taxpayers have the benefit of the money spent in the village, also to get for the property owners the full equivalent for every dollar spent. I think that any gentleman would withdraw such an accusation that I have been an advocate of lavish expenditure of public money.

Mr. Halliday is wrong when he says I advocated placing debenture debts to the extent of thousands of dollars. No sum of money was ever mentioned. What I say is that the people are looking for improvements which we cannot afford at the present rate of taxation, and had I stayed in council I believe the day would soon have arrived when I would have brought this matter to a climax by moving in council that a public meeting be called at which the reeve present to the people a detailed explanation of the financial affairs of the village; also that the reeve and councillors express their individual opinion for or against such a scheme as debenture debts and that the people at a future date be asked to express their opinion by a vote on a by-law to be arranged. This is not rushing the village into debt as Mr. Halliday would make you think, but placing before the people the facts concerning their own business. I contend that if we build roads and sidewalks, and take care of the surface water in certain places, people would build houses, but when we wait till a man builds a house in a mudhole and expect him to be satisfied with a 2 x 4 sidewalk it will be a long time before there are sufficient houses going up to swell the village treasury by way of extra taxes. That old way of staying in the rut our forefathers made and expecting our offspring to do likewise is out of date.

I am an advocate of municipal debentures as long as they are issued with sound judgment spent with judiciousness and not sufficient to overwhelm a community. I believe that posterity would take a pride in helping to pay for improvements we may install, and which they would also benefit by. I have been in this village nine years, Mr. Halliday, and let me say that sometimes the stranger that is within your gates sees more in a few years than some natives may see in a lifetime.

We all know the unique position of Portsmouth regarding Government institutions, and hard as it is, it cannot be remedied. However, it ought to be acknowledged that the major part of the roads touching these properties are maintained by these same institutions, the same applying to their lights, so that although Portsmouth does not receive any revenue from said lands, yet they are not a financial burden to the village, and it ought to be remembered that often they give us a helping hand in various ways, and from what I can see, if they were looked after right much more could be obtained.

Mr. Halliday may think things will continue to prosper without my assistance. For the sake of the village, I hope they do, but as I cannot speak louder than words, why did he not with pleasure accept my resignation instead of rejecting it. Furthermore, why was I not notified of council decision in a business like manner instead of having to find it out through the press several days after council had met? I thank you Mr. Editor for this space allowing me to defend myself. Sincerely yours,  
W. E. WELLER.

PROBS:—Thursday, fair and a little warmer.

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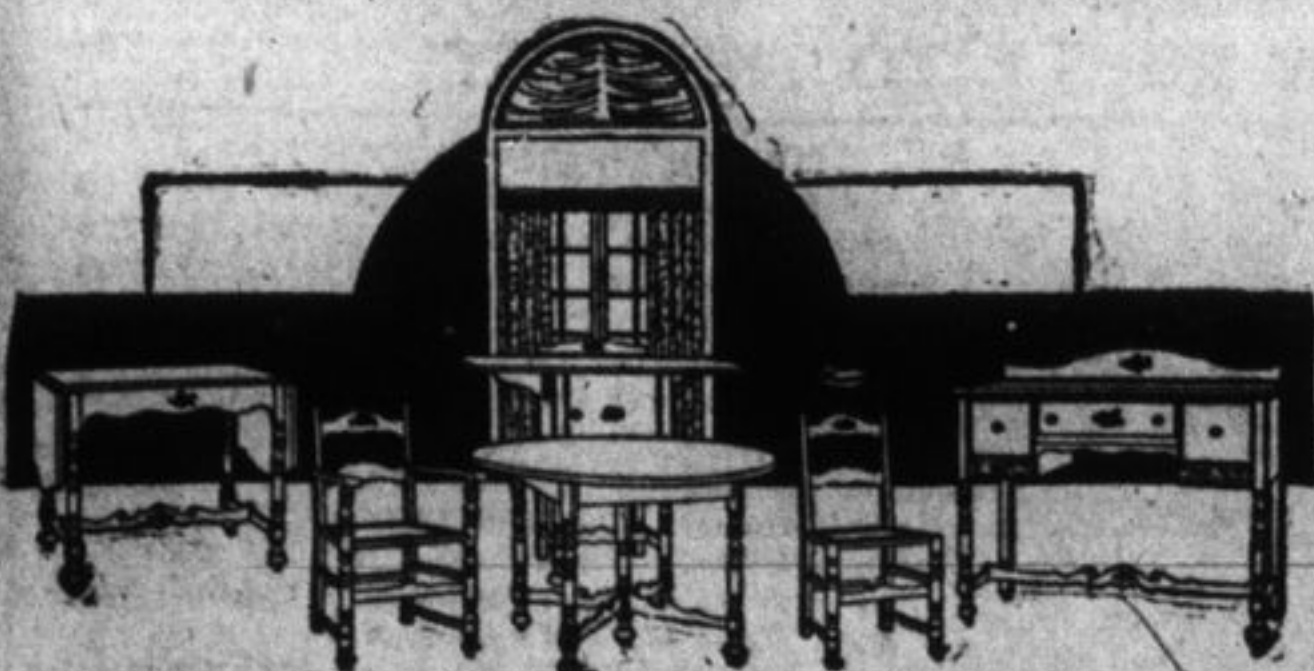
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**Belleville Tax Rate.**  
Belleville, Aug. 22. — The city council has effected an appreciable reduction in the general tax rate of 1-10 mills. Last year it was 23 4-10 mills, and this year it is 22 3-10. The school rates have advanced, but despite this fact the total tax rate for Protestant school supporters is four-tenths of a mill lower than a year ago. The total rate now is 37 6-10 mills.

**Grain Below Contract Quality.**  
Fort William, Aug. 22. — Grain of the 1922 crop reached Fort William yesterday in small quantities and most of it is grading below contract quality. Of seventy-one cars inspected at Winnipeg, only twelve cars graded up to No. 3, which is the lowest of the contract grades. Most of it was passed as No. 4, special and 4.