

CITIZENS MEET

J. B. HARKIN

A Medley of Discussion In Which Important Things Are Aired.

An important meeting was held in Superintendent Clarke's office on Tuesday evening, the occasion being a heart-to-heart talk between a committee of the Board of Trade and Parks Commissioner J. B. Harkin, who has been in the district for a week or two looking over the ground.

D. C. Bayne was the chairman of the visiting committee, the other members of the Board present being Dr. Brett, N. K. Luxton, S. M. Armstrong, H. Roberts, D. M. Soole, L. S. Crosby and William Mather, with Supt. Clarke in attendance.

Licenses

There was an extended discussion on the question of licenses, the main object of the Committee being to see whether the question of dual licenses could not be done away with through an arrangement between the Dominion and the province. As a concrete one the case of motion-picture houses was taken. It appears that under the law, as it stands at present, the Dominion government exact an annual license fee of ten dollars, while the province have the right, which, it is understood, they are to enforce, of exacting an annual license fee of \$50.

Mr. Harkin was perfectly frank in his reply to the deputation, stating that the matter had given him considerable ground for speculation. He recognized the justice of the plea that one license was enough; but the trouble was that the Province had also claimed power to impose an annual fee.

Mr. Bayne pointed out that the question had been before residents of the Park for fifteen or twenty years and a settlement was necessary, while Dr. Brett gave the history leading up to the present state of affairs, pointing out that when the Park reservation was made there was no provision for the situation which had now occurred.

Dual Licenses

Mr. Harkin stated that the matter first arose, so far as he knew, in B. C. when the provincial government undertook to impose license fees on pool rooms and moving picture shows. Since then

it had arisen in Alberta. The matter had been put up to the Department of Justice and there appeared to be no manner of doubt that the dominion government had the necessary authority to impose these fees, if it so wished. The province also claimed to have the right according to the present reading of the law, but he pointed out that the only reason for the dominion imposing any license fee was that the authorities should be in a position to guard the visitors to the Park. It was merely a nominal rate and was not imposed for the purposes of revenue. That remark did not deal only with picture houses, but with every class of business for which a fee was charged; making it impossible for the department to cancel such license in the case of unfair treatment of the public, and thus automatically putting the person, who gave such unfair treatment, out of business with the cancellation of the license. There was no other reason for the imposition of a license fee, for as a matter of fact, it would take a number of years of such license fees to pay for the necessary printing work in connection with them and their regulation. He did not however, care to say more as the matter was being worked on at the present time, but he agreed with the committee that the matter was one which showed some urgency, in the way of reaching a settlement. While, in the final case, there might be a question of appeal to the courts, he would very much rather see the matter settled otherwise, and had hopes that it would be so settled.

Health Questions

There was also considerable discussion over the question of the appointment of election of a health board for the park, previous cases of the outbreak of contagious and infectious diseases being cited.

Mr. Soole suggested that it might be well to provide a small fund to take care of urgent cases, but the Commissioner pointed out that unfortunately neither he nor the Superintendent had very large powers in the matter of dealing indiscriminately with general monetary matters.

The Commissioner stated that the whole aim in framing any regulations bearing on a subject of the kind was to see that there was no unfair burden on the dominion as the governing authority of the park. There was a danger, he thought, that if it were bruited abroad that any and all sick people would be looked after in Banff by the authorities, there would be the possibility of a ticket to Banff

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being bought for any person who took sick in either of the neighboring provinces, as well as Alberta itself.

Dr. Brett suggested that the whole thing being taken out of the hands of the Province and dealt with entirely by the dominion, would be a solution of all the difficulty, with which the Commissioner agreed—if it could be done.

Finally, the feeling of the meeting was that a board of health should, at any rate, be established—the Superintendent being a member: two members being elected by the citizens, and the Doctor appointed by the government becoming, ex-officio a member. Mr. Harkin pointed out, however, that any such board could act only in an advisory capacity the spending end having to be retained in the hands of the department.

Transferring Property

It is not necessary to detail the long discussion which took place in regard to the question of transfers, the following general description indicating the scope of the arguments pro and con as the various aspects arose.

It was generally subscribed to that all cancelled lots should be put up to auction. In the case however, of the opening up of new blocks, it was felt by the meeting that the lots should be open to application; to both of which points the commissioner stated his readiness to agree.

The Commissioner, however, drew emphatic attention to the speculation which was rife in Banff a few years ago, stating that the whole aim of the department was to put a stop to such speculation and to let the men who intended to build get the lot at the least possible figure, without having to buy from the man who bet \$8 against the department that he would get a purchaser for the lot before the expiration of the usual agreement for one year.

In regard to the old lots, relative to which there were no building restrictions, the argument was put up that these be transferable without any conditions being tagged on. The Commissioner on the other hand, thought the proviso in regard to building was perfectly fair, but finally, the following motion, moved by Dr. Brett and seconded by Mr. Bayne, was carried by the members of the board with unanimity. "In the opinion of this meeting the retaining of the building restriction in connection with the old leased lots will be more productive of non-building on these lots than if there were no such restrictions."

Registrations of Titles

This question was raised by Mr. Soole and it was arranged that the Commissioner would take the opportunity of going fully into the question with Mr. Soole and Mr. Bayne at an early date.

Automobiles

In answer to Mr. Bayne the Commissioner stated that it was expected that within a week or two they would have new automobile regulations, and that new roads would be opened up as they became fit for travel. It was not intended to open the Tunnel Mt. and Hot Springs roads at the present time; and it would all depend on the expediency of the questions as they arose, as to how they would be dealt with by the department.

Telephones

Mr. Crosby was out-and-out for an all-night service, while other

members of the board thought the circumstances would be met if a service to midnight were given, including holidays.

While the matter will be looked into, further, by the local officials, the Commissioner pointed out that the system of telephones in the park was run at a loss, the deficit being something in the neighborhood of \$4,000,00 in five years. They hoped to be able to make a rearrangement of the present exchange board whereby new applicants would be accommodated, but he could not say anything further in that regard in the meantime. The Commissioner also pointed out that the park belonged to the whole dominion; that the total revenue of the park was trifling in comparison to the total expenditure, and that they had to consider very seriously any suggestion calculated to increase that expenditure.

Publicity

Mr. Crosby was very keen on the question of publicity in connection with the parks in the west, and related his unsatisfactory experience in that connection at the San Francisco exposition.

Mr. Harkin stated that there was a verbal arrangement between the railway companies and the department whereby the railways, who were very largely interested in the matter, would take care of the publicity end, while the Parks Branch would spend every possible cent in development work.