

H.B. AMES AS MUNICIPAL REFORMER

ABSTRACT

H.B. AMES AS MUNICIPAL REFORMER

Thesis presented to the History Department of McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Daniel J. Russell

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This thesis deals with the municipal career of Herbert Browne Ames, a Montreal alderman from 1898 to 1904, and the philosophy and extent of his reform attempts.

Ames' studies at Amherst College, his early writings and his book (The City Below the Hill) are examined in an attempt to understand the philosophy behind Ames' career as a municipal reformer.

Ames' career on the Montreal City Council is also examined with particular reference to his attempts to bring about reform within the city.

Canadian historiography suffers from a lack of works on urban history, particularly dealing with the "progressive era". American historians, on the other hand, have long been studying this area of their history. The Conclusion of this thesis examines some of the conclusions they have reached (particularly the works of Samuel P. Hayes and James Weinstein) and compares aspects of Ames' career to similar aspects of American urban progressives.

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## INTRODUCTION

"Today people find it impossible to walk and keep pace with the rush of affairs; soon electric cars will move too slowly for the hurried men of the times. There is no calmness, no reflection, no study in the world."<sup>1</sup>

Montreal, at the turn of this century, had already become a bustling cosmopolitan center in the tradition of the large industrialized cities of the United States. The lament for the calmer, less hurried days of the past applied equally as well to Montreal as to New York or Chicago. The huge European migrations were just beginning to leave an unalterable mark on the demography and geography of the city. The movement from rural areas to the cities was adding another new element to Montreal's character. Industrialization molded these elements into a society new to Canada and to the people who lived within it. For the most part government, at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, did nothing to shape the vast changes taking place. Predictably the result was a

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1. The Pen, Vol. 1, No. 2, (December 18, 1897), p. 5.

city that was in parts inhospitable at best, and inhuman  
<sup>2</sup>  
 at worst.

In the municipal election of 1898, Herbert Browne Ames was overwhelmingly elected to the city council by St. Antoine Ward, which included a working class district. He was known throughout the city as a leading reformer. His municipal career was to last six years.

Ames was born in Montreal in 1863, the son of Evan F. Ames, the owner of a large and prosperous boot factory in Montreal and once a member of the Massachusetts Legislature. He received his college education at Amherst College and graduated with a B.A. in 1885. In 1887 Ames married Louise Marion Kennedy the daughter of Sir John Kennedy who later designed the Montreal harbour.

Before actively entering municipal politics in Montreal, Ames was director and owner of the Ames, Holden Co. ( later Ames, Holden, McCready Co. ), his father's firm. During this time he was instrumental in founding the Volunteer Electoral League and was the organization's first president.

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2. For a discussion of life in Montreal at this time, see Chapter IV.



After his municipal career, Ames was elected to Parliament in 1904 as a Conservative for Montreal - St. Antoine. He served in the House until 1921, and appeared interested mainly in economic and budgetary affairs.

In 1919 Ames was appointed Financial Director of the League of Nations and served in the post until 1926. Ames then took up a career as a travelling lecturer on world peace and world organizations for the Carnegie Institute for International Peace. He died in Montreal on March 30, 1954, survived only by his wife and sister, Miss Mary C. Ames.

American historians, in dealing with the "Progressive Era", have been engaged in a lively debate over the nature and extent of the reform movements of the period. Canadian historiography, however, is seriously lacking in studies of a similar vein particularly in the realm of municipal history.

Studies of American urban progressives, particularly by Samuel P. Hays and James Weinstein, have demonstrated almost conclusively that despite their liberal rhetoric, most progressive reformers were in fact attempting to place into power members of their own business class,

rather than bring about substantial change that would materially aid the working class. This thesis is a case study of a Canadian urban progressive reformer, Herbert Browne Ames, his rhetoric, his actions and his philosophy.

Chapter II examines Ames' studies at Amherst College in an attempt to come to some understanding of the philosophical background for his career as a civic reformer. The conclusions reached must be termed tentative at best, but it appears that there does exist a discernable link between Ames' Amherst experiences and his later career.

Beginning in the 1890's, American progressives mounted a massive assault on the problem of the blatantly corrupt municipal governments. Lincoln Steffens wrote his famous muckraking series for McClures exposing the corruption in the city governments of St. Louis, Minneapolis, Pittsburg, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. Efforts were made all over the United States to rout out the dishonest "machines" and "ward bosses", and replace them with honest, efficient men. Chapter III examines Ames' early writings in which he discusses the course of action which he advocated for the reform of the Canadian political scene in general and municipal politics in particular.

Ames spelled out his political philosophy very clearly in these articles.

The housing conditions of the masses were also of vital interest to American progressives. Reformers like Jacob Riis, Lawrence Veiller and Jane Addams have left<sup>3</sup> terrifying accounts of slum housing. Although some reform legislation was passed, little was actually done to alleviate the situation. For example, New York passed the Tenement House Act of 1901, requiring the removal of "unsanitary privy sinks" and other structural changes that would have considerably improved the plight of the poorly housed masses and created a separate city department to ensure that these changes were carried out. However no money was allocated to the department for years afterward<sup>4</sup> and enforcement was impossible.

Ames, too, was extremely interested in the housing of the workingman. So concerned was he about the unhygienic conditions of the "pits privy" in Montreal, that he waged an all out campaign against them, earning

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3. See for example: Jacob Riis Revisited, Francesco Cordasco ed., (Anchor Books, New York: 1968); Veiller, Lawrence: Housing Reform, Russell Sage Foundation, (New York: 1910); Addams, Jane: Twenty Years at Hull House, (Signet Classic, New York: 1961).

4. Veiller, op. cit., n.3, pp. 45-46.

himself the name "water closet Ames". He often inveighed against the overcrowded and unhealthy conditions of the worker's tenements and offered as a solution Diamond Court, a model tenement which he built in the heart of St. Antoine ward. In 1896-1897, Ames wrote a sociological study of a working class district of Montreal. In The City Below the Hill,<sup>5</sup> Ames described the living conditions of the slums and some possible solutions. The book and Ames' model tenement are discussed in Chapter IV.

Ames' career in municipal politics, which is examined in Chapter V, is in essence a study in futility. For three years, he and his party of "reformers" were in a minority on the City Council. They contented themselves with fighting small scale skirmishes on the committee level resulting in few victories, none of any consequence. When finally Ames and his allies managed to win control of the Council after the election of 1900, little changed. No changes or reforms of any significance were produced by the new Council.

Although Ames kept a diary of his years on

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5. Ames, H.B.: The City Below the Hill, (Montreal: 1897).

the Council,<sup>6</sup> it is sadly only a dry day to day accounting of the events in committee and council. His explanations for his victories and defeats are shallow at best. Ideology is foreign to its pages. It is for this reason impossible to make sound generalizations about the Montreal City Council of the period under study. Much more research outside the scope of this thesis is necessary. But Ames' attitude toward the Council is clear.

Some reflections on Ames' municipal career and on the limitations of his progressivism are made in the Conclusion (Chapter VI).

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6. The diary is the main source material used for Chapter V.

## CHAPTER TWO

AMHERST COLLEGE: TRUTH IS MINE

The most striking characteristic of Herbert Ames was the absolute faith he possessed in himself and in his methods. In his writings, his speeches and very strikingly in his diaries, Ames exhibits a self-confidence that very quickly becomes almost self-righteous and most certainly arrogant. Those who dare to oppose him are treated with barely concealed scorn, and a trace of the pity arrogant men show towards the weak; these are not moral men, in fact are barely men at all, but rather obstacles thrown in the way of the just. What motivation can be given them is materialistic: power, patronage, money. Against such men as these are arrayed "the friends", moral, practical men, united against "the enemy". Truth, justice and science are all most assuredly with him. This trait, as well as some of his progressive ideals can be traced to the training he received at Amherst College.

Amherst was founded in 1821 as a Puritan, fundamentalist school whose purpose was to combat the apostasy of Harvard. Despite the great social and intellectual forces which had swept over the United States, Amherst had remained very much the same institution when Ames entered it in 1881. Faith was still the most cherished ideal and

piety the guiding influence.

Ames' freshman and sophomore years at Amherst were spent largely in the study of Greek, Latin and Mathematics.<sup>1</sup> All three subjects, especially the Classics, were presented in an effort to forward the pietistic philosophies of the president and faculty of the College.

The Amherst College Catalogue for 1885 sets out some of the reasons for the study of Greek:

"It (the College) insists on the mastery of this language as an invaluable discipline of the mind, and an indispensable foundation for a scholarly knowledge of the languages and literatures, not only of the ancient but of the modern European world."<sup>2</sup>

But the method of presentation and the writers studied indicate that the Classics were used to instruct Amherst students in more than literature or simply as mental stimulation. "Through all the writings and lectures of the Amherst classicists runs a note of Puritan moralism. To the literature of Greece and Rome was applied a special interpretation that harmonized

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1. Information received from Mr. J. Richard Phillips, Amherst College Archivist. Ames took five Latin, four Greek and four Mathematics courses out of a total of twenty-four courses in his first two years.
  2. Amherst College Catalogue, (1885), p. 26.



with the teleological rationalism of the Puritan  
<sup>3</sup>  
 intellectuals."

The classics were taught not as cultural study but rather to consider the sad plight of a civilization that did not know Christ. The ancient Greeks and Romans had some idea of a sound religious creed, but their ideas were far too poetical, idealistic and aesthetic for a rational, practical evangelist. A moral had to be learned and the professors pointed out many. From Plato one could learn that study to the Greeks had as its end the cultivation of pure intellect. To an Amherst student who learned to have more faith in faith than in intellect, such a thought was heresy. From Homer one learned that love to the Greeks was sensual and selfish, and that it needed the purifying breath of Christianity to raise it from the level of egoism  
<sup>4</sup>  
 and lust. Richard M. Mather, one of the professors of Greek at Amherst, built up a large collection of plaster casts of Greek and Roman art. But this was not to enrich

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3. Le Duc, Thomas: Piety and Intellect at Amherst College, (Columbia University Press: 1946), p. 65.

4. Ibid., p. 70.

the cultural life of the college. "It served only to demonstrate the Amherst doctrine that pagan art was inferior because it was inspired by forces other than Christianity."<sup>5</sup>

There were other less subtle uses for the languages in the teaching of the true religion at Amherst. Greek and Latin were used almost as a science to prove the authenticity of the Bible and to lend credence to a literal interpretation. Portions of the Greek testament were read in both the freshman and sophomore years.<sup>6</sup> Early Christian literature was also studied.

"The course of reading in Classical Latin is supplemented by the study of the choicest specimens of Latin Christian poetry, from the rise of Latin hymnology in the fourth century to the fifteenth century, with topics on the origin and formation of the Latin Christian dialect and the history of Latin Christian literature."<sup>7</sup>

While Mathematics was not used to buttress any religious or moral convictions, the study lent itself automatically to support the evangelicals' search for universal law. The relativism of higher mathematics had

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5. Ibid., p. 73.

6. Amherst College Catalogue, (1885), p. 26.

7. Ibid., p. 27.

yet to reach the universities.

In his Junior and Senior years at Amherst, Ames' elective studies were almost exclusively science courses. At Amherst, science was taught to illustrate the principles of natural theology. Julius Seelye, the President of the college, called for scientific investigations to be "... carried  
8 forward under the guiding influence of the supernatural."

It is difficult to find a rationale for the teaching of physics and chemistry. It appears that the two subjects were, like mathematics, taught without philosophical or religious foundation, but fit neatly into the absolutist world of Amherst. The Catalogue notes of one physics course, "... it is the aim of the course to demonstrate, by experiment and  
9 by mathematical theory, the laws of the physical world."

Such was not the case, however, with geology and biology. These two subjects were the concern of Amherst theologians who sought an answer to Darwin's theory of evolution and both subjects were usually taught by a theologian. By the time Ames came to Amherst it had been recognized that

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8. Le Duc, op. cit., n. 3, p. 84.

9. Catalogue, op. cit., n. 2, p. 30.

the battle would be fought not in the realm of geology but in biology.

Thus it was possible for Amherst to appoint Benjamin K. Emerson as a professor in geology and zoology. After he had graduated from Amherst, Emerson had gone to Germany to further his studies. There he came under the influence of a system of study very different from that at Amherst. The Germanic ideal declared the validity of human reason and accepted that man could discern truth for himself without divine revelation. When he returned to Amherst, Emerson did not follow the old ways. "His approach was wholly naturalistic and he taught geology and zoology as entities altogether independent of metaphysics ... From the first Emerson's teachings premised a frank acceptance of the Darwinian thesis."<sup>10</sup>

Leading the battle against the new methods was John Mason Tyler, the biology professor. He chose to teach his course in complete agreement with Seelye's views and became in fact an apologist rather than biologist. A

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10. Le Duc, op. cit., n. 3, p. 84.

prospectus of the course indicates his aims:

"... instead of making the course an end in itself he proposes to make the study an introduction to the study of History, Ethics and Political Economy." <sup>11</sup>

Although their methods and conclusions were radically different, both Emerson and Tyler taught from absolute assumptions and were thus part of the cult of law. Both of them thus carried on that Amherst tradition. While Emerson refused to fit science into a larger perspective, preferring a vacuum, Tyler followed Amherst tradition and tried to fit science into a larger and orthodox milieu. Ames was thus exposed to two quite different approaches to scientific studies. Emerson's objective was limited. He wanted only to pass on to his students as much scientific knowledge as they could absorb. Tyler insisted that science be used to teach men God's ways. It is apparent that neither man had much influence on Ames. His interest in science can perhaps be explained as the inheritance of the belief that science and the scientific method would lead to  
<sup>12</sup>  
 a better and more efficient world.

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11. Cited in ibid., p. 86.

12. See: Hays, Samuel P.: Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency, (Harvard University Press: 1959).

The remaining studies in which Ames enrolled with the exception of the Senior Philosophy Course, were of a rather nondescript character. The future politician apparently had already decided on a public career and took election and rhetoric courses in almost every term. His dry, colorless style of writing and speaking was certainly no commendation for the course. Ames studied French the three terms of his Sophomore year, and although he was not perfectly bilingual when he first sat on the City Council, he was fluent in the language by 1900. He also studied German. The only general arts courses which Ames took were an introductory course in Political Economy and a History course described as "Outline of Ancient History; Medieval Europe; The Renaissance, four hours a week."<sup>13</sup> Both of these he studied in the first term of his Senior year.

The man who probably had the greatest influence on the young Herbert Ames while he was at Amherst, was Julius H. Seelye, the President of the College. A graduate of Amherst (1849), and an ordained preacher, Seelye taught

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13. Catalogue, op. cit., n. 2, p. 36.

philosophy at Amherst from 1858 until 1874 when he was elected as an independent to Grant's last Congress. In 1876, Seelye was offered the presidency of Amherst College. He accepted, remained in the post and taught philosophy until his retirement in 1890.

As President, Seelye kept the college committed to the primacy of spiritual values. "... his administration reflected the primacy which piety still retained. If scholarship in the college improved, if standards of instruction rose, still, these were but means to the grand end: the glorification of God."<sup>14</sup> To ensure this end, Seelye insisted that he be appointed College Pastor as well as President. In his final report to the Board of Trustees in 1889, Seelye made clear the course he had followed:

"That we should have the best attainable intellectual culture as the result of college study is of course to be our aim all the while, but I have never ceased to urge ... that the moral results of an education are its most important issue, and that all the influences of the college should conspire first of all to make the student pure and upright."<sup>15</sup>

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14. Le Duc, op. cit., n. 3, p. 45.

15. Cited in ibid., p. 45.

It is Seelye's theory of education and his teaching methods more than his idealistic philosophy that gave rise to Ames' complete faith in himself. The educational progress of an individual is to be measured by his apprehension of known truth. What is truth? Truth is law. "The universe in all its aspects, physical and spiritual is governed by law, absolute and immutable."<sup>16</sup> The learning of these laws embraced a Kantian dualism. Reason and inductive reasoning could perceive the laws of the physical world. But human reason is limited. For the laws which govern man's behaviour, we must "... listen for the voice: 'We shall learn without questions', said Seelye. 'Our bewildering speculations will fall away. We shall know as we are known, by divine intuition.'"<sup>17</sup> Truth to Seelye, then, was static. Men lost and gained sight of the truth, the laws, but truth remained immutable.

To live and to teach under such a philosophy it was necessary, as it always was for evangelicals, to have a deep faith in faith. Seelye believed that his faith had the answer for any question, moral, political, economic

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17. Ibid.



or social. Thus, in teaching the senior philosophy course,<sup>18</sup> it was natural and necessary for Seelye to be authoritarian and dogmatic. "He saw no reason why the teacher should waste time by encouraging the students to contemplate the philosophical alternatives."<sup>19</sup> Seelye knew the truth, knew the laws, and in his classes he passed the doctrines of his faith on to the students.<sup>20</sup> If any problems arose Seelye knew his faith had the answer and in weekly question periods, he answered any question a student posed. The subjects ranged from the political prospects of the G.O.P. to the doctrine of universalism, but Seelye answered them all.<sup>21</sup> He was equally as authoritarian in his preaching. In his sermons he made it quite clear that his faith held the answer to all problems. His favorite epigrams summed up his creed: "Perfect freedom is perfect obedience to

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18. Seelye taught the course until 1886, when Garman took over. In 1885, Ames' senior year, the two split the course alternating day by day. The course was mandatory.
19. Le Duc, op. cit., n. 3, p. 56.
20. An Amherst student who graduated with Ames described Seelye as "... still speaking ex cathedra ..." Fuess, C.M.: Amherst: The Story of a New England College, (Little, Brown & Co., Boston: 1935).
21. Le Duc, op. cit., n. 3, p. 57.

perfect law", and "No man can lift himself by his  
<sup>22</sup>  
 bootstraps".

Although Seelye was primarily concerned with the College and presumptuous in his moral and religious beliefs, he was still aware of the social problems facing the United States. During his term in Congress, Seelye saw the corruption in government and the havoc wrought by the 1873 Panic. "By 1884 he was proclaiming that the greatest moral problem facing the individual was his relationship to the group. The only possible solution  
<sup>23</sup>  
 he found was in the practice of Christian commands." Though still retaining his belief in law, Seelye moved away from the traditional Calvinist belief in human depravity to speaking warmly for human worth and dignity. This he did by reviving the

"law of love. This command meant to Seelye the obligation to practice goodwill beyond the point where it compassed the minimal of justice ... it assimilated absolute legalism, the legacy of Hebraic Puritanism to the warm, individualistic, humanitarianism of liberal Christianity." <sup>24</sup>

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22. Fuess, op. cit., n. 20, p. 211.

23. Le Duc, op. cit., n. 3, p. 97.

24. Ibid., p. 95.

This concept was enlarged by Charles Edward Garman, the man who taught the senior philosophy course with Seelye during Ames' senior year. "Every student, he believed, must sometime make a choice between a spiritual and a material world. That was the critical point in his life."<sup>25</sup> After Ames had graduated, Garman expanded Seelye's philosophy to embrace the zeal of the Social Gospel and even a critique of capitalism. But until 1886, although his teaching methods were radically different from Seelye's, Garman also emphasized the spiritual and moral cures for society's ills. He added a call to service which became more and more pronounced in later years.

For a reformer who believed the economic system was working both for labour and capitalists, who believed democracy with a limited franchise was the system through which reform could be made and who had ultimate confidence in his moral judgment, the concept presented by Seelye and Garman was ideal. It retained the ultimate appeal to law, while allowing, even teaching, practicality. It taught that all men were brothers, responsible one to another

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25. Ibid., p. 105.

but by disdaining the materialistic, demanded paternalism. Herbert Ames was such a reformer, and the concept guided him in his municipal career. It is this concept which gave him a peculiar sense of mystic power.

It is interesting to note that many Amherst graduates of the 1880's and 1890's went into the learned professions or in the fields of public and social service. Those who went into business (the majority) often distinguished themselves primarily as leaders in philanthropy.

Ames' Class of 1885 was no exception. The <sup>26</sup>  
Amherst College Biographical Record shows that many of his fellow graduates were deeply involved in social reform or philanthropy of some kind. The following is a partial but indicative list:

Barrows, Franklin William: M.D., Medical  
 Inspector of Schools in Buffalo; Chief  
 of the Bureau of Child Hygiene.

Ely, Robert Erskine: Founder of Prospect Union,  
 a working man's school and college  
 in connection with Harvard.

Greene, Frederick Davis: Businessman, officer  
 of the New York Association for  
 Improving the Condition of the Poor.

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26. Amherst College Biographical Record, 1951 and 1939,  
 Trustees of Amherst College: 1951 and 1939.

Hall, Alfred M.: M.D., Attending Ocultist (sic)  
and aurist at South Side Free  
Dispensary, Chicago.

Kimball, William S.: Businessman; on Foxboro,  
Mass. School Commission and Board  
of Health.

It seems that the class also produced a professional radical:

Sherman, Sidney A.: Secretary of the Union for  
Practical Progress (1894-96); Vice-  
President of the Radical Club (1898-  
1905); Secretary of the Municipal  
League (1903-08); set up the  
Producers' Co-Op Dairy Association  
of Rhode Island; "four minute speaker".

It is impossible to factually explain the reasons  
so many Amherst graduates became involved in social problems.  
Le Duc can offer no other reason than the insight and  
discipline that the College gave its students. As simplistic  
as it may seem, the solution is probably very close to that.

We must remember that the students who went to  
Amherst were by and large from wealthy families. There  
were few scholarships available. The majority of the students  
boarded at the College, which also made the cost prohibitive  
for any but the rich. At Amherst they spent four years in  
an atmosphere that was primarily religious, not intellectual.  
The puritanism in Amherst's piety accepted without question  
one's right to wealth; while the newly proclaimed Social

Gospel, which found its way into the College through Seelye's law of love and Garman's later preaching, called the students to service. It was the perfect combination, for these men could, sooner or later, afford a social conscience.

It is easy to become cynical when dealing with such phenomenon, and accuse these men of consciously striving to preserve the status-quo with no real concern for social problems. Amherst graduates had been taught through association and preaching that wealth was good and an honorable goal for which to strive. There was no shame in being wealthy. They were also taught that the rich had a responsibility to the community. It is hardly reasonable to expect that such men would construe that responsibility to mean the destruction or even a general reform of the capitalism they knew. Instead Amherst graduates, as well as many of their contemporaries, chose philanthropy or direct action through the existing political institutions. We cannot expect in either instance that a man trained in the Amherst system would attempt radical reform measures. Instead, and more logically, their reform measures are limited to particular

aspects of society's ills and those of man (liquor, slums, sweatshops, etc.). The old Calvinist belief in the depravity of man was still strongly held by these men. "No man can lift himself by his bootstraps", taught President Seelye, and so Amherst graduates saw the problems of the new industrial age arising from man, not the economic system. The solution lay in making men moral by alleviating the conditions leading to their obvious depravity.

Such an attitude is arrogant, certainly, but we must remember that many of these men felt a genuine horror at the conditions they saw and that their horror led to deep concern, their concern to action and their actions to reform, however inept.

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### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **WRITINGS AND LECTURES**

Four years before he would himself stand for election, Ames presented in his first published article the battle plan for the reform of Montreal politics. The main weapon to be used was "The 'Machine' In Honest Hands". Ames asserted "... that the only road to substantial reform in municipal administration is through the sanctity of the ballot box and the adoption of 'machine' methods on lawful lines."<sup>1</sup>

The article details the methods and successes of the Volunteer Electoral League<sup>2</sup> as well as detailing numerous examples of the corruption practiced in Montreal. Ames is content with a simple explanation of method and result. The article contains very little of the stirring progressivist rhetoric that he would later use. Its form is the result, no doubt, of a quick glance at his notes from his College rhetoric and composition courses. The structure is classic: Part One, summation of the problem and partial answer; Part Two, the proposed solution; Part Three, the results of the solution applied to the problem.

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1. Ames, H.B.: "The Machine In Honest Hands", The Canadian Magazine, (June 1894).
  2. See Chapter V.

The last example of the success of the League's methods is of course, the most stirring. In the 1894 civic election the League decided to attempt to oust one of the strongest of the corrupt aldermen.

"Against him, as David before Goliath, was pitted a young and comparatively unknown man, for whom little could as yet be claimed beyond an honorable name, a clean character and moderate ability." <sup>3</sup>

Once again Goliath went down to a crushing defeat.

Eleven years later, having successfully tested the methods himself in both municipal and federal elections, Ames again wrote an article on election methods. "Electoral Management" <sup>4</sup> differs from the first article greatly. Little time is spent on particular problems. The methods are outlined more fully and the philosophy behind each step is often explained.

As in the first article, Ames begins by outlining the problem, but by now the problem had become much more serious than mere corruption.

"In these days when charges of electoral

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3. Ames, op. cit., n. 1.

4. Ames, H.B.: "Electoral Management", The Canadian Magazine, (May 1905).

corruption are so frequently made, when the retort generally deemed sufficient is the tu quoque argument, it is little wonder that the average citizen - who votes on occasion and at other times is immersed in his own affairs - should be strongly tempted to conclude that illegal election methods are a necessary evil attendant upon free institutions; indeed, that they are an inseparable adjunct of popular government. Of such vital importance is it, especially at the outset of this era of great national promise, that so dangerous a heresy be not allowed to go unchallenged nor be permitted to find permanent lodgment in the minds of our people, that it is incumbent upon everyone, willing and able to defend the contrary position, to let himself be heard, lest we lose faith in ourselves and in the value of the constitutional liberty which we enjoy."

The solution to the problem remained fundamentally the same:

"... business-like preparations and thorough organization are, not only from a moral point of view, unquestionably preferable, but are also from a practical standpoint as a means of vote-winning, decidedly more effective than the less scrupulous methods so often for this end substituted."

Speaking in the papal plural Ames continued:

"This is the subject under review, and in the development of our theme we naturally take up its consideration under four heads:-

1. The character of the preparations which must needs be made between contests;
2. The methods which may be rightfully employed to reach the ear of the electorate;

3. The activities to be set in motion in order to bring out the maximum favorable vote;
4. The precautionary measures necessary for the protection of an honorable candidate against corrupt practices on the part of an opposition less scrupulous."

Ames considered it a necessity for a successful candidate to have a political club behind him which would continuously check the electoral lists for ineligible voters and assure that all voters who were eligible and who were favorable to the candidate were registered. Earlier, the Volunteer Electoral League had assumed this role for Reform aldermen, and later the Young Conservatives performed the same duties in Ames' successful federal campaign.

Ames next considered the methods that could be used to attract votes. The candidate must first ascertain who are the undecided voters. These are the votes which will win the election. Those who have made up their minds should be "eliminated from the problem". After making a list of the "doubtfuls", the candidate must be extremely careful on how to influence them. Much of the literature sent out during elections is useless

"because of lack of appreciation of the fact that men cannot be influenced in masses. Every individual has his personal characteristics

and it is 'hand picked fruit', that constitutes, in most instances, the successful candidate's majority."

Thus the doubtfuls must be classified and sent only the literature that would be relevant to them: labour views to workers and "artisans"; tariff policy statements to importers, and so on.

"But after all, the most powerful vote-winning influence is personal solicitation. Happy the candidate who has a band of friends ready to undertake for him this service with the list of 'doubtfuls'."

"The supreme test of electoral organization is its success in bringing out the voter." Ames suggested dividing the district, and in each division having a corps of workers ready to work. Some should be telephoning businessmen to remind them of their duty, others should be prepared to transport favorable voters to the polls, while still others should be tracking down other negligent voters. In this way, a candidate should be able to count on almost a one hundred percent turnout of favorable voters.

The last problem to be solved was how to combat a less scrupulous opponent. Ames' solution remained the identification cards that the Volunteer Electoral League had used so successfully. Ames also felt that another

preventive measure was necessary:

"In order to stamp out political corruption it is necessary in all cases that election crime, when detected, should be severely punished ... Was it understood that electoral crime would be unflinchingly punished, cost what it may, we would soon have little or none of it."

To conclude his article, Ames penned a stirring call to arms worthy of the noblest progressive:

"The political Party that resolutely sets its face against every form of electoral corruption, that absolutely refuses to consent to compromise, that prosecutes without flinching those guilty of fraud and that, keeping from guilt itself, forces its opponent to do likewise, that party - if there ever be such a one - will sooner or later come to power. A party thus elected, untrammelled by promises and obligations which it cannot with honour fulfill, free from the necessity of providing at the public expense for men whose claim for the services they have rendered, will be in a position to claim the services of the noblest men, will have and will hold the confidence of our people and will be able to give to Canada that pure and honest administration of which this nation, now entering upon the grandest period of its political existence, stands most in need."

It seems almost incomprehensible that anyone would attack such a noble and honest plan. But in August, the Canadian Magazine carried "A Reply to Mr. Ames"<sup>5</sup> in which

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5. "Electoral Management (A Reply to Mr. Ames)", by a Candidate in the Late Elections: The Canadian Magazine, (August 1905).

"A Candidate in the Late Elections" toted up the cost of Ames' plan and arrived at the not inconsiderable figure of \$15,000. Election day expenses alone he calculated to be \$6,000. And where does all this money originate? Most candidates would be unable to cover such an expense themselves, and so, the author explains, the money would have to come from Party funds. And where do the Parties get the money? From big business, of course, and big business would hardly give money without expecting a favour or five. "There is one possible, ultimate source, and one only. The people of the country foot the bills of both parties - the honest and thrifty provide the funds that are scattered among the dishonest." Ames apparently felt that such a smear did not warrant a reply. None was printed.

In the winter of 1895-96, the Montreal Y.M.C.A. presented a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal. Among the speakers were Reform Aldermen E. Penny and A.A. Stevenson, John Kennedy, the Harbour Engineer and Ames' father-in-law, and "Herbert B. Ames, Esq. B.A." In an introductory note, the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. explained the reasons for giving such a course:

"This course was presented, not with a view of



criticizing the local administration, but for the purpose of acquainting our thoughtful young men with the actual facts regarding the way in which the government of the city in which they live is carried on." <sup>6</sup>

In the introductory lecture entitled "Why We Should Study the Municipal System of Our Own City", Ames, who was Chairman of Educational Work for the "Y", explained why such knowledge was not only valuable but necessary:

"My condensed answer will be:- Because this science is - in this country at least - but imperfectly understood, and failure in understanding it affects most intimately the pocket, the health and the morals, not only of the municipality as a whole, but also of every individual within its boundaries." <sup>7</sup>

The study was not an easy one to make, continued Ames, because of the constant change involved. Population growth was enormous, creating new problems that must be mastered. Ames then considered the evils, in a general sense, of not observing "... the old Greek injunction 'know thyself' ..." and how municipal government affects "the pocket, the health and the morals".

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6. Ames, H.B., et al.: Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal, Delivered in Connection with the Educational Work of the Young Men's Christian Association of Montreal, (Montreal: 1896), p. 3.
  7. Ibid., p. 5.

The first aspect of the problem quite naturally for Ames, was the financial. He pointed out the vast sums of money that the cities received in taxes. "In proportion to the magnitude of the enterprise, so is the power for good or evil which a municipal administration exerts upon a city."<sup>8</sup> A well governed and well-kept city would attract a desirable class of citizens, while such people would surely leave a city where conditions became intolerable. The cost of housing, the potential for business, the expense of daily necessities, all these are directly influenced by the methods which the city government utilizes to run the municipality. Reason enough for anyone to understand municipal finance and "... be able to criticize to some purpose when sound business laws are broken ..."<sup>9</sup>

"The second evil attendant upon poorly administered municipal government is the danger that lies therein to public health. It is a recognized law that 'the nearer people live to each other, the shorter their lives are'."<sup>10</sup>

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8. Ibid., p. 6.

9. Ibid., p. 7.

10. Ibid., p. 7.

The municipal authorities are charged with the exercise of precautions against disease and the maintenance of conditions that permit healthy living conditions. A poor municipal government would thus mean disease, and "... the constant bringing to maturity of a type of manhood and womanhood of which no city can be proud."<sup>11</sup>

"Although the loss in money to a community through municipal mismanagement is bad, although deterioration in health is worse, worst of all is loss of character."<sup>12</sup> Corrupt government brings with it a loss of faith in popular government and injury to the ideals of the young. Corrupt councillors, vote selling, financial mismanagement, blatant patronage all lead the citizens and especially the young to conclude that honesty is not the best policy. Nor is this all. When civic politics become diseased, national patriotism does not long remain unaffected.

"As soon expect pure water from a dirt befouled spring, as pure national politics from a community whose local politics are degraded. He who loves his country, therefore, must love his city also, and labor primarily for

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11. Ibid., p. 8.

12. Ibid.

her political purification ... If then there is to be any purity in politics, national or provincial, there must be righteousness in civic administration." 13

Ames then moved on to the particular case of Montreal. Many of the problems were obviously present in the city. Financial mismanagement could be seen in the borrowing policies, the rising taxes and the shortage of money to cover expenses. The population was growing rapidly, the death rate was horrendously high and yet little was being done in the field of public health. Ames did not mention directly the corruption evident on the Council, but surely anyone could see that?

The final section of Ames' lecture is the most interesting. He quoted Joseph Chamberlain, whom he called "the most prominent figure on the horizon of English politics today", on the British ideal of municipal government:

"... a joint stock or co-operative enterprise, in which every citizen is a shareholder, and of which the advantages are receivable in the improved health, and the increase in the comfort and happiness of the community. The members of the Council are the directors of this great business enterprise ..." 14

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13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 9.

It is because of this ideal continues Ames, that British municipalities were so far ahead of Canada's. Many English cities controlled and operated their municipal monopolies, such as the street railways, and did so with profit thus reducing taxes. Many other measures were also being taken to further the health, education and comfort of citizens. Public halls, museums, libraries, art galleries, low-priced dwellings, playgrounds, "... these are the privileges already within the reach of the meanest citizens in any large British centre."<sup>15</sup> Britain is made clearly to be the ideal. Ames then continued to argue:

"The trend of the age is toward municipal socialism, and, in hands that can be trusted, this need not present an unwelcome outlook. For the many there are certain privileges which the state alone can provide. These advantages only the rich may enjoy if left to individual effort. What magnificent possibilities for benefiting one's fellow-men lie open to those who are to work out the science of municipal administration in the light of the twentieth century."<sup>16</sup>

We must neither over dramatize nor underestimate Ames' endorsement of "socialism". It is not a revolutionary's

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15. Ibid., p. 10.

16. Ibid.

cry for the end of capitalism. "Socialism" to Ames was what he saw in British municipalities: municipal control and ownership of public utilities and the expenditure of tax revenue in an attempt to alleviate the degrading aspects of urban life. The concept did not mean comprehensive state control of the economy, of business, or of business priorities that socialism generally denotes. It was very simply, good business. Ames pointed out that some British municipalities accrued from fifty to seventy percent of their revenue from publicly owned utilities. Taxes were thus greatly reduced. The "hands that can be trusted" to run such a government would beyond doubt be men with sound business experience. Ames envisioned municipal government entering into the capitalist system through control of one or more monopolies, not a new system.

Ames also gave the second and third lectures of the course. Lecture II was entitled, "History and Development of Local Municipal Institutions". It is a general history of the city and the city's charter. For the most part the lecture is a dull enumeration of statistics, dates and charter provisions. However, the lecture does demonstrate very clearly that Ames was a Whig in the grand old tradition.

The history of Montreal did not begin in fact until the Conquest.

"It is not necessary to our purpose to follow the historical development of the town from the time of Maisonneuve down to its capture by General Amherst ... Under French rule there was absolutely no local self-government ... Up to as late as 1832 the Legislature of Quebec was practically a municipal council for the whole of this province, and the unwillingness on the part of the French-Canadians to consent to any measure of local taxation, proved an effective barrier to the introduction of a workable municipal system throughout the province. With the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841, however, municipal institutions were introduced, and by the time of Confederation in 1867, had become fully developed." 17

English Protestantism to the rescue.

Ames' final lecture, "Our Local Parliament, the City Council", is a resumé of the qualifications for mayor and aldermen, and the duties of the Council and the Committees. A candidate for the mayoralty was required to be a British subject resident in the city for at least one year previous to the election, and the owner of real estate within city limits amounting to \$10,000, clear of all obligations. The qualifications for aldermen were the same

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17. Ibid., pp. 11, 14.

except that the property qualification was dropped to \$2,000. The Mayor could be paid up to \$2,000 per year. Until the Charter of 1899 was enacted, aldermen were not paid. Then a stipend of \$600 was provided. That Charter retained the same qualifications for municipal office.

Ames offered no comment on the system that effectively prohibited Montreal's working class from holding<sup>18</sup> office, but later voted for the property qualifications.<sup>19</sup> His writings do, however, hint that Ames was most interested in reform that would bring his own business class to power. He later demonstrated quite clearly that this was indeed the case.

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18. See Chapter IV for discussion of wages in Montreal during the period.

19. See Chapter V, p.



**CHAPTER FOUR**

**THE CITY BELOW THE HILL**

Ames became actively involved in municipal politics because he believed that reform could only be achieved by men such as himself, businessmen "who have the welfare of their fellow-men at heart".

"They are not those who take things for granted," he wrote. "They require to have demonstrated to them in black and white the local need for action and the conditions - changing with every locality - to which it would be needful to conform to meet the needs of the case, and, at the same time, yield reasonable financial returns."<sup>1</sup>

"For such as these ... the captains of industry, the owners of real estate and those who labor with brain rather than hand," Ames completed "A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal," The City Below the Hill. He hoped that this study would motivate "the classes" of Montreal to examine conditions in their own city.

"At this time in the world's history, when careful observers and honest thinkers in every land are coming more and more to realize what is meant by the interdependence of society, when those who study city life are each day more persuaded that ordinary urban conditions are demoralizing and that no portion of the community can be allowed to deteriorate without danger to the whole, when it is being proven over and over again by enlightened municipalities that the public health can be conserved, morals

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1. Ames, H.B.: The City Below the Hill, (Montreal: 1897). All quotations and statistics are taken from Ames' book unless otherwise cited. Emphasis mine.

improved and lives saved by a right knowledge of local conditions and the proper use of measures for their amelioration, it is opportune that the citizens of Montreal should for a time, cease discussing the slums of London, the beggars of Paris and the tenement house evils of New York and endeavor to learn something about themselves and to understand more perfectly the conditions present in their very midst."

In The City Below the Hill Ames presented Montrealers with "a right knowledge" of the conditions of a working class district within the city. During the autumn and early winter of 1896, Ames hired enumerators to make a "house to house canvass" and "an unofficial industrial census" of an area containing thirty-eight thousand people, "... drawn almost exclusively from three nationalities, the French-Canadian, the Irish-Canadian, and the British-Canadian." It was an opportunity to "study a class rather than a race", for in no other part of the city were "these three nationalities blended together in not very unequal proportions."

The northwest boundary of the area was the C.P.R. tracks ending in Windsor Station. They ran along the top of the hill which separated Ames' "city below" from the far more prosperous "city above the hill". A block to the southeast lay St. James Street and the G.T.R.'s Bonaventure Yards. Notre Dame Street cut through the middle of the

section and two blocks below it lay the Lachine Canal, one of Montreal's oldest industrial arteries. The southwest boundary was marked by Centre Street which separated the area studied from Point St. Charles, "... almost an independent suburb by itself, being sustained by employment furnished in the offices and workshops of the G.T.R." McGill Street on the southeast, separated the area from a section of the city containing "warehouses and office buildings, wherein no residential population can be found". To the west lay St. Cunegonde, then still an independent "suburb" of Montreal.

The area encompassed was one of the oldest industrial quarters of the city, and one which Ames hoped to prove by his scientific methods, was "eminently fitted for philanthropic investment". Further, to demonstrate "from actual experiment that 'Philanthropy and 5 per cent' in Montreal, as elsewhere, can be combined", Ames built a model tenement, Diamond Court, in the area under scrutiny. Ames did not want to reform his society. He wanted only to convince those of "the city above the hill" that there was a need for them to act on behalf of their less fortunate fellowman and to demonstrate that a social conscience could

still turn a profit.

Ames began his book with a study of the employment situation in the area. The industries of the "city", wholesale clothing, foodstuffs, cigars, boots and shoes (including Ames' factory), iron and steel, lumber, transportation equipment, and many smaller services, employed 12, 511 men, 3,266 women and 460 children. Most of the women and children were employed in the lighter industries. "The silk manufactory, the cannery and the bag works employ many women; the sugar refinery employs boys and the rope walk and the paint works many boys and girls." Ames counted "grown lads capable of doing a man's work" as adult male labour, making at least his figures on child labour slightly suspect. The percentage was probably somewhat higher than the three percent cited by Ames. Provincial law set the minimum for boys in factories at twelve and fourteen for girls. Ames nowhere defines the ages he used to arrive at his figures. Ames also found that of the 16,237 wage earners in the district, only two-thirds were residents of the area. He remarked that suitable dwellings, such as his model tenement "... could not fail to be a benefit to the workingman and should form an investment for the capitalist at once safe

and profitable."

Ames then turned his study to the composition of the family. In proper scientific terms, he found that the typical family in the area contained 4.90 persons, 1.41 adults worked for wages, while 1.53 remained at home and contributed to its care. There were 1.64 children in the home, .93 of whom were of school age and .72 infants. Ames also calculated that every third family kept one lodger.

More interesting than the figures themselves, is Ames' "... endeavor to discover and trace the operation of several natural laws". Ames' experiences at Amherst seem obviously to have left him with a belief similar to that of President Seelye in the precedence of law over all. Ames used his figures to set down a few rules which "appear to operate in the main with tolerable regularity". For example one

"... law which appears to the writer to be dimly apparent is in effect that neither wealth nor poverty is likely on the whole to be accompanied by large average families. These are rather to be expected among the middle industrial class, and the average number of persons per household decreases as the social status of the residents rises above or falls below this level."

These laws and statistics were, of course, all set down for a very definite purpose:

"Should the time come when capital shall be ready to be invested in the erection of improved industrial dwellings, it is evident that for its intelligent expenditure, in this or that locality, definite knowledge must be in hand as to the personnel and composition of the average family of the section selected."

In his study of wages in the "city below the hill", Ames concentrated on the "real industrial classes", exempting from scrutiny the "well-to-do" (who earned not less than twenty dollars per week) and the "submerged tenth" (the poor, who earned less than five dollars a week).

Ames ascertained that "from \$10.00 to \$10.25 per week, then is the family income of the real industrial class" and that \$7.20 to \$7.35 per week was the average wage per worker. This could be broken down further to show that the average wage was \$8.25 per week for a man, \$4.50 for a woman and \$3.00 for a boy. Such figures meant that a man working regularly through the year could earn upwards of \$400. However, there were few labourers who could count on fifty weeks of work in a year. As J.T. Copp points out, the average annual income for all wage earners

in the manufacturing sector of Montreal's economy in 1901,<sup>2</sup> a better year economically than was 1897, was \$237.00. These figures become more meaningful in Ames' discussion of the "submerged tenth, the poor of the West End".

Because a dollar a day was "regarded as the minimum wage for an unskilled laborer" and since few could count upon regular work throughout the year, Ames set \$5.00 a week as "the limit of decent subsistence" and concluded that "such families as, throughout the year, earn no more than \$260.00, are properly to be termed 'the poor'." Although such a method of calculation is severely limited, even Ames' figures indicate that the average laborer could be termed "poor". Calculations based on a Federal Department of Labour's study on minimum wages in 1912, indicate that in 1901 a family of five would need an annual income of \$536.00 to<sup>3</sup> meet ordinary needs. Assuming Ames' "real industrial class" did enjoy regular employment, at \$10.00 to \$10.25 per week, they were barely able to reach this mark.

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2. Copp, J.T.: Poverty, Progress and Progressivism: Montreal, 1897-1921, (Working title of a draft of a book in preparation by Professor Copp).
  3. Ibid.



In his study of the poor, Ames pointed out that among the "real industrial class", "there still remained 1,724 families, or 23% of the total number, whose small incomes could not be depended upon as constant and regular throughout the year." Ames concluded that insufficient employment was "chief" among the causes of poverty.

"This irregularity of work", he wrote, "is doubtless the main cause of poverty, for the prolonged idleness unfits many a man for steady work even when he at length succeeds in getting it. Once irregular always irregular is apt to be true, and irregularity, demoralization and poverty is the order of descent."

He offers no solution to the problem.

Although a total abstainer himself, Ames was not prepared to blame the evils of liquor for the distress in which many found themselves. But he was more than willing to point out that a great problem existed:

"Whether the sale of intoxicants is the cause of irregular employment and poverty, or whether idleness and want bring into being and maintain the liquor stores, we will not decide. This fact is, however, apparent to the observer wherever poverty and irregularity are most prevalent, there the opportunities for drunkenness are most frequent."  
(Emphasis in the original).

He noted that throughout "the city below the hill", there were 105 licensed saloons and 87 liquor selling groceries.

Excluding the outlets closest to the railway stations, this meant an average of one liquor store for every 45 families, or one for every 219 persons. "This is an exact, though startling average, for the 'city below the hill'."

In an attempt to examine the poor more closely, Ames took a second canvass two months after the first, of half the families he had designated "the submerged tenth". He found that more than ten percent of the group had moved since the first visit. If such a ratio was maintained, Ames calculated that more than half the families would move<sup>4</sup> before the year was up.

Ames pointed out that, unlike the American urban experience, Montreal's poverty was not chargeable "to any considerable influx of foreign elements ... hardly a dozen families were discovered that had not been residents of the city for at least three years." Besides irregular employment and drink, Ames found that the next greatest cause for poverty was "decapitated" family groups. He found that about one third of the families he studied were

"... in indigent circumstances through no fault of their own. Death or disease have so crippled the family group, that it can

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4. This calculation was not far off the mark. See, Cross, Dorothy Susann: The Irish in Montreal 1867-1896, (Unpublished M.A. thesis, McGill: 1969).

no longer unaided keep up in the fierce struggle for subsistence."

Ames concluded the chapter on poverty by advocating that a central charity board "upon which representatives of every race and creed might sit", be<sup>5</sup> established in Montreal. "There is in Montreal abundant willingness to help those who cannot help themselves, but it wants proper guidance and direction."

Ames was most interested in the housing of the population in the district and published The City Below the Hill to demonstrate the feasibility of a project like his model tenement and to set out guidelines for similar philanthropic endeavors.

"I think we will all agree," Ames wrote, "that the ideal home is one where the front door is used by but one family, where the house faces upon a through street, where water-closet accommodation is provided, and where there are as many rooms allotted to a family as there are persons composing it."

Ames' study indicated that the "home average" was still a good way below the "home ideal" he had defined, but that the wage earner in Montreal was in many ways still better off than in some American cities.

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5. Such an organization was the Charity Organization Society, begun in Montreal in 1900. Ames was on the Board of Directors. See the organizations's Annual Report 1901, (Montreal: 1901).

"Lofty tenement houses" were non-existent in the area. The average house accommodated just two families. But the evil of the "rear tenement" was still very much a problem. One out of every ten families, by Ames' calculations, was forced to live in an "ancient wooden cottage of the rural habitant type or a two-storey building encased in refuse bricks and reached by rickety wooden stairs and galleries." Ames also calculated that the average family lived in 5.02 rooms. As compared to Glasgow, where 74% of the families lived in one or two rooms, Montreal was not what could be called overcrowded.

Ames reserved much of his ire for "that relic of rural conditions, that insanitary abomination, the out-of-door-pit-in-the-ground privy." In 1896, he claimed, there still remained nearly 5,800 privies in Montreal, and more than half the inhabitants in the "city below the hill" had no "water-closet accommodation". In some areas, "the proportion with proper sanitary equipment is but one tenement in every five."

"It certainly does not seem to me that the work of eradicating this evil is being pushed forward with the energy and dispatch which the urgency of the case demands. The evil is still so wide-spread and abundant that only drastic

measures, born of persistent agitation, will suffice to extirpate it ... There is no excuse for permitting this evil longer to exist ... Would that Montreal might enter the twentieth century with this reform an accomplished fact."

Ames was to continue his campaign for the next eight years and was very nearly totally successful in eliminating this "danger to public health and morals".

Rents in the area varied according to the type of accommodation and location. The "real industrial class" paid \$8.75 per month, or approximately sixteen percent of their income, not at all out of line with contemporary rates. The "well-to-do" and "very poor" used from twenty to twenty-five percent of their earnings for rent. While discussing rents in the area, Ames took the opportunity to caution those who might be interested in building model tenements:

"One of the mistakes most frequently made, in semi-philanthropic efforts to provide homes for working people, is the building of dwellings too high priced for the neighborhood. Incidentally this may benefit the locality though only those already fairly well housed can take advantage of this better value. The bulk of the people live as before."  
(Emphasis in the original).

Ames completed his study of housing conditions with an examination of density and overcrowding. He found

that, excluding "the canal and wharves, the parks and streets, Bonaventure station and the non-residential section" the area contained as an average ninety-four persons to the acre. In some areas, the average was considerably higher. In the "swamp", the area bound by Notre Dame, Mountain, the railway tracks, and the city limits, the average rose to 163 per acre. On one block, "in a trifle over three acres can be found 955 persons, or over 300 to the acre. Think of it, a thousand people residing upon a space the size of one portion of Dominion Square." The 15,000 people who resided in the "swamp" had only one park, Richmond Square, within easy access. Ames felt the situation needed immediate improvement.

"... what more fitting way of celebrating the approaching anniversary of our noble Queen can be devised than to open and equip within this densely populated area a public park in dimensions and adornment worthy the occasion? ... Something certainly should be done to give residents of the 'Swamp' more breathing space."

Overcrowding does not appear to have been a problem in the area. Although some areas, particularly parts of "Griffintown" showed an average of 1.13 persons per room, most families enjoyed an average of one person

per room. In less than two percent of the families Ames studied was an average of two persons per room reached.

One chapter of The City Below the Hill examined the death rate in Montreal and particularly the area in which Ames was most interested. Montreal did not compare at all favorably with other large cities in the world. In 1895, the death rate for the city was 24.81 per thousand. London, Paris and Birmingham recorded a rate of 20 per thousand in 1894, Rome 19.4, and Brussels 18.1. In North America, Boston showed a rate of 24.02 in 1893 and New York a rate of 23.53. Ames calculated the rate for the "city below the hill" as 22.25 per thousand, slightly better than the overall figure, but found areas within it that reached the astounding figure of 38.54 deaths per thousand people.<sup>6</sup> Ames blamed the high figures on overcrowding, high density of population, rear tenements and privy pits.

Unfortunately, Ames failed to study the infant mortality rate, but figures from other sources indicate

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6. This figure was reached in the area surrounded by Bonaventure station and track, Chaboillez square, Notre Dame and Versailles street. Other areas attained rates of 30.87, 31.15, and 33.96 per thousand.

that Montreal was statistically close to the worst place in the world to be born. Out of one hundred deaths of all ages in the same year, fifty-three were under five years old and of these 70% were under twelve months. This rate was equalled by Chile, but European Russia (26 per 100), Austria (22 per 100), Spain (18 per 100), England (15 per 100), and Australia (10 per 100) were all below Montreal's abysmal rate.<sup>7</sup> Reasons for such condemning figures include the poor sanitary conditions cited by Ames, the inadequate and unsafe water supply in Montreal,<sup>8</sup> the lack of vaccination legislation and the deplorable condition of Montreal's milk supply. The study done on the milk sold in Montreal came to some startling conclusions.

"The most deplorable fact is that the averages of these samples show that Montreal milk in both summer and winter is of very poor hygienic quality. It is Grade D milk, milk which would be unhesitatingly condemned by any city with even a low standard. Such milk could not be sold in Chicago, Boston, or Rochester." <sup>9</sup>

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7. Harrison, F.C., et al.: The Milk Supply of Montreal, A Report of a Bacteriological Investigation of the City's Milk Supply, (Montreal: 1914), p. 3.
  8. See Copp, op. cit., n. 2.
  9. Harrison, op. cit., n. 7, p. 63.



Montreal's by-laws called for the confiscation of "unwholesome" milk as the only penalty for selling milk of poor quality.

Ames completed his study by studying the relationships between his statistics and the nationalities and religions of the population. His figures indicate that for the most part there is little difference in the relative standing of the different segments of the people in the area.

Ames concluded his book on a rather subdued note:

"Were we by such means enabled each year to accurately determine what progress was being made in improving the general condition of society, were we able every twelve months to place the finger upon every district which exhibited unhealthy symptoms, I have faith to believe that our citizens would not be unwilling to take the necessary steps towards betterment."

But it was obvious throughout the work that he had as his greatest goal to convince others dwelling in the "city above the hill" to follow his lead in building model tenements in an effort to improve the living conditions of the "real industrial class".

The idea of building model tenements to improve housing and at the same time earn a profit had already been tried in some American cities. Most such attempts had been

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successful, notably in New York and Boston.

Ames built Diamond Court on William Street, between Young and Ann in the heart of the district.

"Here are four blocks of buildings conforming with the small house type so universally popular, occupied by 40 families of varying nationalities and conditions. These buildings furnish model accommodation at an average price of \$2. per month per room, and yet yield a return of 5 per cent upon invested capital." 11

He chose the area, part of "Griffintown", because "in this region the need at the present time is greater than in any other locality within our nether city, and because if success can be here attained it will be certain elsewhere." The location was also within "half a mile or ten minutes' walk" of industrial establishments which employed over 12,000 workers.

Ames never recorded whether his tenements continued to earn a profit or eventually became a poor investment. But his main goal, to convince others to follow his lead, was not

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10. Veiller, op. cit., Chpt. I, n. 3, p. 69.

11. Ames, H.B.: "Incomes, Wages and Rents in Montreal", Bulletin of the (U.S.) Department of Labor, (Washington: January 1898). The article is based entirely on The City Below the Hill.

successful. There is no evidence to suggest that anyone but Ames constructed model tenements in Montreal.

The very idea of building model tenements came under severe attack, at least in the United States. Veiller felt that such plans were a waste of time, effort and money. Until adequate housing legislation had been passed and its enforcement ensured, such plans were "... at best, cultivating one small corner, while the length and breadth of the field remains untilled." In New York, for example, while 25 model tenements were built to accommodate 17,940 persons, 27,100 other tenements, most of which were unsanitary at best, had been constructed to house over one and a quarter million<sup>12</sup> people.

Montreal was sorely in need of a movement dedicated to bring about a strict housing code. None existed for the city until after World War I. The City Charter of 1899, did not specifically mention housing, and only one by-law empowered the city to do anything to control the situation. It called upon the city to "prevent overcrowding" and to require "apartment and tenement houses ... to be put and kept in

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12. Veiller, op. cit., Chpt. I, n. 3, pp. 70-71.

proper sanitary condition." The Provincial Health Board did not draw up any housing regulations until 1906, and<sup>13</sup> even then they were ignored in Montreal.

Despite Ames' best efforts to convince the "city above the hill" to take an active role in improving Montreal's housing conditions, no one followed his lead. What is most tragic is that almost no one took even the slightest interest in the housing problem and as a result the conditions deteriorated during the first decades of the twentieth century, rather than improved.

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13. Copp, op. cit., n. 2. See Copp's chapter on Housing for a more detailed study of housing legislation and conditions.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**ALDERMAN AMES**

A. In Opposition: 1898-1900.

The Minutes of the Montreal Parliamentary Debating Society record that on January 19, 1886, Herbert Ames entered into a debate on the desirability of Canadian independence. "Mr. Ames replied in favor with a well argued speech very promising for a young member of the society."<sup>1</sup> That Ames became a member of the Society so soon after graduation from Amherst is indicative of the public career of the "promising" young man. Among its members were W.T. Lighthall, George Washington Stevens and other notable upper-class English Montrealers.

Ames' career began in 1890, when he founded the Volunteer Electoral League, whose purpose was

"... to encourage suitable candidates to accept nomination as aldermen, and ... to render their election reasonably secure, without heavy financial sacrifices on their part ... to elect honest men by honest means."<sup>2</sup>

The list of subscribers to the League reads like Who's Who of English Montreal: J.H.R. Molson, W.C. Macdonald, William

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1. Montreal Parliamentary Debating Society: Minutes: 1886, p. 75.
  2. Ames' Papers: Volunteer Electoral League.

Smith, James Corristine, H. McLennan, John MacDougall, Sir J. Hickson, H.M. Molson, Lord Mount Stephen, Sir Donald A. Smith, and on and on with barely a French name to be seen.<sup>3</sup> The League and reformers met with limited success in the municipal election of 1892, but steady progress was made in later elections.

In January 1898, the Montreal Star in bold column headlines announced that Ames' name had been mentioned as a possible candidate for the February municipal election. "The difficulty", reported the Star, "will be in getting Mr. Ames to run."<sup>4</sup> The difficulty took very little time to overcome. On January 17, 1898 Ames stated his intention to run for Seat Number Two, St. Antoine Ward. Ames explained that he had been promised by "two or three other prominent men" that they would seek election in 1900 if Ames would stand now. He also felt that since he had persuaded others to enter the field he could hardly turn down the call when it came his way. Ames went on to explain:

"That being on terms of close acquaintance with

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3. Ibid.

4. Montreal Star, (January 13, 1898).

all the reform members of the Council, I have been led to believe that my joining their number will bring about greater unity and cohesiveness among them." <sup>5</sup>

Not wishing to make an enemy of his opponent, Ames explained that he chose St. Antoine Ward not because Alderman Costigan had been an unsatisfactory alderman, but "because I have personally endorsed candidates in every other riding where it might have been possible for me to accept nomination." <sup>6</sup> The Witness, however, felt that the St. Antoine electors should pay heed to Some Very Peculiar Votes. "Ald. Costigan ... has cast certain votes since he has been in aldermanic life that should be carefully pondered over by his electors," the paper proclaimed. But even the Witness had difficulty proving Costigan guilty of more than very slight and infrequent misjudgment. <sup>7</sup> But it was enough. Two days after Ames had announced his intention to run, Costigan retired from the race offering no reason and rather wistfully adding that if the electors ever felt a need for his services he would be glad

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5. Montreal Daily Witness, (January 17, 1898).
  6. Montreal Star, (January 17, 1898).
  7. Montreal Daily Witness, (January 18, 1898).



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to return.

But Ames still had to face an opponent, F.M. Sullivan, put up Ames claimed, by a "group of contractors".<sup>9</sup> The campaign was uneventful, and the election strictly no contest. Ames polled 2,322 votes to Sullivan's 769.<sup>10</sup> The Star was annoyed that Sullivan and five others had lost their deposits in what were from the beginning hopeless campaigns and had thus put the city through "needless expense". The six candidates should obviously have been acclaimed, huffed<sup>11</sup> the Star.

Ames assumed the chairmanship of the Parks and Ferries Committee, was appointed to the Police, Fire, and Health Committees,<sup>12</sup> and was later appointed to a special<sup>13</sup> committee to revise the city charter. He went quickly

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8. Montreal Star, (January 18, 1898).
  9. Ibid., (January 26, 1898).
  10. Montreal Daily Witness, (February 2, 1898).
  11. Montreal Star, (February 2, 1898 ).
  12. Ibid., (February 12, 1898).
  13. Minutes of the City Council, Book 146, (February 14, 1898).

to work and in just a few months had made clear what reform meant to him.

Three weeks after he was elected, Ames discovered that the earth around the city stables had been levelled without an order from the city to do so. Ames had unearthed<sup>14</sup> his first scandal. After apologies from the aldermen concerned, Ames succeeded in extracting from the Council members promises not to award contracts without approval from the Committee involved and the City Council.

Three days later, Ames moved in Council for a minimum wage of twelve and a half cents per hour on all city contracts and sub-contracts. In his Diary Ames set out his reasons for demanding a minimum wage.

"1st. A great city should set an example as a model employer and should do all in its power to prevent sweating.

"2nd. The London County Council has since 1890 inserted and enforced a similar clause in all contracts with the result that, although the cost of public works has been slightly increased, the quality of the work has been greatly improved. A contractor who must pay fair wages will only employ

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14. Montreal Daily Witness, (February 25, 1898).

good men.

"3rd. The Principle of interfering on behalf of employees has already been upheld by this Council in the Street Railway contracts where the number of hours are limited by by-law.

"4th. In many government contracts now being granted by the Ottawa government, there is a clause prohibiting sweating ...

"5th. I have instructed Taylor and Gordon to put similar clauses in all my contracts." 15

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The motion was carried.

One of Ames' main priorities was the health of the citizens and in his first year on the Council the new alderman took many steps to safeguard the city's population. He believed most strongly that the municipal government was there to protect and guide the citizens of Montreal.

"We must not lose sight of the fact, that, as representatives of the citizens, we are responsible for the well-being, not of any particular class, but of all classes, and I must admit that in my mind the health of our population has a prior claim to be protected by this council than the purse of the proprietor. Although this council exists to safeguard the interests of all classes of the

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15. Ames, H.B.: City Council Diary, in Ames Papers, (February 28, 1898). Hereafter referred to as Diary.
  16. Minutes of the City Council, Book 146, (February 28, 1898).

community, it is its special duty to protect the weak and to watch over the well being of those who are least able to protect themselves."<sup>17</sup>

To this end Ames waged an unending war against privy-pits and cesspools within the city. Ames first moved for their<sup>18</sup> abolition in March of 1898. The battle Ames waged was not at all an unnecessary one. In 1897, there still remained<sup>19</sup> 5,376 privy pits within the city limits. At the same time Ames began a crusade to stop the practice of shutting off<sup>20</sup> water to houses whose tenants owed taxes to the city.

Ames also fought against the health hazard presented by the tenements. He attempted to have the Fire and Light Committee draft a by-law prohibiting "... builders from putting up houses with dark rooms."<sup>21</sup> On the Charter Committee, Ames fought for the insertion of a clause to read:

"... so that the building inspector would have the power to demolish, instantler, houses which were so old and so insanitary (sic) so as to

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- 17. Montreal Daily Witness, (May 3, 1898). Speech to Council.
  - 18. Minutes, op. cit., n. 13, (March 21, 1898).
  - 19. Montreal Daily Witness, (March 30, 1898).
  - 20. Minutes, op. cit., n. 13, (March 21, 1898).
  - 21. Montreal Daily Witness, (March 18, 1898).

be unfit for human habitation. He showed that there were today a number of such houses in the city and that they were nothing less than pest holes." <sup>22</sup>

When the Grand Trunk Railroad demanded their new terminal be built on Victoria Square, Ames rose to protest. He had previously stated that he was "... in hearty accord with the sentiments of ..." the Women's Park Protection Association. <sup>23</sup> He could not condone the loss of another park since, "... the city has incurred considerable sacrifice to establish public squares in the city ..." <sup>24</sup> This battle Ames won, and the G.T.R. was forced to locate elsewhere. As if to ensure victory, Ames later proposed that the police band play twice a week in various squares in the city, <sup>25</sup> including Victoria Square, during the summer.

To insure a scientific basis for a study of the population's health needs, Ames very early took the lead in <sup>26</sup> demanding that a census be taken as soon as was possible.

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22. Ibid., (October 20, 1898).

23. Ibid., (January 25, 1898).

24. Ibid., (April 13, 1898).

25. Ibid., (April 28, 1898).

26. Minutes, op. cit., n. 13, (March 21, 1898).

Although he had support from Mayor Prefontaine, the Council considered the need negligible and the census idea died.

On the Charter Committee, Ames began a campaign that was to be a priority throughout his career in municipal politics. He was to be a champion of the English population of Montreal. When putting forward the idea of an executive council to govern the city, Ames

"... proposed the English speaking Western section have the power to elect two of the proposed six members of this board. He dwelt upon the fact that the English element in the city had not had fair treatment in the Council in the past, and made a plea for more generous treatment in the future." <sup>27</sup>

Ames time and again, raised the problem of an English and French split on the Council. At least one other person agreed that this was indeed a problem. "A French Canadian" pointed out that although every city government was corrupt the problem in Montreal was compounded by the fact that control of the Council was in French hands (the east end) while the English aldermen were trying to wrest control away. This, according to the author, accounted for the sudden interest that had been taken in municipal reform by so many aldermen.

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27. Montreal Daily Witness, (October 22, 1898).

In the end the proposal for an executive board was defeated because,

"the most ignorant members of the council ... only considered one thing, that the project would deprive them of their petty patronage, and they succeeded in defeating it." <sup>28</sup>

It cannot logically be argued, though, that Ames' sole purpose was to bring about English control of the city government. In fact Ames later relinquished the leadership of the "Reform Party" to a French Canadian, Alderman Hermidas Laporte, while he was still on the Council. Ames did, however, make the protection of English rights one of his chief causes.

In his first year on the Council, Ames made it clear that reform meant money. Any savings that could be made should be made. When a coal merchant bid against the coal combine of the city, Ames applauded him:

"I have great admiration for the way M. Charland has come out against this powerful combine. He should receive the city's warmest support." <sup>29</sup>

In an attempt to abolish the patronage of the Committee system

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28. "Municipal Reform in Montreal", by a French Canadian, The Canadian Magazine, (March 1899).

29. Montreal Daily Witness, (July 27, 1898).

that had put Montreal on the brink of bankruptcy, Ames proposed that the city appoint one purchaser for all the city's needs. He pointed out that such a system would do away with such discrepancies as the thirty percent difference<sup>30</sup> in the prices that two Committees were paying for hay.

Ames did not play favorites in trying to cut down on expenditures or to make money for the city. In fact his zealousness at times makes him look anything but a "progressive" reformer. When the Fire Chief, "... lost his patience and declared that he could not be responsible for the department if his appropriations were reduced", Ames coolly noted, "Necessity knows no law however, and we set to work on the matter at once."<sup>31</sup> In an even more unusual move, Ames supported a proposition to sell part of Fletcher's Field.

"It appeared to me that this part of the park was unnecessary and unsightly and that if by disposing of the same the funded indebtedness could be reduced one half million dollars, the move would be a wise one."<sup>32</sup>

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30. Ibid., (March 21, March 22, 1898).

31. Diary, (December 22, 1898).

32. Ibid., (December 21, 1898).



At the close of his first year as an alderman, Ames was not particularly enchanted with many of his fellows.

Committee work was anything but pleasant:

"It is growing evident that henceforth I shall find it disagreeable work kicking against the pricks in the Police Committee." 33

"This Health Committee requires the closest watching ... One can never trust any of this work." 34

Ames was equally as enchanted with the Council in general:

"There was a full attendance because there was a petty appointment to be made, viz. the choice of a notary. This will bring out a contingent even where the making of a city charter can scarce get a quorum." 35

He agreed when, "McBride remarked that there were two influences which could dominate the Council at will - the Bishops and the saloon keepers." 36 Ames' motion to raise the tax on saloons had just garnered the grand total of four votes.

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33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., (December 27, 1898).

35. Ibid., (December 16, 1898).

36. Ibid., (December 28, 1898).

Ames' second year at City Hall was spent mainly in obstructing the plans of the "enemy", and in building the confidence of the Reform Party. His party was still outnumbered in Council and on most of the Committees and so lost many of the battles. But by the end of the year, the momentum was clearly on Ames' side.

The first major battle took place over the chairmanship of the Water Committee. In February the chairman and members of each committee came up for reconsideration. Ames made it plain earlier that he intended to make a change in the Water Committee.

"I stated frankly to Alderman Jacques who was my neighbor, that I had no confidence in the Water Committee since it was practically without a chairman and avowed my intention to replace Alderman Kinsella (the Chairman) at the February revision of Committees." <sup>37</sup>

On February 13, the matter came before Council.

"I was prepared, even if I stood alone, to dissent to the re-nomination of Alderman Kinsella, who as chairman of Water Committee during the past twelve months has been a complete failure. There had been no previous canvas on this matter, but the dissatisfaction was so general especially among the English members, that it was thought well to try a vote." <sup>38</sup>

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37. Ibid., (January 30, 1899).

38. Ibid., (February 13, 1899).

When Kinsella was nominated, Alderman Sadler, seconded by Ames, nominated the other English speaking member of the Committee, Clearihue. He declined the nomination and so Alderman Laporte was nominated. "The clique waxed ugly ..." <sup>39</sup> but Laporte was elected chairman. Ames explains the final vote in terms highly consistent with his general description and interpretation of the workings of the Council. Reform enters the picture, especially for himself, but still there remains the spectre of a general mentality that borders on a type of racism from which Ames is not entirely free. <sup>40</sup> The division of Montreal into an East and West end was not just a geographical nicety but a very real and pernicious division.

"It will be seen that the better element of the Council was wholly against Kinsella with the exception of Aldermen Stevenson and Turner. Alderman Stevenson would not vote for a French speaking chairman, even preferring

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39. Ibid.

40. See for example: Ibid., (January 13, 1899): "I stated plainly that if two new appointments were to be made one should be of English origin ..."; Ibid., January 20, 1899: "I may come into some criticism for appointing an Irish Roman Catholic to a position previously occupied by a Protestant ..."; Ibid., February 9-12, 1890: formation of Committees; etc.

Kinsella, while Alderman Turner, with a large Irish vote in his ward could not vote against an Irish chairmanship. This vote is, however, encouraging, because it is claimed that Kinsella had been promised the chairmanship of Water if he would help Depatie to secure the scavenging contract. It shows that the Jacques-Marsolais crowd are not able to deliver the goods. Kinsella has received only what he deserves for he has persistently voted with the worst element of the Council during the past twelve months. I expect a great howl will arise from my Irish electors, but I would rather go out of public life altogether than be compelled to support incompetent men because of their nationality." 41

Typical of the efforts Ames made to keep the awarding of contracts legal and just, was the awarding of contracts for police uniforms in March, 1899. Ames had already instituted the system of having a sample uniform made and having tenderers then submit bids on the cost of duplicating the sample. This he considered a real triumph. 42

In the Police Committee meeting to read the tenders, Ames and his allies, who were a minority, fought every bid that was supported by the "clique majority". The usual reason for contesting the award was price, but there were others:

"I could not favor the firm of Saxe and Son

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41. Ibid., (February 13, 1899).

42. Ibid., (February 14, 1899).

because I had been credibly informed by reliable parties that they had their work done in Jewish sweat shops ..." <sup>43</sup>

Ames lost every vote on the Committee level, but fared much better in Council, in "one of the most exciting meetings of Council, since my advent thereto ..." <sup>44</sup> Every decision was reversed in Ames' favor but one. But even then the affair was not ended. When Ames returned from a trip ten days later, he discovered that the contracts had not been officially awarded. The Chairman of the Police Committee had told the Secretary not to notify the successful tenderers. Ames went <sup>45</sup> to work and "... spiked the guns of the opposition ..."

He notified the companies involved, advising them to pick up certified copies of the minutes of the Council meeting during which the contracts had been awarded, and to send notarized acceptances to the City Clerk. He then secured from the City Attorney an opinion that the action of the Council "... constitutes a complete contract which binds the city ..." <sup>46</sup> When the Council met that afternoon there was

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43. Ibid., (March 1, 1899).

44. Ibid., (March 3, 1899).

45. Ibid., (March 13, 1899).

46. Ibid.

little that could be done to defeat Ames. The contracts remained, unchanged.

One of the favorite topics for Montreal newspaper editorials at this time was the deplorable state of the streets and sidewalks. Ames was not long in demanding action. In May, the crusading alderman put before Council a motion asking for immediate repairs and cleaning to be done by means of an extra tax. His speech is a classic call to arms.

"The public outcry against the condition of our streets and against the likelihood of a repetition this autumn of the conditions of last year make it imperatively necessary for this Council to take some steps toward prevention. The newspapers, the doctors, the Provincial Board of Health, and the ladies have protested repeatedly and unanimously against the continuance of a policy of "laissez faire". For this indignation there are indeed good reasons. The state of our streets is disgraceful beyond expression; dangerous to public health, and damaging to property. It is impossible to estimate the loss to the city...

All things considered my proposition to raise a special tax seems the only practical course open to us. Sec. 335 of the new charter grants this Council power, in cases of urgent necessity, such as epidemics, etc. I claim the present case is one of urgent necessity, and that if we have not an epidemic actually upon us, we are likely to have one if we permit matters to remain as they are. Prevention is as necessary as cure...

To advocate a special tax is never popular. It

is a course that it takes courage to follow. Our present pitiable condition is due to the faults of our predecessors. We think, that the public will appreciate a heroic effort to make good the faults of the past ...

I have pretty thoroughly tested the opinion of my own ward on this question. St. Antoine Ward will be called upon to pay nearly one-third of any special tax that is levied. I believe that my electors are ready to make the sacrifices ... But my electors rightly demand some guarantee ... We believe that half of the money should be distributed in the Western division ... I am convinced that those among us who heroically endeavor to meet a trying emergency, if we have not been responsible for its creation, will not be condemned therefor by those whom we represent." 47

Heroism, however, was at a premium. Ames' motion was defeated, drawing only six votes in its favor. On May 29, the matter was closed when another motion asking for a special tax was withdrawn. The streets remained in poor shape for another year.

Ames next attacked the Finance Committee for the methods it used to float a three million dollar loan.

"It was a pitched battle between the reform and the enemy in which the former was defeated, not, however, without inflicting loss upon their opponents, as the next election will probably show." 48

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47. Ibid., (May 15, 1899).

48. Ibid., (July 10, 1899).

The vote on Ames' motion to refuse to ratify the Committee's action was as follows:

AYES: Laporte, Ames, McBride, Turner, Sadler, Martineau, Clearihue, Ekers, Gagnon, Roy.

NAYS: Rainville, Marsolais, Stevenson, Jacques, Prenoveau, Beausoleil, Kinsella, Dupre, Archambault, Ouimet, Lareau, Gallery, Paquette, Wilson, Dufresne.

Commented Ames, "I never saw a better division line run through Council than this. In my opinion with the exception of possibly Dufresne, we could spare the nays in the interests of the city." It is also interesting to note that the names of the three English aldermen who voted against Ames (Stevenson, Kinsella and Gallery) are underlined in Ames' diary, as is often done in other instances. They appear almost as traitors to the cause: "... Gallery also voted with the enemy ... the conduct of Alderman Stevenson appeared to me very strange."<sup>49</sup>

After returning from a month's holidays, Ames stepped into what was to be the reform party's signal victory before the election in 1900. On August 31, the Montreal Herald carried a story detailing the selling of a

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49. Ibid.



position on the police force by a lieutenant. The next day La Patrie followed suit. On September 5, the Herald reported another similar incident. By September 8, the Gazette, La Patrie and La Presse were all demanding an inquiry into the hiring practices of the police. Ames succeeded in convincing the Police Committee that an investigation should be made but in Council Mayor Prefontaine held up the reformers on a rather arbitrary decision of the Chair.<sup>50</sup> The next week in Council "The great question of the Police Investigation was fought out to a finish and the reform party triumphed gloriously."<sup>51</sup> Council voted in favour of allowing the Police Committee to hold the enquiry and granted immunity to any constables testifying at the hearing. "The clique had had enough of fight for that time and did not care to try strength again and so the Council adjourned. It was a great victory." But the victory was short lived. On October 11, an injunction was handed down forbidding the investigation to continue. It was not to start again until after the election.

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50. Ibid., (September 13, 1899 and September 25, 1899).

51. Ibid., (October 2, 1899).

The next three months were spent mainly in campaigning for the Reform Party. No great battles were fought in Council or in any of the Committees. Ames fought a rather desultory fight against the sale of liquor, beer and curios in Mount Royal Park on Sundays.

"I was not in favour of allowing the sale of any of these things on Sunday, first on the moral ground, and secondly because it interfered with the business of city merchants."<sup>52</sup>

But he settled for a compromise, allowing the sale of almost anything but "spirituous or intoxicating liquors."

The Police Committee recommended that the police be armed and Council agreed to the proposal. Ames favored  
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the plan.

Shortly before the election, Ames' favorite causes again came up for vote. On his motion to abolish privy pits, Ames noted, "I did not make a long speech in defence of it, for I knew pretty well the Council would kill it." He added that "another of my pet projects in reference to the abolition of unsanitary houses I withdrew, knowing that there would be not use in trying to pass it through such

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52. Ibid., (November 10, 1899).

53. Ibid., (November 8, 1899, November 13, 1899).

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a Council at this time."

The final meeting of the Council before the election presents one of the incongruities that are to be expected in a reformer of Ames' type. During a discussion on Charter amendments,

"Alderman Martineau opposed the clause which gave the Council the power to oblige the milkmen to sterilize and pasteurize the milk, on the ground that there was a danger of creating a monopoly and moved the striking out of these words, which carried." 55

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Ames was the seconder of the motion. It must be remembered that Ames was above all else a practical man who had been trained to write, speak and think logically and to make decisions on a priority basis. Faced with a choice between a monopoly controlling the distribution of milk which would surely drive prices too high for many Montrealers and the situation as it existed, the only logical choice was to accept the status quo. 57

In his Diary, Ames describes only one of his

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54. Ibid., (January 8, 1900).

55. Ibid., (January 12, 1900).

56. Minutes, op. cit., n. 13, Book 152, (January 12, 1900).

57. A more detailed study of Ames' progressivism can be found in the Conclusion.

campaign rallies, but reproduces the speech he delivered intact. In it he gives the principles under which he voted and worked:

- "1. Que les emprunts de la ville soient offerts publiquement et accordés au plus offrant.
2. Que la limite d'emprunt, fixée par la chartre actuelle, soit strictement maintenue, au moins quelques années de plus.
3. Que les contrats civiques soient soumis à la concurrence de tous les citoyens qui parent les taxes, et soient accordés au plus bas soumissionnaire reponsable et digne de confiance.
4. Que des methodes economiques soient adoptés dans tous les departements, dans le but d'empecher un surcroit de taxes.
5. Que, dans le service municipal, on favorise ceux qui sont capables, et que c'on remercie ceux qui sont inutiles.
6. Que, ce que les journeaux appellent "la barriere municipale" soit aboli le plus tot possible. Et que les parasites qui exploitent les honnetes gens sans travail soient puni sans merci." 58

These six points were to become the platform for the Reform Party in the important municipal election of 1900. Ames was acclaimed to his seat and his party at last gained control

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58. Diary, (October 11, 1899).

of Council. Now rather than a party of obstruction, Ames, Laporte and their allies could move to take direct action.

B. In Power: 1900-1904

The first task faced was the composition of the various committees. What was left of the "enemy", Aldermen Jacques, Lareau, Wilson and Brunet met together in the Mayor's office<sup>59</sup> and, "... it was decided to make an effort<sup>60</sup> to secure control of the new Council." In the afternoon of the same day (February 2) the "clique" held a meeting with the new French members "... purposely excluding Aldermen Laporte, Martineau, Ouimet, Savignac, Chausse, and Vallieres ... Alderman Lareau and Jacques explained that the six absent members were purposely left out because they were too English."<sup>61</sup> They were unable to garner enough support. On February 4 and 5 the "reform element" met and a ticket was drawn up. Then the Council met in two groups, French and English. "The reform element of the French Canadians in caucus fought it out and victoriously carried<sup>62</sup> through the ticket prepared ..." The English caucus

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59. Mayor Prefontaine was re-elected.

60. Diary, (February 9, 1900).

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

meanwhile, "... determined that we should hold out for one-third of everything, that is to say, three English chairmanships and twenty-one out of sixty-three English places on Committees."<sup>63</sup> This they succeeded in doing. In the end, Ames was elected chairman of the Hygiene and Statistics Committee and a member of the Police and Fire Committees. He was later a member of two special committees, Public Library and Charter.

The first two months of the new Council were spent mainly in laying the foundations for future work. The most important measure passed by the Council was the setting up of a special committee "... to study the question of salaries, work, qualifications and other questions concerning the civic employees ... with a view to replace such as would be a hindrance to reform administration."<sup>64</sup> Ames was a member of the Committee.

Ames' Hygiene Committee outlawed the cutting of ice for any use whatever "... from any quarry, from the Lachine Canal within the city limits or from the river between

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63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., (February 16, 1900; February 26, 1900).

the guard pier and the wharves ..."<sup>65</sup> The water in these locations was too polluted for use. Ames also returned to the "much discussed matter" of privy pits, and succeeded in passing in committee a motion outlawing them within city limits.

In March, 1900, the Quebec government considered the charter amendments drawn up by the Council in 1898-99. The lower House threw out nearly every amendment that had been made by Council. Ames outlined the reasons for the mutilation:

"Our first mistake was in entrusting the bill to ex-Alderman Rainville. This gentleman ... having ceased to be an alderman, at the same time ceased to have any interest in forwarding the bill. Our second difficulty was that politics were allowed to enter into consideration. Members of the Lower House freely stated that, as the Council of the City of Montreal was at present mainly controlled by Conservatives, these should be compelled to do the best they could under legislation which had sufficed for their Liberal predecessors ...

My conclusion of the whole matter is this: Were the Legislative Council at Quebec abolished there would be nothing between Montreal and spoliation and ruin. At the hands of Lower Chamber, as at present

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65. Ibid., (February 23, 1900).

constituted, Montreal would be but a milch cow and the prey of every unscrupulous schemer." 66

Ames was not far off target. Many members of the Lower House held stock in Montreal Light, Heat and Power Co. and other "interests" over which the proposed charter would have given the City Council some control.

But Ames and his reform party did not remain bitter for long. After the Council appointed a new Clerk of the Recorder's Court, he righteously noted:

"It will be noticed that a Liberal Mr. Lefebvre, an ex-president of the Laurier Club, was elected in a strongly Conservative Council on motion of a Conservative (Ames) seconded by a Conservative (Lavallee)." 67

The Reform Party was now to begin cleaning up the municipal government. At a caucus of some Reform aldermen at Ames' home it was decided that the Superintendent of the Water Department and the Superintendent of Mount Royal Park should be dismissed. 68 A month later the matter was brought before Council and both men were dismissed.

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66. Montreal Star, (March 23, 1900).

67. Diary, (March 26, 1900).

68. Ibid., (March 27, 1900).



"The longest session on record since I have been a member, but in spite of all that the Mayor and his party could do ... the reform element has triumphed. We know now who our friends and our enemies are and can henceforth rule without fear." 69

The votes were twenty-six to six and twenty-three to ten in favour of dismissal. In the flush of victory, Ames reported to the Health Committee that he would study the lavatories in Paris during his impending trip to Europe. 70

Very little but routine work was done at City Hall between this victory and Ames' voyage (June 22-September 10). Much of the time of the Police Committee was spent in filling vacancies on the force according to the religion and language of the applicant. One candidate was unacceptable to Ames: "Jean Brunet: Not a good shaped head. Not well educated." 71 One other problem attacked by the Committee was the continuing sale of alcohol in hotels on Sundays. The Chairman of the Committee, Alderman Le Boeuf, had given the Chief of Police orders to use extra men to

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69. Ibid., (April 23, 1900).

70. Ibid., (April 20, 1900).

71. Ibid., (April 24, 1900).

catch the offending proprietors. One alderman objected to such tactics but Le Boeuf stated that if it continued to happen, he would put on even more men. "This was heroic and McBride and I applauded it while Chevalier and Tansey agreed not to interfere."<sup>72</sup>

The Health Committee continued to operate in a routine way: a case of small pox at the Windsor Hotel was quickly isolated and the hotel fumigated. There were no complications.<sup>73</sup> "Instructions were given to the Milk Inspectors to collect samples of ice cream sold by Italians ..."<sup>74</sup> The Fire Committee's work was even more routine and need not be recounted here.

In May and June, 1900, the French-English split in Council once again came to the forefront. Ames' diary for these months makes it obvious that the split was real and deep. When a French Canadian was proposed to fill the post of Superintendent of the Water Department, Ames noted that "... the French members, as evidenced in the caucus held at Vallieres' home on the 18th inst., would not support

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72. Ibid., (June 18, 1900).

73. Ibid., (May 9, 1900).

74. Ibid., (May 23, 1900).

Lesage. I suppose because he is too much of an Englishman."<sup>75</sup>

In another caucus of aldermen, discussion took place on the appointment of a new Superintendent of Markets. "The French Canadian members had no intention of electing an Englishman to the position," noted Ames, and so he insisted that "... on other occasions a French Canadian be not put in the place of an English speaking employee."<sup>76</sup> A short time later Ames again protested:

"I complained that we of the English nationality saw that men of our nationality holding positions in the employment of the City Hall, were becoming less and we were determined to take steps not to permit a further diminution if possible."<sup>77</sup>

On this occasion, an English speaking candidate was chosen for the position in question.

Immediately upon his return from Europe, Ames as a member of the special Committee on Civic Employees<sup>78</sup> recommended that the Committee's report include:

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75. Ibid., (May 21, 1900).

76. Ibid., (June 18, 1900).

77. Ibid., (June 20, 1900).

78. See n. 64, above.

- "3. Draft of plan for the introduction into each dept. of a scale of minimum requirement for applicants and a system for the examination of candidates.
4. Draft of a plan for the introduction into each dept. of a system whereby promotions shall be based upon the results of competitive examination within the ranks of the staff.
5. Draft of a plan for the insurance, at the Civic expense, of all permanent civic employees in case of death, sickness and accident and for their retirement on a pension after having accomplished a certain term of service." <sup>79</sup>

The Committee promised to consider the proposals.

In December, consideration of a new contagious diseases hospital was begun at the request of Aldermen Ames. He proposed that the hospital be paid for by a special tax on real estate of not more than thirty-five cents additional for each one hundred dollars now paid. "It would certainly seem that to secure so great a boon for suffering humanity no taxpayer should hesitate at such a trifling contribution." <sup>80</sup> But it was soon made plain that the task ahead would be a difficult one. Arguments flared over the amount to be spent,

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79. Diary, (September 25, 1900).

80. Ibid., (December 5, 1900).

who was to control the finances, whether there should be one hospital or two (one English and one French), where the hospital should be located, and so on. "This divergence of opinion if irreconcilable will probably defeat the object<sup>81</sup> in view."

Almost from the first day that Ames had been an alderman one of his main targets had been George A. Hughes,<sup>82</sup> the Chief of Police. Finally Hughes bowed to the pressure:

"For personal reasons of health, and for the sake of my reputation, in face of unjust and unmerited attacks, I have the honor to offer to you my resignation as Supt. of the Police Force ..."<sup>83</sup>

Ames was more explicit: "This letter is the result of long<sup>84</sup> continued pressure." Later, when it appeared that Hughes' friends on the Council might fight against accepting the resignation, Ames

"... prepared with great care 7 charges against Chief Hughes. This had been committed to writing and typewritten copies made for the press. Had it been necessary I was prepared to demand his dismissal for cause. But his

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81. Ibid., (December 12, 1900).

82. See for example: Ibid., (April 17, 1900).

83. Ibid., (December 10, 1900).

84. Ibid., (December 10, 1900).

friends yielding to wise counsels, concluded it was better to let the resignation stand and accept it without contest." 85

Ames' diary for the year 1900 shows primarily that the Reform Party had succeeded in one year in stabilizing the municipal government of Montreal. Business was run smoothly and with very little fuss. What trouble arose was either blatant obstructionism by the remaining "enemy" or instigated by the Reform Party itself, as for example the firing of the superintendents of the Water Department and Mount Royal Park.

There were, however, no fundamental reforms undertaken by the Council in the running of the government and no effort to further democratize the Council itself. There still remained a property qualification which barred Montreal's working class from the Council and mayoralty. Ames' Health Committee did revamp the system of choosing sanitary inspectors. Candidates now had to possess certain qualifications and pass an examination. The old system of strict patronage was out. No other department, however, set up such a system, preferring the old. In fact in the eight

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85. Ibid., (January 7, 1901).

years Ames spent on the City Council only the Health and Police Committees eliminated the patronage system of appointments.

The "clique", Ames noted was still far from dead. "It will thus be seen that very little progress is being made ... and if this opposition be continued it may be a month yet before the Orders of the Day be completed."<sup>86</sup>

One alderman, who had been one of Ames' strongest supporters from the very beginning, suddenly switched allegiance.

"Ald. Martineau has taken his place as leader of the Opposition which will make it necessary for us to act accordingly."<sup>87</sup>

The Opposition made 1901 a rough year for Ames' Reform Party.

One problem Ames faced was not due solely to opposition on Council. Since taking the Chairmanship of the Health Committee, he had attempted to make vaccination compulsory for all school children. The City Council had never accepted a motion on the matter and there were other hurdles:

"The M.H.O. further stated the difficulties met

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86. Ibid., (March 12, 1901).

87. Ibid., (March 25, 1901).

in connection with vaccination, pointing out that the Catholic School Commissioners had not co-operated with the health authorities as the Protestant School Commissioners had done in the matter of requiring the vaccination of all pupils attending the public schools." 88

It was not until December 1901, in the midst of a small pox epidemic in the city that steps were finally taken.

"The Council then proceeded to pass a by-law for the adoption of preventive measures against smallpox and to establish a more effective system of vaccination in the city. No school teacher or employer of labour will hereafter be permitted to allow school children or working people to come to his school or factory unless they bring vaccination certificates. It is permitted, however, in exceptional cases in lieu of a vaccination certificate to bring a medical certificate proving that the person is immune or cannot be vaccinated without danger to his health." 89

But the by-law was only temporary, and in May 1902 a permanent  
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by-law making vaccination compulsory for all was defeated.

Ames' plan for a contagious diseases hospital received the support of his Health Committee but fared poorly in Council. From all the conflicting arguments Ames drew up what he considered to be the best plan for the hospital:

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88. Ibid., (March 15, 1901). M.H.O. is Medical Health Officer.

89. Ibid., (December 27, 1901).

90. See below.



"Whereas it is absolutely necessary that better hospital accommodation be provided, without delay for the reception and care of persons affected with contagious diseases; And Whereas, in order that an isolation hospital should effect the purpose for which it is established, it must possess the confidence of all classes of our population;  
 And Whereas a system permitting of the separate care and treatment of Roman Catholics by physicians and nurses of their own religion and providing for persons of other denominations to be treated and cared for by Protestant physicians and nurses, - is certain to secure the general confidence of the public; thus bringing about an isolation of infected persons that would reduce all danger of contagion to a minimum; Be it resolved that ... this Committee declare ... their approval of the principle of a double hospital ..." 91

Unfortunately, all of Ames' planning was to no avail. In April a by-law to enable the City to raise a loan of \$300,000 for paving and repairing streets, and for the construction of sidewalks, fire stations, police stations, and the hospital was defeated. "It was a meeting that will not soon be forgotten. The questions at issue will probably  
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 be fought out before the people." Although the proposal

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91. Diary, (March 15, 1901).

92. Ibid., (April 12, 1901). Other proposed loan by-laws for the individual plans included in Ames' omnibus bill were defeated earlier by slim margins. See: Ibid., (March 19, 25, April 1, 1901). See also: (April 11, 1901), for details of "omnibus caucus" held to discuss the issue.

received a majority vote, it was short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass a by-law. The hospital plan had to wait until after the 1902 municipal election.

The appointment of the new Chief of Police was not considered a success by Ames either.

"Ald. Roy was in favour of Chief Legault of the Provincial Police, but Ald. McBride and I felt that he would be an unfit man as at present he was restrained frequently from doing his duty by political interference and could not be expected to do otherwise if named Chief of Police." 93

Legault was appointed by the Council and Ames told him that "I would do the best I could to help him so long as I was satisfied that he was doing the right thing ... we parted  
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good friends."

During the year the question of salaries for civic employees and contractors' employees was dealt with. In June, Ames proposed that the Montreal Terminal Railway be obliged to pay its workers twelve and a half cents an hour. When this proposition was lost, he supported the motion that stipulated a wage of one dollar a day for day

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93. Ibid., (May 3, 1901).

94. Ibid., (June 17, 1901).

laborers and two dollars a day for mechanics.<sup>95</sup> In July, the contract with the Montreal Street Railway was discussed and a motion was passed giving day labourers one dollar and fifty cents a day and mechanics two dollars. Although he supported the motion, Ames called it "... pure election rot."<sup>96</sup> He was not above such tactics himself, however. A motion to raise the salaries of civic employees was brought before Council and

"I incurred the dislike of the labour leaders by insisting that the mention (sic) to pay \$1.50 to all corporation employees which was sprung upon the meeting without advice, should be left over until next meeting."<sup>97</sup>

During the intervening week, "... it was decided that it would be advisable by the administration party to accept the principle and get the credit of the move."<sup>98</sup> When the motion to pay the workers \$1.50 was read, one of the reform aldermen moved in amendment that the employees "... shall receive 15 cts. per hour, the working day to consist of 10 hours

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95. Ibid., (June 5, 1901).

96. Ibid., (July 15, 1901).

97. Ibid., (December 9, 1901).

98. Ibid., (December 16, 1901).

thus fixing the minimum salary of the workmen in the employ of the City at \$1.50 per day ...". The original mover understandably claimed that the amendment was in fact his motion. After "a great hub bub" it was agreed that the reform alderman would second the resolution. "The resolution carried unanimously,"<sup>99</sup> and Ames' party received at least partial credit.

During 1901 Ames was often concerned with dangers to the morals of the citizens of Montreal. When a police officer brought in a report on the infamous "cafe chantants", Ames guided through the Police Committee a resolution to shut down such establishments. "These places have been a curse to the community and a danger to public morals."<sup>100</sup>

Later in the same Committee, Ames brought forward another cause. "Towards the close of the meeting, at my request, the Committee gave instructions to Chief Carpenter to see that all obscene pictures in the saloons were suppressed ..."<sup>101</sup> Ames was not at all impressed with the

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99. Ibid.

100. Ibid., (May 15, 1901).

101. Ibid., (June 7, 1901).

theatres of his time, and wanted the city to pass a by-law forbidding children from attending them. When it was pointed out that the city did not have the power to pass such a law, "At my suggestion it was determined to ask the Council to petition the Premier of the Province of Quebec praying him to introduce a general bill of this character."<sup>102</sup>

Council never received such a request.

The most important decision taken in 1901, was the awarding of the electric light contract by the Council on September 3, 1901. Earlier in the year tenders had been called, received and opened. The lowest tenderer was the St. Lawrence Power Co., a new company formed expressly to bid for this contract. Sir W.C. Van Horne was president and support was given to their bid by Ames and other reform aldermen. Their bid was \$54.75 per arc lamp per year. The other bids were much higher. The Royal Electric Co. had bid \$95 per arc lamp, which was in fact a reduction of \$35 per lamp from what they had been receiving from the city under the previous contract. The difference was so extreme that the Council decided to call for new tenders. The stage was

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102. Ibid., (November 13, 1901).

set for a coup.

On August 31, six aldermen who had long opposed the reform party, presented the mayor with a petition calling for a meeting on September 3 to deal with the electric light question. The mayor accepted the petition and notices were sent out forty-eight hours in advance as prescribed. There was, however, one problem. September 1 was a Sunday and September 2 was Labour Day, both holidays. Ames and some other reform aldermen were away. Laporte discovered the trick and attempted to telegraph the aldermen who were absent. Most made it back in time, but Ames could not be contacted. The meeting began amid fierce fighting among the aldermen. A motion to adjourn was defeated almost immediately by one vote. The previous motion calling for new tenders was rescinded and a motion offering the contract to the Royal Electric Co. at \$60. per arc lamp for five years was passed. The vote was eighteen for and fifteen against. The meeting adjourned.

A week later, Ald. Clearihue, long a reform alderman, revealed that he had been offered \$3,000 to vote  
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for "A certain company", and called for an investigation

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103. Montreal Star, (September 10, 1901).

into "alleged corrupt practices". A Committee of the Chairmen of all the Committees was set up to investigate. On October 2, the contract was formally ratified by the Council. Ames voted for ratification, although he made it plain that he was, "... in principle opposed to the contract and the manner in which it was obtained."<sup>104</sup> He felt that "... the contract was closed and this was only the ratification of it by a written agreement."<sup>105</sup>

The whole affair came to an end three weeks later when Mayor Prefontaine ruled that Clearihue's investigation into the whole affair was illegal because he had made no formal or specific charges.

"Now if any alderman loves an investigation Ald. Ames does ... In a moment Ald. Ames, with the daring of a knight of old, was in the arena and offering battle to the old and wily knight who presided over the assembly, and who had been through innumerable tournaments." 106

The "old and wily knight's" decision stood the joust, and the investigating committee was disbanded.

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104. Diary, (October 2, 1901).

105. Montreal Star, (October 2, 1901).

106. Ibid., (October 22, 1901).

The battle over the electric contract points out that Laporte, Ames and the Reform Party were not as unified as believed. At the beginning of these two years (1900-1901) the Party held control but by the end of the period they did not chance bringing up for vote any important measure. The Star felt that the problem arose from the rather haughty attitude of some Reform aldermen.<sup>107</sup> One alderman in particular drew the paper's attention:

"Ald. Ames is a man with decided opinions, so decided in fact that he can hardly conceive of any man differing in opinion with Ald. Ames without being positively wicked. To him the platform of the Reform Party is a religious creed which, unless a man believe faithfully, without doubt, he shall perish everlastingly ... He takes everything including himself, very seriously, and is a trifle apt to arouse hostility by an assumption of superior virtue."<sup>108</sup>

But the Star concluded that despite his faults, the City Council needed more men of Ames' ability and stature.

The election of 1902 was a strange affair. Ames was again acclaimed to his seat in St. Antoine. The mayoralty contest provided most of the thrills. Ames had

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107. Ibid., (January 16, 1902).

108. Ibid., (January 9, 1902).



along with the Reform Party come out early in support of  
 Dr. E.P. Lachapelle.<sup>109</sup> Mayor Prefontaine decided to stay  
 in the running although he was in Europe.<sup>110</sup> A great  
 campaign was begun in the city and supported by the Star  
 for an English speaking mayor. And so R. Wilson-Smith,  
 who had been mayor from 1896 to 1898 declared his candidacy  
 amid much applause.<sup>111</sup> James Cochrane, whom nobody knew,  
 also declared his candidacy. All this prompted Dr. Lachapelle  
 to state that he would withdraw if Wilson-Smith promised to  
 stay in the fight. Two days later, Ames declared that  
 Lachapelle would not pull out. The next day, both Lachapelle  
 and Prefontaine retired from the race in favour of  
 Wilson-Smith. It was the time for an English mayor they  
 stated. And so it was Wilson-Smith, seemingly everyone's  
 hero, against the candidate of the Sicily Asphalt Co.<sup>112</sup>  
 It was supposed to be no contest, but Cochrane won. Ames,

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109. Ibid., (January 15, 1902). See also Diary, (January 11, 1902).

110. Montreal Star, (January 20, 1902).

111. Ibid., (January 18, 1902). A whole page is given to the event and headlined, "English Citizens Aroused to Their Duty".

112. Ibid., (January 31, 1902). Prefontaine made an attempt to re-enter the race, but a judge ruled his candidacy illegal.

however, was happy. "The new election has placed Alderman Laporte and his friends in power again."<sup>113</sup> The Reform Party had a majority, the Star calculated, of about five members.<sup>114</sup> But the majority was soon proven to be very unstable, and once again the Reform Party spent most of its term trying to quietly administer rather than reform.

The fight for a contagious diseases hospital came to an unhappy end for Ames. At first it seemed victory was going to be easily achieved. The Council passed resolutions to build a hospital and that only one be built for both English and French. This was done despite "... a letter from Archbishop Bruchesi strongly protesting against what he called a neutral hospital. It was received in silence by the City Council."<sup>115</sup> The second part of Ames' plan, to build the hospital on the north-east end of Fletcher's Field was not popular, but the resolution passed at the same meeting. On March 18, the City Attorneys presented to the Council an opinion that the site chosen for the hospital

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113. Diary, (February 7, 1902).

114. Montreal Star, (February 3, 1902).

115. Diary, (March 10, 1902).

was not legal. Ames was able to override this decision by bringing the question of a site once more before the Council. He won the point on the Mayor's deciding vote.

"After three months of hard fighting we have decided upon three principles:-

1. That the City Council should build and own the hospital;
2. That it should be built on the pavilion principle so arranged as to be divisible as regards nurses and patients into a Protestant and Catholic section;
3. That it should be located on Fletcher's Field ...

Certainly no question ever submitted has been more difficult of solution than this hospital question." 116

There was more truth in that statement than Ames would like to have believed.

On June 9, the decision to build the hospital on the park site was appealed to Council, but once again Ames won. The next battle, though, was the most important and Ames lost. The appropriation for the new hospital was again voted down by the Council.

"As far as I can find out the opposition falls under three heads,-

- 1st. There are those, Alds. Ekers, Clearihue, Ouimet and Hebert who really object to the site;

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116. Ibid., (May 26, 1902).

- 2nd. There are those like Alds. Martineau Robillard and Lesperance who are bitterly against me personally because I assisted in removing them from the Road Committee, and
- 3rd. There is the group composed of Alds. Chausse, Couture, Gallery, Lamarche, Ricard, Payette and Lemay who evidently were of the opinion that if the \$19,000 were withheld from the hospital it would be divided up and they would get their share. My mistake was in taking it for granted that there was any honor in these men ... I appealed to the members of the Council showing them the great danger which the city was in from epidemic. I also intimated that it might become my duty to retire from the position, if I felt that I no longer held the confidence of the Council and could no longer protect the public health." 117

But Ames fell short of the two-thirds majority necessary to pass such a motion and the hospital idea died. It was not revived while Ames was on the Council.

In December, 1901, Andrew Carnegie offered to build a library for Montreal on condition that the City agree to spend one-tenth on the operating costs of the library on books each year, and supply the site. In

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117. Ibid., (July 7, 1902).

118. Ibid., (December 2, 1901).

May 1902, the Council voted to accept the offer. There were only three negative votes.<sup>119</sup> In September a hint of trouble arose. At a caucus of "the friends" at Ames' home, the library question was discussed and it was decided that the fifteen thousand dollars needed to comply with Carnegie's stipulations would be granted. The question of censorship also arose. At the caucus, "There seemed to be a general opinion that it was unwise to insist that no clergyman should act on the Board of Censure."<sup>120</sup> But when the by-law came before the Council, it became obvious that there would be a battle. "There had been a very energetic canvass made among the members of the Council by the French radical wing with a view of combatting the view of the Roman Catholic clergy in this matter ..."<sup>121</sup> Alderman Martineau, the leader of the opposition on the Council, opposed Church censorship, while Alderman Laporte, leader of the Reform Party, was in favour. Martineau won this battle. It was decided that there would be no outside censors, but rather a library committee for censorship.

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119. Ibid., (May 26, 1902).

120. Ibid., (September 24, 1902).

121. Ibid., (October 6, 1902).

"Senator Dandurand had called on me and tried hard to persuade me to support Ald. Martineau in this matter. While sympathizing to some extent with the French wing, desirous of emancipation, I must say that I would rather be included with Laporte's party than with Martineau's." 122

But the battle went on and Ames was moved to remark, "It almost seems as though the gift of Mr. Carnegie might in the end be refused." 123 In the end Martineau lost his battle and the Council voted for censorship. 124 The next question to be settled was the site. Another battle arose, and this time Ames was in the middle. One group of aldermen favored Viger Square as the site, while Ames explained that the St. Lawrence Market would be the best site. This location was in the center of the city and would thus "... be the greatest good to the greatest number". Courses were given to the public at the Monument National and so there would be a clientele near by, and they were the people for whom the library was to be built. "... the industrial classes were exactly the persons intended by Mr. Carnegie in his gift."

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122. Ibid.

123. Ibid., (October 24, 1902).

124. Ibid., (November 3, 1902).

And since "... St. Lawrence Main Street had always been the point where the two races met ..." the site would be "... of equal value to both nationalities ... and cement the bonds of union."<sup>125</sup> Despite such eloquent logic, Viger Square was chosen as the site for the library. It seemed that the matter was settled.

But opposition to the library grew and so did the problems. The French Catholics continued to argue over the censorship question. The unions of the city protested vigorously against accepting anything from Carnegie. And finally the Provincial Legislature ruled that libraries could not be built on public squares. The Viger Square site was thus not acceptable. Despite the Montreal Star's declaration that "the objections to the establishment of a Carnegie library cannot be taken with a pernicious view of modern conditions ..." <sup>126</sup> the City Council finally voted to reject Carnegie's offer.<sup>127</sup> It was just three weeks short of a year since the Council had originally accepted what seemed then to be a perfectly acceptable proposition.

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125. Ibid., (January 29, 1903).

126. Montreal Star, (February 9, 1903).

127. Ibid., (May 5, 1903).

In February, 1902, Ames gave notice that he would  
 move a by-law making vaccination compulsory in Montreal.<sup>128</sup>  
 From the beginning, he was faced with stiff opposition. When  
 the motion finally came before the Council, it was first  
 passed over in favour of other business, "... although I was  
 not very well pleased with this."<sup>129</sup> The same week, the  
 Council rejected a motion to give the by-law second reading  
 immediately after first reading, although this was common  
 practice on the Council.<sup>130</sup> When the by-law did come up  
 for consideration, it was defeated.

"Several speeches were made by members, notably  
 Alds. Lavalee, Couture, and Ricard against  
 interference with the individual by compulsory  
 vaccination ... it was evident that all the  
 French-Canadian members of Council were opposed  
 to compulsory vaccination."<sup>131</sup>

The vote of the by-law divided the Council exactly on French,  
 English lines. Every French speaking alderman voted against  
 the motion and every English alderman for it. This was done

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128. Diary, (February 7, 1902).

129. Ibid., (April 14, 1902).

130. Ibid., (April 17, 1902).

131. Ibid., (May 5, 1902).



in spite of the fact that the Provincial Board of Health had enjoined the city to pass such a law as soon as possible. However, no steps were taken by the Board after the debate.

The rest of 1902 was spent in dealing with other less important items. Ames and many of his Reform Party allies again showed that economics limited the scope of their "progressive" ideals in the awarding of a contract for stone. He and many of his friends voted against giving a contract to unionized workers because they received more money than non-unionized workers would get under the city's minimum wage law. The vote was taken precisely on this point, and unionized labor lost even though it meant giving the contract to an outside contractor since all stonecutters within Montreal belonged to the union. The city's minimum wage at the time was fifteen cents an hour, the union's, twenty cents an hour.<sup>132</sup>

A by-law to allow some small shops to be open on Sundays caused Ames and others some consternation in deciding how to handle the question. The solution was typically

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132. Ibid., (April 30, 1902).

rational and practical:

"... on third reading I asked that my dissent be recorded as did also Aids. Robertson and Turner. When speaking to the by-law I stated that for conscience sake I nevertheless realizing that this by-law would reduce the existing number of shops considerably and was a restriction on Sunday selling, I could see that much might be said in its favor by those admitting the principle. I therefore helped my colleagues in drafting of amendments and voted for those which seemed beneficial although I voted against the principle of the By-Law on the third reading." 133

Continuing in his efforts to protect the health of Montreal's citizens, Ames proposed a by-law "to provide for<sup>134</sup> the inspection of bread and bakeries". The by-law was accepted but another to regulate the size of bread loaves was defeated. Even a loaf of bread could cause racial discord.

"The English bakers led by Messrs. Aird, McKeown, Strachan, were greatly disappointed but as I explained we did our best for them only they were deserted by those who had promised aid. Unfortunately, the question was made a national one and the French members of the Council were told that the French bakers wanted a change and the English bakers did not want it. This caused the last division to be a national one with the usual disastrous result." 135

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133. Ibid., (June 2, 1902).

134. Ibid., (June 16, 1902).

135. Ibid., (June 18, 1902).

In September, a decision to award the contract for power for the reservoir to the Lachine Rapids Hydraulics and Land Co., seemed to Ames a real triumph. "This is a decided defeat of the Forget interests."<sup>136</sup> It was a shortlived victory. In March, 1903, Montreal Light, Heat and Power Co. bought out Standard Light and Power Co., and a number of other smaller companies were also brought under its control,<sup>137</sup> including the Lachine Rapids Hydraulics and Land Co. The merger resulted in a virtual monopoly of power sources by Montreal Light, Heat and Power.<sup>138</sup> The results were later very expensive for Montreal.

1903 was for Montreal a year of labour strife, and Ames was often deeply involved. In February the conductors and motormen of the city's streetcars went on strike demanding a raise in salary and recognition of their union. A "civic deputation" was appointed by the Council to mediate the dispute. Mayor Cochrane and Aldermen Ames, Laporte and Vallieres set quickly to work and three days after the strike

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136. Ibid., (September 22, 1903).

137. Montreal Star, (March 18, 1903).

138. Montreal Daily Witness, (March 18, 1903).

began, the mediators had worked out a solution satisfactory to both sides. The Street Railway Co. agreed to give the men a ten percent raise in salary and to accept their union but they would negotiate only with employees and not any outside executive of the union. "The Company recognizes the right of their men to belong to any union or benefit association of their own that they may see fit." It was also agreed that men acting as negotiators for the union would not later be "badly treated" by the company. In order to completely assure the men, Ames promised that if any were fired for union activities, the city would give them jobs at the same rate of pay as they were making with the Street Railway Co.

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In May, the men again went on strike to back demands that the company agree to negotiate with union executives even if they were not employees. Workers of the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Co. also went out on strike with similar demands. The strike lasted five days with no agreement reached. Also in May, Montreal dock workers

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139. Ibid., (February 6,7,8,9, 1903).

140. Ibid., (May 23, 1903).

went out on strike for two and a half weeks. Scab labour<sup>141</sup> backed by militia and police broke that strike. There were also numerous strikes against private industries in the city, most demanding wage increases and union recognition.

In November, the Montreal Trades and Labour Congress announced plans to run candidates in the municipal election scheduled for February 1904. Their platform called for a reduction in the water tax of forty percent and a general tax reform that would reduce taxation on industry and increase it on land values. The T.L.C. favored municipal ownership of all franchises, a city wide referendum to decide all important matters, and promised to use the union label<sup>142</sup> on all municipal printing. However, the labor group failed to run any candidates, probably because the property qualification made it very difficult to find a worker who was eligible to run.

Ames, however, began to show a much greater interest in labour problems. When it was suggested that a

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141. The strike began April 28 and ended May 11, 1903. The Montreal Star and Montreal Daily Witness carry the story.

142. Montreal Star, (November 10, 1903).

Civic Federation be set up in Montreal to arbitrate labour problems, Ames was fully in support:

"I highly approve of having an organization of that nature for a large industrial city like Montreal. I have on all occasions expressed my sincere approval of conference and arbitration to settle trade disputes. Strikes should be guarded against by all possible means." 143

When he accepted nomination for Parliament, Ames outlined in his platform one plank which read:

"Reasonable legislation, which may have for its object, the establishment of industrial harmony for the betterment of the conditions under which the inhabitants of our cities live and labor shall, at all times, receive my support." 144

Shortly before the municipal election, Ames sent a letter to a Clothing Workers' Union meeting in which he outlined his stand on labour relations:

"He stated in his letter that ... their factory was union from top to bottom. He was a strong believer in contracts being made between employees and employers. He recognized the right of capital to combine and of labour to unite, for mutual advantage and protection. He was strongly in favour of free schools and free text books and was an opponent of Sunday labour." 145

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143. Ibid., (December 21, 1903).

144. Ibid., (December 30, 1903).

145. Ibid., (January 18, 1904).

The Star reports that the letter was received with wild enthusiasm.

Ames' one great battle in 1903 was against the lack of control the city had over the street railway franchises. In June, the Council unanimously passed a motion protesting Dominion control over the franchises and demanding municipal control.<sup>146</sup> He and Martineau were sent to Ottawa to plead Montreal's case before the Railway Committee. Ames pointed out the sections of the Railway Bill which particularly affected municipalities: any street railway whose tracks crossed a federal railway line was under federal control; if a company did not like the terms of a contract offered by a city, it could appeal to the federal government to intervene and dictate terms.<sup>147</sup> With the help of a delegation from the Union of Canadian Municipalities, Ames and Martineau were able to convince the government to put the franchises under municipal control.<sup>148</sup> It was not long before the power was used.

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146. Ibid., (June 20, 1903).

147. Ibid., (October 20, 1903).

148. Ibid., (October 27, 1903).

On November 3, the Montreal Street Railway Co. asked for an extension of thirty years for their franchise which still had nineteen years left to run.<sup>149</sup> Ames opposed such a move because he felt the company's offer was not economically a good one for the city and would result in a monopoly of the streets. The offer was easily voted down<sup>150</sup> as was a second attempt.<sup>151</sup>

Although Ames again stood for office in 1904 and was again acclaimed, he took very little part in civic affairs during his two year term of office. H. Laporte, the leader of the Reform Party, was elected Mayor of Montreal, easily defeating Cochrane, the incumbent, and U.H. Dandurand. Ames spent much of 1904 on a trip across Canada campaigning for the Conservative Party, and in Montreal campaigning for himself.

The only move of any significance that Ames made in civic matters was guiding through the Council a motion

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149. Ibid., (November 3, 1903).

150. Ibid., (November 17, 1903).

151. Ibid., (December 5, 1903). Both votes were six for, twenty-six against the offer.



stating that, "when civic positions were vacant, they should be published in the Municipal Gazette. The advertisement should show salary, qualifications, and duties."<sup>152</sup>

In November, 1904, Ames was elected to the House of Commons as the Conservative member for St. Antoine. His municipal career was over.

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152. Ibid., (June 15, 1904).

## CONCLUSION

"With a little help from my friends"

Ames' career as a municipal reformer ended with very little accomplished. In January 1904, the Montreal Star in an article on Ames' six years as an alderman listed what it considered to be the successes wrought by Ames and his reform party. In 1898 there had been no money available for work on the city's roads, but by 1903 one million dollars were available for their improvement. The watering and scavenging, claimed the Star, was much improved. By 1903 the police had uniforms, while in 1898 there were none. To accompany the new sartorial splendor of the force, positions were now given for merit instead of money. The Star also claimed that the reform administration had paid off all the debts of the old administration without a raise in taxation, but failed to mention that Ames had attempted to convince the City Council that a tax increase was necessary. The city's debt had "... not been allowed to exceed by one dollar the limit set in the new charter". To complete the eulogy, the daily proclaimed that "he is a declared sympathizer with the movement for freer schools, free books, and greater school accommodation."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Montreal Star, (January 2, 1904).

The Star's article was a fairly accurate accounting of Ames' accomplishments as an alderman and Reform Party leader. Once he and "The friends" were in power, they demonstrated that reform to them meant instituting good business practices in running the city's affairs. Within this limited range, Ames was successful.

As chairman of the Hygiene and Statistics Committee and a member of the Police and Fire Committee, Ames was instrumental in eliminating the graft and patronage that had long been associated with all municipal committees. Positions were obtained through competitive examinations and interviews, and contracts awarded on the basis of bids usually accompanied by samples of the work to be done. Much of the time in Council meetings was spent in attempts to ensure that other committees were within reasonable limits while spending the city's money.

Such a limited view of reform can be seen from the very beginning of Ames' interest in municipal politics. In founding the Volunteer Electoral League, Ames began his attack on corrupt municipal government by dealing with the most basic evil the reformers faced: dishonest election practices. In "The Machine in Honest Hands", Ames pointed out that men

elected by corrupt methods were invariably responsible for the sorry plight of Montreal's financial and governmental situation. The solution was to find "... suitable candidates to accept nomination as aldermen ... to elect honest men by honest means." These "honest men" once in power would guarantee honest, economical, efficient municipal government.

Ames was not issuing a call for mass participation in politics in an attempt to make government more responsive to the needs of the people of Montreal. Both the methods he proposed and his choice of "suitable candidates" clearly demonstrate that his philosophy of reform was limited to bourgeoisie paternalism. "The Machine in Honest Hands" was to be used to persuade the people to vote for "honest men" and to insure that they turned out on election day. Ames did not want to organize the working class into a politically viable force that would bring forward its own candidates and policies. He favored and voted for the property qualifications which effectively prohibited any of Montreal's working class from running for alderman or mayor.

The men Ames favored were "the friends", men who had demonstrated clearly that they were practical, successful businessmen. Ames had made a special arrangement with

C.F. Smith and Frank J. Hart that would guarantee that if one of the group ran for alderman all three would.<sup>2</sup> They all became staunch members of the Reform Party on the City Council. Smith was born and educated in England and came to Montreal in 1866 where he became owner of the Jas. McCready Co., which later merged with Ames' boot company. He was a director of a number of large businesses, including the Merchants Bank, Dominion Textile Co. and the Royal Victoria Life Insurance Company. In 1899, he was made president of the Board of Trade.<sup>3</sup> Frank Hart expanded his father's business into what was one of the most extensive wholesale fruit companies in Canada and acquired interests in other businesses.<sup>4</sup>

Other aldermen who were members of the Reform Party displayed credentials at least on a par with Smith, Hart and Ames. Henry A. Ekers, a fellow conservative, was president of Canadian Breweries Co. George W. Sadler was head of the firm of Sadler and Haworth, manufacturers of leather belting

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2. LaMothe, J.C.: Histoire de la Corporation de la Cité de Montréal, (Montreal: 1903).
  3. Morgan, Henry J.: The Canadian Men and Women of the Time, (Toronto: 1912).
  4. Montreal Star, (March 27, 1902). The firm's name was Hart and Tuckwell.

and tanners in Montreal and Toronto. Hormidas Laporte, who took over leadership of the Party from Ames was head of L. Martin et Cie. Ltee. and a founder of the Chambre de Commerce.

Ames further demonstrated his affinity with the upper classes by becoming at least nominally involved with a great number of the multitude of organized charities in Montreal. All of them failed to come to grips with the root causes of poverty and offered no solution to the problems of industrial Montreal except philanthropy. Ames and his fellow citizens of the "city above the hill" were content with alleviating through charity some of the more blatantly inhuman aspects of living conditions in Montreal.

The ideals of the Social Gospel had been translated by Montreal's upper classes to mean that they had a duty to protect the "weaker elements in society" from themselves and other less scrupulous elements, and to try to elevate them from their state of moral degeneracy. The yearly reports of almost any organized charity in Montreal during the period abound in paens to this ideal. The constitution of Iverley Settlement, with which Ames was associated, states as the group's object:

"To help people to help themselves thereby to

try to elevate those we come in contact with by passing on to those who need it our knowledge of better things and hoping to teach them to act in the highest and most Christian manner at all times." <sup>5</sup>

At times the alliance between Social Gospel and capitalism becomes almost a parody of itself. When presenting prizes to some boys cared for by the Montreal Boys' Home, George Hague, Manager of the Merchants Bank sermonized:

"I present the boys with these sums of money, not that they may learn to love money for its own sake; which would be a great evil, but for the purpose of developing in the first place a constant habit of self-denial which is a fundamental Christian virtue, and also habits of economy, forethought, and prudence, which are Christian virtues also." <sup>6</sup>

In Montreal, such philanthropic organizations were taken very seriously indeed by the wealthy segment of the population. Ames was associated with a great number of Montreal charities, and almost every one boasted of having at least some of the English aristocracy on its board. The Gaults, Ogilvys, McLennans, Redpaths, Dougalls, Holts, and Molsons were at least nominally associated with a great number of these charities. Montreal's English elite had

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5. Iverley Settlement, Annual Report, 1913, (Southam Press: Montreal).
  6. Montreal Boys' Home, Annual Report 1894-1895, (Montreal: 1895). It should be noted that Ames and his father were both ardent supporters of the organization.



become at least vicariously involved in the plight of their less fortunate fellow man. For the rest, Ames proposed to ensconce in power members of his own class who would through "businesslike management" put an end to the corruption and unbridled spending that threatened to put taxes far above a reasonable limit.

Ames was similar to a number of American progressives in this respect. Frederic C. Howe, who was educated at John Hopkins University under such men as Richard T. Ely and Woodrow Wilson, and who later became a leading reformer in Cleveland, outlined in his autobiography the philosophy by which he was at first guided:

"I urged the necessity of cleaning up the council, of electing a new sort of men to public office, of getting rid of the spoilsman ... The city was merely housekeeping, and housekeeping should be done on a business basis ... The principal issue in my mind, too was corruption. The old gang should be cleaned out, a new kind of men put in. The kind of men I had in mind were business men, trained, university men. They were my friends. The others, the bad ones, lived principally down under the hill."<sup>7</sup>

The same sentiments with hardly a change in wording can

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7. Howe, Frederick C.: The Confessions of a Reformer, (Quadrangle Books, Chicago: 1967), p. 92.

clearly be seen in Ames' writings. Unlike Ames, however, Howe later changed his tune, and with Mayor Tom Johnson attempted to bring about substantial reforms in Cleveland. He found that his "friends" soon deserted him. No doubt a similar fate would have awaited Ames had he attempted reforms along the line of Howe's and Johnson's.

Howe's estrangement began when he and Johnson attempted to bring about municipal ownership of the street railways. Although Ames had argued that "the trend of the age is toward municipal socialism" he never attempted to bring about municipal ownership of Montreal's utilities. And there are indications that he thought better of the idea later on. When in 1901 the electric lighting contract came before Council, Ames did not attempt to have nor even mention the possibility of the city taking over the utility. Instead Ames backed Sir William Van Horn's company which, although it did offer the city the best price by far, was still a privately owned operation.

Ames had qualified his endorsement of municipal socialism: "In hands that can be trusted", he noted, "this need not present an unwelcome outlook." It could be argued that Ames felt that the City Council still did not contain

enough men of stature to handle such an operation and so he turned instead to a private company which would operate with the city's best interests at heart. In either case it still seems clear that Ames believed that men of his class were the hope of the city.

There are, however, some other indications that Ames' arguments for municipal control of utilities and other services were not held for long. When Andrew Carnegie offered to build a library for Montreal, Ames was in the forefront of the plan's backers. But when it became obvious that the project was doomed, Ames gave up the whole idea rather than suggest the city build such an obviously beneficial institution. In November, 1903, the Montreal Street Railway Co. attempted to have their franchise extended thirty years, although their contract still had nineteen years to run. Ames opposed the attempt, not because he felt that the result would prohibit Montreal from later taking control, but because the company's offer was not economically a good one.

It is clear that Ames' true allegiance was to his own class. Certainly he was extremely concerned with the plight of the citizens in the "city below the hill" but he advocated only reform measures that would at best alleviate

some of the worst abuses of industrial Montreal. The rest of his program consisted of measures that would place men such as himself, "business men, trained, university men, 'the friends'" securely in power.

Perhaps the most tragic example of the limitations of Ames' progressivism is to be found in The City Below the Hill. Ames undertook, at his own expense, a detailed study of a portion of Montreal and wrote a fairly sophisticated sociological study based on the results of his "census". In his discussion of poverty, particularly, Ames demonstrated an ability to understand the workings and weaknesses of Montreal's economic system, and concluded that lack of employment was the major cause of poverty in Montreal. He also recognized the precarious position of a large number of the city's working class who, because of irregular employment, remained on the verge of economic oblivion. But Ames was unable, or unwilling, to conclude that basic social and economic reform was necessary to substantially improve the conditions he so roundly condemned.

Instead Ames concluded that "... the public health can be conserved, morals improved and lives saved by a right knowledge of local conditions and the proper use of measures

for their amelioration ..."<sup>8</sup> He penned the study to demonstrate to the citizens of the "city above the hill" that Montreal was in dire need of their help, to urge them to take up the "gentleman's burden". He was following in the tradition of American muckrakers. Benjamin Orange Flower, the dean of American muckrakers had arrived at the same conclusion in his study of some portions of Boston. "Appreciation of the magnitude of the peril, and concerted action", he wrote, "these are the supreme needs of the hour."<sup>9</sup>

Ames believed that once he had demonstrated the need for "concerted action", Montrealers

"who have the welfare of their fellow-men at heart ... would be willing to assist any movement of a semi-philanthropic character ... These men are business men."<sup>10</sup>

The City Below the Hill amply demonstrated that such a need existed in Montreal, but the study did nothing to spur the city's business men to action.

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8. The City Below the Hill, p. 4. Emphasis mine.

9. Cited in Mann, Arthur: Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age, Social Reform in Boston, 1880-1900, (Harper and Rowe, New York: 1966), p. 6. Emphasis in original.

10. The City Below the Hill, p. 7.

Ames' model tenement was conceived in the same philosophy. He believed that proving "philanthropy and 5 per cent ... can be combined" would lead others to build similar dwellings. As Veiller pointed out, however, unless adequate housing legislation existed, the erection of model tenements would do nothing for the vast majority of those in need of better housing. Ames did, on a few occasions, attempt to put before the City Council some by-laws prohibiting the worst abuses of the slums, but for the most part relied on the "friends" to alleviate the situation. No one followed his lead.

It is his belief, that "right action" would follow "right knowledge" and his insistence that reform could best be achieved through the benevolence of men of his class that best explains Ames' failure as a reformer. The philosophy followed him into municipal politics and dictated that he and his Reform Party would become essentially "conservative reformers", content with assailing the most flagrant abuses of "the clique" while out of power and instituting "sound business practices" when finally control of the Council was theirs.

The Reform Party clearly spelled out this philosophy

of "reform" in their platform for the election of 1900:

- "1. Que les emprunts de la ville soient offerts publiquement et accordés au plus offrant.
- "2. Que la limite d'emprunt, fixée par la chartre actuelle, soit strictement maintenue, au moins quelques années de plus.
- "3. Que les contrats civiques soient soumis à la concurrence de tous les citoyens qui parent les taxes, et soient accordés au plus bas soumissionnaire reponsable et digne de confiance.
- "4. Que des methodes economiques soient adoptés dans tous les departements, dans le but d'empecher un surcroit de taxes.
- "5. Que, dans le service municipal, on favorise ceux qui sont capables, et que c'on remercie ceux qui sont inutiles.
- "6. Que, ce que les journeaux appellent "la barriere municipale" soit aboli le plus tot possible. Et que les parasites qui exploitent les honnetes gens sans travail soient puni sans merci."

It seems ludicrous to expect any type of radical reform from a group of men who subscribed to such a program. Montreal, and especially the city's working class, got none from Ames and "the friends".

Ames was in fact, then, a conservative. Like many of his American counterparts he believed that capitalism was not organically evil or unworkable. He recognized that problems existed and appealed to the business community

through writing and direct action to take steps to remedy the evil aspects of industrialized Montreal. It was clear to Ames that philanthropy could alleviate most of the problems in the "city below the hill". What remained to be done he left to the ministrations of a Council dominated by men of his class.

It is interesting to compare Ames' career with that of Robert A. Woods, a Boston progressive who graduated from Amherst one year after Ames, in 1866. Woods continued his education at Andover under Professor William J. Tucker, a leading exponent of the Social Gospel. In 1891, Woods went to England to study Toynbee Hall and other English charity organizations. On his return he published a study of what he had seen, English Social Movements,<sup>11</sup> and set up Andover House, a settlement patterned on what he had learned in England.

In his book, Woods, like Ames, points out that problems at home were now of extreme importance.

"And it can no longer be taken for granted that

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11. Woods, Robert Archie: English Social Movements, (Charles Scribner and Sons, New York: 1891).



working men are better off in the United States than in England ... We do not, therefore, any longer need to go over the sea to learn about evil social conditions."

But unlike Ames, Woods recognized that the social order was at least partially to blame for the "evil social conditions":

"The American aristocracy is more powerful and more dangerous than the English. Our class system is not less cruel for having its boundaries less clearly marked." <sup>12</sup>

Arthur Mann notes that Woods scorned reformers of respectable birth who thought that the millennium would come by throwing out the "bosses" and getting honest businessmen to run the city. The question was not who ran the government but how it was run. Woods felt that the ward leaders, because they aimed to please, would be more responsive to public pressure and so cooperated with some of Boston's more infamous politicians. Both Ames and Woods had been moved to action by their college experiences and both decided that the social issues of their cities were most in need of remedy. But on the question of method the men parted ways, at least for a while. Unfortunately by 1902, Woods had come to believe in piecemeal reform, in patching the existing social order and

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12. Ibid., p. VI.

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not in changing it drastically.

American historians have recently argued that progressive urban reformers in the United States were to a large extent men such as Ames, businessmen with very definite ideas of what "reform" meant to them. Samuel P. Hays<sup>14</sup> has shown quite conclusively that the source of support for reform in municipal government in the United States came from the upper class. The leading business groups in each city and professional men closely allied with them initiated and dominated urban movements. These businessmen and professionals attempted to gain control of municipal government in their own interests and at the expense of the lower classes. Previous to the rise of the progressives, municipalities had been dominated by ward politics under the control of men who, while often corrupt, still owed their positions to the support of their constituents. They spoke for their local areas, for those aspects of community life which mattered most to those

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13. Mann, op. cit., n. 9, p. 121.

14. Hays, Samuel P.: The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era; New Perspectives on the American Past, Vol. II, (Little, Brown and Company, Boston: 1969). Originally published in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, (October 1964).

they represented.

In his Diary, Ames seemed most chagrined with aldermen who, it appears, were more loyal to their wards than to what Ames would define as the "common good". He often castigated aldermen who "held out" for a larger share of the city's bounty for their constituents.

In place of the decentralized system of government, American progressives attempted to centralize urban government most notably with commission and city-manager movements. James Weinstein has argued conclusively that these movements too were dominated by the business class most often through the various Chambers of Commerce.<sup>15</sup> The movements, Weinstein argued, fulfilled the requirements of progressivism by rationalizing city government and institutionalizing the methods and values of the corporations that had come to dominate American economic life. The end result of the movements was to place city government firmly in the hands of the business class.

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15. Weinstein, James: "The Small Businessman as Big Businessman: The City Commission and Manager Movements", The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, (Beacon Press, Boston: 1968).

Ames seldom became actively involved in a campaign for a change in Montreal's system of government. There did exist some links between some of the leading groups campaigning for commission and city-manager governments in the United States and reform groups in Montreal and Canada. Montreal's City Improvement League, whose executive was dominated by members of Montreal's upper class,<sup>16</sup> and the Union of Canadian Municipalities were associated with the National Municipal League.<sup>17</sup> W.D. Lighthall, mayor of Westmount and the son of a leading businessman was a member of the Council of the League.<sup>18</sup> The movement had some success in Canada. Toronto established a commission government in 1897, shortly after Winnipeg had done the same.<sup>19</sup> Port Arthur, Ontario had "Commission-Manager" government in 1911, and by 1914 Maisonneuve, Quebec, had also set up a

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16. See, City Improvement League, Annual Reports. Officers included Farguhar Robertson, Dr. J.G. Adami, and Dr. W.H. Atherton.
  17. Handbook: National Municipal League, (Philadelphia: 1914).
  18. Ibid.
  19. Huston, C.D.: Municipal Government By Commission, from: The City Hall, (January 1909).

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similar government.

Like Ames, American progressives often spoke of the corruption in municipal politics and much of their effort was spent in attempting to oust the evil men from power and replace them with good men. But as Hays has pointed out, the problem of corruption was in fact political, not moral. The "machine" offered the immigrant and other lower class elements one of their few avenues to success. The rising business class, however, while taking advantage of the opportunities to influence government through bribery and other forms of graft, looked upon city government as being wasteful, inefficient and unresponsive to their ideas of what society should be. In answer to the problem, the progressives proposed to replace the old with men from their own class who would run the cities in accord with their conception of the ideal: "sound business practices".

The evidence presented in this thesis indicates that Herbert Ames and municipal reform movements in Montreal during the progressive era follow almost exactly the pattern

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20. Commission and Commission Manager Plan of Government, National Municipal League, (Philadelphia: c. 1914).

discussed by Hays and Weinstein. Canadian historians have virtually ignored urban history, particularly in this era, and so no comparison can be made between Ames and other similar Canadian reformers or movements. Richard Allen's study "The Social Gospel and Reform Tradition in Canada",<sup>21</sup> indicates that the rhetoric of the Church movements of the period and the programs they presented are almost identical with those in the United States. It would appear, admittedly from very little evidence, that the history of Canadian cities in the progressive era is also identical to the American experience.

Ames' conservative philosophies seem to have followed him into federal politics. When he accepted the Conservative Party's nomination for St. Antoine he outlined his platform in much the same terms he used in the Reform Party's platform of 1900:

"In my judgment one of the first duties of a Conservative Government when it shall have received the mandate of the electorate will be to enact practical legislation in the interests of clean politics and honest elections. Such legislation will receive my heartiest support.

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21. Allen, Richard: "The Social Gospel and Reform Tradition in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, (December 1968).

Reasonable legislation, which may have for its object, the establishment of industrial harmony for the betterment of conditions under which the inhabitants of our cities live, and labour shall, at all times, receive my support.

Above all I shall stand for the honest administration of the public funds ... I shall at all times consider it my duty to do my utmost to prevent waste, to check extravagance and to secure full return to the people of Canada for the moneys expended in their name." <sup>22</sup>

Ames was also concerned about the quality of the immigrants arriving in Canada. In his platform he called for legislation "to prevent the admission into Canada of undesirable immigration", and later expanded on the point to say that he wanted

"... not the bringing into this country of the undesirable and unassimilable immigration, but a broad effective policy for opening up the fertile territory which will become the granary of the Empire, and the planting upon this land of men who either are British subjects or capable of maintaining the standards set by the two great races already established in Canada." <sup>23</sup>

Ames, of course, was not alone in Canadian politics with such ideas.

Except for the reference to "industrial harmony" and

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22. Montreal Star, (December 30, 1903).

23. Montreal Star, (June 17, 1904).

a promise to work for the acceptance of the principle that Montreal was a national port, Ames never raised the spectre of urban politics in his speeches. Once he went to Ottawa, Ames never again became actively engaged in working on the solutions to the problems that had so dominated his life.<sup>24</sup> After his career in Parliament and with the League of Nations, Ames became immersed in working for world government.

Ames' sudden break from municipal affairs can probably best be explained by a decision to concentrate on his new career as a Member of Parliament. His progressivist rhetoric was soon gone, but his interest in philanthropic endeavors continued for a number of years. Ames was knighted in 1915 for his work as Chairman of the War Relief Fund. In turning in later years to the cause of world brotherhood, Ames was following the pattern of others who had held similar convictions in the simpler days before 1914.<sup>25</sup>

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24. The Debates of the Canadian House of Commons show that Ames never spoke on municipal problems in Parliament.

25. See Allen, op. cit., n. 21.



#### **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

H.B. Ames As Municipal Reformer concentrates on the career of one Montreal progressive reformer rather than attempting a general survey of Montreal reform movements of the period. For this reason the main source material for the thesis deals, as much as possible, directly with Ames. His published articles, book and the Ames' Papers constitute the largest source of information.

The Ames' Papers (held by the McLennan Library of McGill University) are made up primarily of Ames' City Council Diary covering February 1898 to January 1903. The Diary unfortunately is only a dry day to day accounting of events that took place during Council and Committee meetings. Also of some value in the Papers, is a Notebook of the Volunteer Electoral League which contains a list of the subscribers to the League. The rest of the Papers consist of scrapbooks dealing mainly with Ames' federal political interests, financial statements for the various civic committees on which Ames sat and municipal budgets, and a number of Cash Books which outline Ames' personal financial affairs.

Most of Ames' published material is dealt with at some length in the thesis itself. His articles, "The

Machine In Honest Hands" (Canadian Magazine, June 1894), "Electoral Management" (Canadian Magazine, May 1905), and his contributions to the Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal (Montreal: 1896), all provide information on Ames' reform philosophy and plans to effect change in political situations. Ames also contributed to the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. In Volume XXI (1903) Ames contributed two short notes, one (pp. 130-131) describing the franchise situation in Montreal, and the other (pp. 145-147) outlining Montreal's financial situation. Neither article provides any information not found in other sources nor insight into Ames' career. In 1918 (Volume 77) Ames contributed an article entitled "Canada's War Relief Work", which mainly deals with the work of the War Relief Fund of which Ames was Chairman.

The City Below the Hill (Montreal: 1897) remains as Ames' major accomplishment. It is an invaluable source for any study of Montreal during the progressive era. Ames later condensed his findings into an article, "Incomes, Wages and Rents in Montreal" (Bulletin of the Department of Labour, January 1898, Washington).

Besides Ames' Diary, other material was consulted

for information regarding his career as a civic reformer. The Montreal Star, Montreal Gazette and particularly the Montreal Daily Witness carried reports on municipal politics fairly often. All three were, on the whole, in complete sympathy with Ames and the Reform Party. The Minutes of the Montreal City Council and the Reports of the various committees also are valuable sources of information relating to Montreal's civic administration. The Archives of the City of Montreal hold a great deal of material useful to students of urban history.

A number of books written during or soon after the period under study yield information on the personalities involved in Montreal politics. Particularly useful is J.C. Lamothe's Histoire de la Corporation de la Cité de Montréal (Montreal: 1903) which contains a short history of the city, statistics on numerous aspects of civic affairs and biographies of the aldermen and civic officials. Other sources of similar biographical sketches and contemporary history are Henry J. Morgan's The Canadian Men and Women of the Time 1912 (Toronto: 1912); Rev. J. Douglas Borthwick's History of Montreal (Montreal: 1897); and History and Biographical Gazetteer of Montreal to the Year 1892 (Montreal: 1892);

and W.H. Atherton's Montreal: Biographical (Montreal: 1914).

Surprisingly, at least in light of the American experience, little was written in Montreal detailing living conditions or other social aspects of the city. One of the most vivid and condemning descriptions of housing conditions in the city was given by a visitor, Bernard J. Newman, the Secretary of the Philadelphia Housing Commission ("Housing Evils and their Causes", Addresses Delivered before the Canadian Club of Montreal, 1912-1913, pp. 155-159). Also of note is F.C. Harrison, et al., The Milk Supply of Montreal (Montreal: 1914) which describes the conditions under which milk was sold in the city and the inadequate laws regulating the sale of such perishable goods.

The yearly reports of Montreal's sundry philanthropic and charity organizations are valuable in two ways. Many of them detail the specific "evil" which the organization was attempting to alleviate and thus offer clues to the conditions under which much of Montreal's population was living. But perhaps more important, the rhetoric of the reports offers valuable insight into the philosophy behind the organizations and demonstrates the conservatism in the response of Montreal's upper classes to

the problems posed by industrialization and urbanization. The Annual Reports of Montreal's Charity Organization offer a clear picture of this phenomenon. A partial list of the reports available can be found in the Bibliography following this Note.

The political thought of Canadian and particularly Montreal progressives appears to follow the American example. Ames' writings are an ideal reference source for such a study. Another Montreal reformer, W.D. Lighthall, who served as Mayor of Westmount in the period, also wrote on municipal affairs. Most valuable are Westmount: A Municipal Illustration (Montreal: n.d.) and Valedictory of Mayor Lighthall on Leaving the Mayoralty Chair of Westmount: January 22, 1903 (Montreal: 1903) in which Lighthall discusses reform in much the same terms as Ames. Again, the annual reports of various groups are valuable sources for this aspect of progressive reform. The Annual Reports of The City Improvement League outline the League's plans and activities in attempting to plan Montreal's future. The Reports of the Annual Conventions of the Union of Canadian Municipalities provide evidence that urban reformers throughout Canada were very similar to Ames.

Of value to ideological historians is the plethora of independent weekly newspapers and magazines that were published during the period in Canada. Most had relatively short life spans, but while in existence they served as pulpits for a number of Canadians interested in communicating their ideas to their peers. Of particular interest in Montreal are The Pen (began publication December 1897), a literary and historical review magazine which contains some comments on the contemporary urban scene, and The Indicator (published in 1895), a real estate and monetary review which includes abundant examples of progressive rhetoric on the need for clean cities. Two more general magazines of equal value are Dominion Illustrated, published in Montreal from 1888 and The Week, a Toronto magazine, begun in September 1892. A more complete list can be found in the Bibliography.

Various collections of the writings of American progressives offered a framework with which Ames' writings and actions could be compared. The most valuable was Frederic C. Howe's The Confessions of a Reformer (Chicago: 1967) in which he describes the evolution of his philosophy and the conservatism of those around him. Also of value are

Jacob Riis' accounts of New York slum life (Jacob Riis Revisited, New York: 1968) and Jane Addams' history of her Chicago settlement (Twenty Years at Hull House, New York: 1961). Lawrence Veiller offered what was perhaps the most advanced contemporary attack on the housing problems and solutions of the progressive era (Housing Reform, New York: 1910). Robert A. Woods offered a chance to compare Ames with a fellow Amherst graduate. Woods' English Social Movements, (New York: 1891), and an article outlining his belief in the almost mystical power of democracy ("Democracy: A New Unfolding of Human Powers" in Studies in Philosophy and Psychology by Former Students of Charles Edward Garman, Boston: 1906) serve as the best examples of the similarities between the two men and of their debt to Amherst.

Secondary source material, because of the dearth of Canadian urban historiography, was almost totally American. The works of Samuel P. Hayes, particularly "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era", (Pacific Northwest Quarterly, October 1964) and James Weinstein's The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State: 1900-1918 (Boston: 1968, see especially Chapter IV of his book at pp. 92-116) present an extremely well argued thesis which



seems to apply to Ames as well as the American urban progressives with whom they deal. There are, of course, a whole host of others too numerous to mention here. One hopes that soon a similar number of works on Canadian urban and progressive history will be available.

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