

Report of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities

Held at Penticton, B.C., September 18, 19 and 20, 1918.

The Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities was held in Ping's Hall, Penticton, British Columbia, the 18th, 19th and 20th of September, 1918.

The President, Reeve Bridgman, of the District of North Vancouver, occupied the chair.

The President called the meeting to order and appointed a Credentials Committee as follows:—

Credentials Committee:—Alderman Lynch, Mayor Miller, Councillor Diggon.

Moved by Reeve Borden (Saanich), seconded by Alderman G. A. McBain (North Vancouver):

"That this Union of British Columbia Municipalities, at its fourteenth Annual Convention, tender His Excellency, the Governor-General, its sincere appreciation of his valuable services as Governor-General and convey to him the heartiest good wishes for his future welfare, and ask him to convey to His Majesty the King the unswerving devotion and allegiance of this Province, also to assure His Majesty that this Province is determined in every possible way to assist in the prosecution of this great war to such a conclusion that liberty and the common right to live shall be established to the everlasting benefit of humanity."

Moved by Mayor Gale (Vancouver), seconded by Alderman Sargent (Victoria):

That the delegates attending this Convention, representative of every municipality in British Columbia, have followed with continued pride the record of the boys of British Columbia who are fighting for the freedom of the Empire. We wish them God Speed and a successful issue of the War.

Be it Resolved, that the President be authorized to convey a message to this effect to General Currie, O.C. Canadian Forces Overseas, and through him to them.

Moved by Clerk Moore (Burnaby), seconded by Councillor Webb (Burnaby):

"That this Convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities do extend to our neighbours, the people of the United States of America our heartiest greetings in respect of the part taken by them in the present fight for the sacred cause of freedom and justice, and also extend our congratulations in respect of the magnificent showing made in France by the soldiers of that great nation. Further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States of America."

Moved by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Reeve Vinson:

Whereas, since the last Annual Convention of the Union of B. C. Municipalities, the Hon. H. C. Brewster, Premier of this Province, has been called by death.

Therefore, be it Resolved, that this Union, in Convention assembled, places on record its deep and abiding sense of the serious loss the Province has sustained in his untimely decease in almost the dawn of his political power; its appreciation of his sterling private character and spotless public reputation, and of his constant and consistent labours for the Provincial, National and Imperial good.

And that this resolution be spread upon the records of this Union, and that a copy be transmitted to the family of the late Premier.

Then followed the address of welcome by Reeve Smith, of Penticton, who said in part:

"I am sorry to say that on account of the war we are not able to 'do you as proud' as we would have liked, but what we are doing is done with the utmost goodwill, and not only that, it is done by many of the citizens individually. The Aquatic Club has thrown open its doors to you, and that has nothing to do with the Council, they have done that individually. A large number of car owners will take you to Summerland to-morrow afternoon—and I hope you will all take that drive, which is well worth seeing. They are doing it of their own free will. In this connection I would like to say that by some unfortunate error the programme describes this auto ride as being the entertainment of the Corporation of Penticton—it is also provided by the Corporation of Summerland. A year ago, when it was decided that you should come to this town this

year, one of the representatives of Summerland came up to Mr. Mackenzie and said that Summerland would like to join with us in your entertainment; and when this year came around we were only too pleased to show that spirit of co-operation which is so much in evidence at the present time, and we were pleased that Summerland showed that spirit of co-operation in trying to entertain you. They are sharing with us to show you all honour during your stay. And so I am very glad indeed that Summerland is joining us in this, and I may say that from the time you enter the Summerland boundary until the time you leave it, you are the guests of Summerland. There is an Experimental Farm there, from which you will have to tear yourselves away with very great urgency—it is a most interesting place.

Reeve Fraser, of Burnaby, the Vice-President of the Union of B.C. Municipalities, responded to the address of welcome given by Reeve Smith.

THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY.

Mr. John Ridington, Librarian of the University of British Columbia, then addressed the Convention as follows:

"Mr. President, and Gentlemen:—In reviewing the ever-increasing expansion of municipal institutions, as compared with those institutions ten or fifteen years ago, one is struck by their vast and rapid progress, with one exception, that of the municipal library. I do not know if you have compared the library progress in this Province with that in your adjacent states and provinces. Recently I sent out a questionnaire to many of your cities, and the responses show how far this Province is behind—so far as I can ascertain there are only five public libraries in the Province, at Victoria, Vancouver, Trail, Vernon and New Westminster. Women's Institutes, Prisoners of War, Red Cross Societies and Farmers' Institutes also have a few books.

Our hopes in this country, this Province and the Empire are certainly based on democracy, and an ill-informed democracy is a menace to the country. Strikes, social unrest, labour conditions are largely due to the absence of the spirit of fair play, misunderstanding of conditions of other classes of society, one of the best means of reaching the root of these troubles is through the public library. The public library as has been said is the people's university, and it is the fourth plank in the programme of the British Labour Party that more public libraries should be established.

Touching upon the conditions in neighbouring States. In California a man has access to practically every book he wants. If he cannot find the book he desires in his local library he sends to the county library and one week later the book is delivered at his door, through the efforts of the Central State Commission to provide enlightenment for the people.

In Alberta up to date library legislation has been enacted.

Now to look at our own position. The British Columbia Library Association consisting of Miss Helen Stewart, of Victoria, Mr. Douglas and myself, have met to draft a provincial library law, and I have gone over from 70 to 75 library laws which might be applicable to British Columbia. We have the sympathy of the Government in our efforts and the principal clauses of the Act and its plan of action are substantially as follows:—

1st.—The library activities of British Columbia to be vested in a library commission, unpaid. Men who have the interests of book service at heart. The members to be possibly three or possibly five. The majority to be appointed by the Government on a basis of recognized interest in book service throughout the Province. This commission to superintend all library activities, the active officer to be an organizer and trained librarian, his business to go to the various parts of the Province and consult with those interested in book service, to address public meetings and explain how advantage can be taken of the Act; really to supervise, to suggest, to instruct.

2nd.—This part to be divided into three sections: Travelling libraries, to consist of fifty or sixty boxes of books containing 50 volumes.