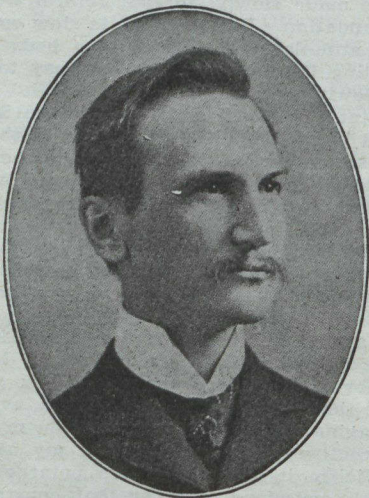


CONVENTION OF U. C. M.—(Continued).**Hon. Secretary's Report.**

It seems almost incredible that this should be our fifth War Convention. It is needless to speak of the general facts of the War itself, but in so far as it has affected us Canadian Municipalities, we have had grave and considerable problems thrust upon us, and the end is not yet. We should, first of all, be thankful that our problems have never been those of the ancient City of Ypres, nor of Peronne, ruined, destroyed and captured, nor like those of Lille, with her inhabitants largely carried into slavery; nor like those of Brussels and Antwerp, robbed of immense sums, and ground under the heel of the oppressor; but that our brave men—with others of the civilized nations—have kept such horrors, indignities and losses far from us all these years. Still, we have had much to think about in loss of population, stagnation of industries, partial paralysis of our financing, and above all the necessity of co-operating with every effort vital to the needs of the Empire and of civilization. Our



W. D. Lighthall, K.C., Hon. Sec., U.C.M.

Mayors have turned recruiting agents on a large scale, many of our municipal leaders have donned khaki and some of them have paid the penalty of courage on the field of battle. When the first news of the War fell upon us at our Convention in August, 1914, at Sherbrooke, we did not know where we were nor where we would be. The first problem that confronted us was how to deal with the universal panic on the stock markets. In 1915 we were obliged to postpone the kind invitation of the City of Victoria, and even to forego holding a Convention of any kind, and could only substitute for it an unsatisfactory General Executive Meeting at Niagara Falls. In 1916, we had grown to see our way more clearly, and took up satisfactorily many current question of finance and organization at the Montreal Convention. In 1917, we had begun to get on our feet, and the London Convention was, on the whole, a good one, and produced several effective measures, of which perhaps the principal was our resolution pledging all the municipal machinery of the country to support the Government in all its measures, which it might consider that our assistance would be of value. Perhaps the best element in our action was the feeling in Government circles that we were with them, and loyally behind

them, in their strenuous labors to support our soldiers at the front and prosecute the War. This year we ought to be able to take vigorous action on preparation for After-the-War problems. These preparations ought emphatically to be made now, and not left to drift. They should include a plan of financing, a programme of town planning and a definite outline of action, founded resolutely on the determination that we must enter upon a new career of energetic progress and enterprise. This unquestionably should be the spirit of Canada after the War. A large place must be given to the Returned Soldier question in its widest aspects, and also to selected immigration. The cities' and towns' must take a more businesslike and systematic interest in all that pertains to the development of their tributary regions. Agricultural banks and agricultural institutes, and the rendering of farm life attractive, should all be elements in the programme. May I be permitted to again urge the appointment by the Dominion Government of a Cost of Living Tribunal, similar to the Dominion Railway Board, which is every day more necessary if the citizen is to cope with the heavy burdens that will rest upon him arising out of the cost of the War.

The spirit of our last Convention was worthy of the immense and vital interests which are in the hands of our municipal governors and will, I am sure, be carried on into this. We owe our apologies, or rather explanations, to the City of Victoria for having postponed from year to year, from 1914 to the present, the acceptance of its hospitable invitation, but the difficulties in organizing a Convention at one end or the other of Canada during the War can only be appreciated by the Central Office of the Union, and for this reason we have been continually hoping for the end of the struggle; we feel glad that we have at last seen our way clear to stand once more within this beautiful city and to give ourselves up to its hospitalities and all its charms, as well as to meet the special present problems of the West face to face. There is one element of our work which is sometimes overlooked, which we consider very important; namely, the annual and other Executive Meetings of the Union in Ottawa during the Parliamentary Session. These always bring us in close contact with questions in which legislation touches closely the interest, either of the whole of the municipalities, or of several of them singly. We are enabled there to meet with the Dominion Cabinet and the most active Members of Parliament representing all parts of Canada, and to bring to their attention the views and interests of places as widely scattered as the Dominion. One of the most important resolutions of the last Convention, as stated above, was our resolution offering the Government the general support of all the municipal machinery of Canada, for War purposes. This was taken advantage of by the Dominion Government in several ways, of which we might specify as an example, that the Fish Committee of the Canada Food Board was put into communication with active municipal men everywhere, with highly satisfactory results. We also circularized the municipal authorities in a manner which we think considerably lightened the immense task of the Canada Registration Board. One of the most important matters of the year at Ottawa has been the continued consolidation of the Railway Act. This is of the utmost importance to all our