

not ask them to do anything for us. Present conditions are satisfactory and we have no money to throw away." Such municipalities do not realize that the work that the Unions are doing is pulling chestnuts out of the fire which they will be only too glad to eat in the near future, but which others are paying for.

In the West, the Bell Telephone Company had a Dominion charter under which they could cut up streets and roads to lay or erect their lines practically where they saw fit. Thanks to the work of the Union of Canadian Municipalities a change has come over the spirit of the dreams of the Bell Telephone Company and similar corporations. The municipal corporations have awakened to a realization of their own strength, and to-day not only life under such conditions, but the birth of corporations with such powers in the Dominion Legislature has become an impossibility. Is that of any benefit to the small municipality, to the young town? Let us see.

Right here in our own Province the Nova Scotia Telephone Company, allied with the Bell Company, has a Canadian charter which gives them the power to erect or lay their lines by simply giving notice. If they exercise that power their interest will clash at some time with the interest of the small municipality and young town. Then the latter will be glad to invoke the aid of the united municipalities in an endeavor to accomplish what one small municipality cannot hope to do alone. If the powerful and influential corporation does not interfere with the rights or interests of the smaller municipalities, then it is pretty safe to assume that it is because they have learned to recognize and respect the power and influence of the municipalities when working together for one end and the common good.

Who then is reaping the benefit? Is it only the larger and stronger and older municipalities? By no means! The smaller is much more in need of a sturdy champion than the larger and should not be slow to support our organization.

It is not only telegraph and telephone lines that threaten to encroach on our rights but public tramway lines, electric light and power lines which may extend great distances in the future, railway lines with their road and farm crossings, water pipe and sewer crossings and road diversions. We owe it to ourselves to do what we can to help the larger movement. Membership in the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities means supporting not only that organization but also the Union of Canadian Municipalities, for one fourth of our receipts go to the support of the larger union.

What the larger union is doing for Canada we have been trying to imitate in Nova Scotia. While our membership roll shows that the Union does not include all the municipalities in Nova Scotia, we have not drawn any line in carrying on our work up to the present.

In influencing and obtaining legislation the result of the Union's endeavors is very encouraging. While our support was not confined to one measure, the result of the work done in connection with one piece of legislation will suffice to illustrate.

A municipality wrote to the Secretary asking the support of the Union in an effort to obtain an amendment to existing municipal legislation. The Clerk stated that they had written to nearly all of the other municipalities and received their approval. They had introduced it at the session of the local Legislature in 1907, and although it was under the wing of a member of the Government it failed to pass. It looked discouraging but was taken up, approved by the Executive and pushed through its different stages in both Houses. After the

House closed the Secretary received a letter from the Clerk stating that he regretted to learn from the member of the Government before referred to, that the amendment had been again thrown out. He received a reply enclosing a copy of the act and assuring him that the legislation asked for had become law notwithstanding the belief of the member of the Government to the contrary.

Much more can be accomplished in this direction as soon as our membership includes every municipality. The first and best way therefore, in which we can increase the usefulness of the Union to its members, is by increasing the membership, and if each Mayor, Warden, Councillor and official will do what he can the desired result will soon be attained.

Another way in which the Union could be made more useful to its members is through the municipal officials. Mayors, Wardens and Councillors are in office frequently for one term only, while officials such as street, water and sewer Superintendents, Clerks, Treasurers, etc., are practically permanent. Not for one moment is it the intention to advocate the management of this Union by the paid municipal officials, but in order to connect one year's work with another and maintain a continued interest it is important that the officials should attend occasionally and in turn these annual conventions, with the Mayors, Wardens and Councillors. It would not be sufficient for these officials alone to meet, for then the interest now taken by the governing bodies would undoubtedly be absent.

It is characteristic of human nature to be reluctant to acknowledge ignorance where knowledge is expected. Nevertheless no official has corralled all the brains in his particular line, and he cannot go to another municipality, talk with the officials there respecting their methods of doing work, observe results and differences, and keep his eyes open for improvements without coming home with new wrinkles and broader ideas. It is no reflection on him that he should do so, but rather creditable that he should display sufficient energy and interest in his work to be anxious to improve. Such information is rarely obtained second hand, and it is therefore almost certain that the placing of the officials in closer touch with the work of the Union will increase its usefulness to its members.

In this connection much might be done to place general municipal information in some standard form, so that officials seeking it could obtain it more readily. Mr. McLeod is laying before you to-day the financial and statistical side of this proposition. The spending officials might be directed to compile cost data each year on such a uniform system that comparisons might be made readily and Councils could test the economy of their own work. Estimates would also be made more reliable and values would be placed in the hands of Councils as well as officials. Inexperienced officials would have something to guide them, and here again the smaller and younger municipalities would reap the greater benefit.

Such information should be collected, classified and indexed in a concise form by a central bureau of information, so that it would be available on demand. We should have a Secretary who would do such work and all other work of the Union promptly, energetically and intelligently. If developed along the lines suggested the advantages of such work alone would be ample recompense and justification for the formation of this Union.

Another proposal, which, if carried out might increase the usefulness of this organization to its members