

The resolution reads as follows:

"This meeting, representing 216 municipalities in Ontario, demands that Sir Adam Beck, be continued as chairman of the Provincial Hydro-Electric Commission, and that the Commission shall consist of three members only, Sir Adam Beck, the chairman, one member to

be appointed by the municipalities and one by the Government. In the event of the request of the municipalities being refused by the Government, then a representative on the Commission shall have the approval of Sir Adam Beck. Further, that the terms of office for such commissioners shall be not less than six years."

## Government Commissioners

The Governor-General, in attending the convention of the Union of B. C. Municipalities, not only gave encouragement to those who are studying the complex problems of municipal government in Canada but he himself had an opportunity to compare the Canadian with the English system of which he has a practical knowledge—he being chairman of many years standing of one of the Districts Councils of the Old Country. One of the papers given dealt with the government of a municipality an appointed commissioner, such system being in force in South Vancouver. While we have not yet had an opportunity of reading the discussion that followed Commissioner Gillespie's paper, we would say that whether or not South Vancouver was better governed by a government appointed commissioner than under the administration of mayor and council, the newer system is absolutely opposed to the spirit

of democratic government, and as such is to be condemned. It is true that South Vancouver had got into low water with its finances and possibly the only thing the Provincial Government could do was to appoint a commissioner to tide over the situation, but the appointment should only be temporary. Should the commissionership become permanent it would stultify public responsibility in local affairs and if carried out in other municipalities it would mean doing away with popular government altogether; something that the Anglo-Saxon race will not stand for. What is wanted in Canada so far as municipal government is concerned is not its leveling down to the dead plane of "business" but its levelling up to the ethics of civic conscience; and this is certainly not going to be done by government commissionerships.

## Social Welfare & Municipal Council

In a special issue of "Social Welfare," given to the study of the problem of the child, the responsibility of the State is prominently brought out or implied in each article. The whole argument is pithily expressed in the following sentence taken from the leading editorial "Once a child is born, the parents and the State must accept the responsibility for its well being." This conclusion, we may take it, is today accepted by the average citizen, but the point is what do we mean by the State? Primarily, we mean the nation through its governing body, but under the North America Act Canada has three distinct governing bodies—Federal, Provincial and Municipal—each body having certain responsibility relating to the social welfare of the nation. To make things more complicated the municipal authorities are supposed to be responsible to the Provincial authority for every dollar spent in the community, and there is no provision in any of the municipal acts to enable any local authority to raise and spend money on social welfare. The Provincial authorities have more power but they are handicapped by the limitation of the means of taxation at their disposal. The Federal authorities are

limited only by the power conferred on them by Parliament, and the taxable resources of the Dominion are great. This means that in solving the problem of the child, so far as the responsibility of the State is concerned, the initiative must be taken by the Federal authorities in legislation where money is to be spent.

This, of course, does not absolve our municipal councils from their responsibility towards the child life of the community. Much of the loss of young children of the poorer citizens is due directly to the lack of pure air and proper nourishment. At the present moment the matter of nourishment is outside of the local authorities but the seeing that every child has pure air is certainly part of the civic duties. There is not a municipality in Canada but what has sanitation and hygienic by-laws of some kind, and yet throughout the Dominion the overcrowding in the poorer quarters of our communities is appalling. This state of affairs is not very creditable to our municipal system and should be stamped out by the simple process of seeing that the by-laws affecting the public health of the people are carried out practically.

## Grand Trunk Deal and Local Taxes

In the acquisition of the Grand Trunk system by the Government a very serious question arises that affects very closely the municipalities through which that system runs. Much of the local income is derived, through local taxes, from the railways owned by private companies. But Federal Government property is exempt from all local taxes so

that in taking over the Grand Trunk system there is the danger of the local authorities losing a large part of their income, in spite of the recent assurance given to the contrary in the House of Commons. So real was this danger felt that the Union of Municipalities sent in to the Government a strong protest against acquiring the Grand Trunk without first in-