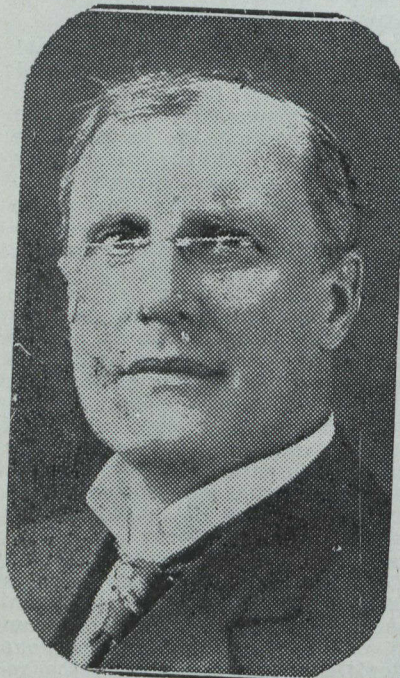


SOME BIG MUNICIPAL MEN

(By AJAX)

MAYOR HARDIE, OF LETHBRIDGE.



The municipal life of this country would seem to be taken up by two classes of men—the first looking for the honour of aldermanic or mayoral lignity, and then forgetting all about it in relinquishing their office. This class might be termed incidents rather than factors in local government, for what can a man know of the ethics and practice of civics in a short one or two years. The other class take their responsibilities seriously and learn all they can, not only of actual local conditions,

but their bearing on the general life of the nation. There are many in this class who might truthfully be termed nation builders, for they in their circumscribed area, but not limited outlook, are consciously or unconsciously, instilling daily the principles of Canadian citizenship into the minds of those with whom they come into hourly contact—it might be a child or it might be a newly arrived immigrant—and they inspire a truer sense, at least, of public responsibility in the community.

Such thoughts and comparisons were passing through the scribe's mind when he met W. D. L. Hardie, the Mayor of Lethbridge, at the conference of Mayors at Ottawa last May. Mayor Hardie certainly does belong to the "other class"—the class of civic thinkers and doers.

At the said conference, Hardie was very much to the fore, and he introduced some Western sense into the discussion. "If anything was worth doing at all it was worth doing well," was his slogan, and unemployment (the big subject of the conference) was with his city at that time a very real problem. Naturally he was very impatient at the introduction of extraneous matter into what was a subject of the deepest import. No sidetracking for him of the real issue to please anybody. The fact of the other delegates being of the same mind does not lessen the determined showing of Mayor Hardie, who, I verily believe, would have tackled the Government himself.

This determination gives the key to his make-up, for does not his record give an indication of his getting there all the time. What that record is is best epitomized in his being a Scotchman (born in Bathgate, 1862)—a practical engineer—and a Canadian Mayor, 1912. Between his natal day and the present year W. D. L. Hardie has done many things—most of them good, though not all. He started to travel very young, being but two years of age when

his parents took him to the State of Ohio via Canada, though he returned to Scotland for his schooling and engineering training, taking a course as a civil and mining engineer. When twenty years old young Hardie emigrated to the United States again. He entered his chosen profession and received the best of experience on the railroads and in the coal mine.

As a good Scotchman Hardie could not keep away from British territory, and he came to Canada in 1890, and settled in Lethbridge, where he has been ever since, excepting for a few years in railway work in Old Mexico. For twenty years he occupied the position of colliery superintendent and mining engineer of the old Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company (now part of the C. P. R. system) which, if nothing else, is a good example of continuous service; but the records show that he was a valued official.

Mayor Hardie has grown up with the city of Lethbridge. He was a citizen when it received its first town charter, and was a prominent man when it won its city charter. He was the last mayor under the aldermanic form, and is the first mayor under the commission form of civic government, which came into force January, 1914.

Under the new charter Lethbridge has three commissioners—the Mayor is Commissioner of Finance, Police, Fire and Immigration; the second Commissioner has charge of Public Works and the third Commissioner looks after all Public Utilities. Each Commissioner is required to give the whole of his time to the service of the City.

At the first election the Mayor was elected for four years, the Commissioner of Public Works for three years, and the Commissioner of Public Utilities for two years. There is no election the second year, so that one commissioner goes out each year, after the second year, and is elected for three years after. Under this system Mayor Hardie has two more years to serve, and being as popular as he has proved himself efficient there is no reason why he should not be Mayor of his adopted city for at least another term. And why shouldn't he, for one thing the Mayor glories in is his big job. As he says himself the work is engrossing and pleasurable.

Probably the secret of Mr. Hardie's success in the Mayoral office is his sense of responsibility to the citizens of Lethbridge. "I regard a public office as a public trust, and govern myself accordingly," he said on one occasion, and it would be hard to find a more sane or dignified expression from a public man. And the time is fast coming when men who regard sacredly a public office as a public trust will be better appreciated by their fellows, and Hardie will come into his own.

WON'T STOP KISSING.

The Municipal authorities of an American city and the heads of the local schools announce they will make no effort to enforce "recommendation No. 25," issued by the county Board of Health, in which kissing is prohibited under penalty of contracting disease. One and all declared "it can't be done."

"No form of salutation can take the place of the good old-fashioned kiss," declares the mayor. "No tapping on the shoulder or forehead will take the place of a good kiss, with a hug thrown in."