

Public Health Convention

The Public Health Association Convention which was held last month in Quebec was particularly interesting and instructive, almost to the point of abruptness. Not that there was any lack of courtesy—that would be impossible in any gathering of medical men—but all the papers and discussions were given with a directness somewhat disconcerting to the lay mind, which is used to being fed on conventional platitudes. And there certainly was no need for the layman to take a dictionary with him to understand the technical terms—there were none—but every minute of each session was loaded up with solid material and every subject pertaining to health was dealt with thoroughly in the discussions. While it would be unnecessary for us to pick out any particular paper for its individual value, for they were all good, the symposium on immigration, because of its special bearing on a large part of the future citizenship of this country, appealed to our sense of values in view of our own campaign of preparedness, and the conclusions put into the form of resolutions should be acted upon very quickly by the authorities. The symposium was made up of five papers and twelve speakers, each one being a specialist on the phase he, or she, took up, and though we do not agree with all the statements made we are heartily in sympathy with the resolutions that were passed. Throughout the session there was a unanimity of opinion that the laws and system governing the medical inspection of immigrants were far from perfect, and that if Canada would have a better class of immigrant, in physique, mentality and morals, the system must be radically changed. We would go further and say that our whole system of inspection should be changed to meet the new conditions that will arise when this war is over. We believe that our immigration problems must be solved at the ports of entry, and not left to the inland provincial and municipal authorities, if we really want this country to be a homogeneous Dominion and not a communal dumping ground for every foreign sect or people that choose to come to this country. In the middle West we already have large communities of foreigners who know not Canada—its laws, constitution, etc.—and who, in the first generation at least, are not likely to ever know the meaning of British citizenship under the present system of allowing them to herd together in one place; and the only places this can be prevented is at the immigration ports, where they can be properly directed. The difficulty of the government of the United States in its relations with European affairs during the last two years was not in having a large German population but in having large communities of Germans, and if Canadian citizenship means anything good at all we cannot instil its ideals too early into the minds of new immigrants, but which is not going to be done by encouraging the present herding-together-of-foreigners system.

The proper direction of immigration is also necessary to secure the best out of newcomers. The misdirection of immigrants was brought home to this country soon after the outbreak of war when

the mayors met at Ottawa to petition the government in relieving the situation caused by unemployment, and which in turn had been brought about by the large number of agriculturists found in the cities. This was well illustrated by Mr. J. G. Woodsworth who contributed to the symposium, in the following extract.

"In a special investigation which was made a year ago in Winnipeg, statistics were obtained in regard to two hundred and fifty-five families who were in receipt of relief. In 70.02 per cent of the cases the head of the family was in the Old Country, an owner of land which he cultivated; in 16.08 per cent he was an agricultural laborer and in 7 per cent a tenant farmer. In 6 per cent only had he earned a livelihood from any other source other than the land. Here then is an example of the lack of proper direction by which, out of 255 immigrants, 240 who had been on the land and should be on land as producers in this country, were herded in the cities without work, without money, and supported by public charity."

We trust that the discussions of the Public Health Association on this important subject will have sufficient effect on the powers that be to do something.

CIVIC IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE OF CANADA.

We have just received the report of the Civic Improvement League of Canada Convention which took place in Ottawa last January. As this journal has already published a report of the convention in our February issue, together with our comments, there is no necessity to go over the ground again. The blame for the long delay in the publication of the official report is put on the printer—the poor printer has to stand for a lot—but we do suggest to the Commission of Conservation that if they want the Civic Improvement League to do really effective work its discussions must be published a little earlier than nine months afterwards. Events move quickly these days and much of the work done at the Ottawa Conference is already out-of-date. This Journal believes in promptitude hence our publishing our report in the February issue, though the conference was held in the last week of January.

UNION OF B. C. MUNICIPALITIES.

The Annual Convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities will be held, October 11th and 12th, in the City of Vernon, B. C.

GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION IN NOVA SCOTIA.

A Provincial Good Roads Association has just been formed for Nova Scotia with the following officers:

President Mr. G. F. Pearson, of Halifax; First vice-president, Mayor W. H. Roach, Windsor; Second vice-president, Mr. J. S. Whyte, Glace Bay; Third vice-president, Mr. W. Churchill, Brooklyn, Yarmouth County; Secretary-treasurer, Mr. R. P. Bell, Halifax; together with a number of representatives of various counties. The fee for ordinary members was fixed at \$1; sustaining membership, \$10, and life membership \$100.