

of notice from such hospital, of the amount of the account against such patient and proof by the Municipality of the fact that the said account has been paid by them), may levy any sum or sums so paid, by the way of taxes against any real or personal estate owned by such patient, or by his executors, administrators or assigns and situate within the limits of such Municipality. (Other provisions to be added as to method of making levy.)

10.—The Union recommends that the Provincial Government be urged to increase the grant payable under the amended "Charities Aid Act" from 25 cents to 50 cents per day, and further that the Residence limit under said Act be one month instead of six months.

Brandon Fire Brigade.

At 1.45 on Wednesday, the Fire Brigade gave an exhibition run in front of the City Hall for the benefit of the delegates. The brigade made a smart turn-out with the chemical, hose waggon, and aerial ladder.

One thousand feet of hose was laid in two lines of 500 each, one being taken to the top of the aerial, which was extended to its full height.

From the time the alarm was rung until the hose was at the top of the aerial was exactly $4\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, while the chemical was in operation in one minute.

The delegates present were high in their praises of the splendid equipment that the city of Brandon has and of the efficiency of the men who turned out in double quick time.

Wednesday Afternoon.

President Cochran introduced Mr. E. M. Wood, Deputy Municipal Commissioner, who read the following paper:

General Revision of the Municipal Acts

Edmund M. Wood

Deputy Municipal Commissioner.

I appreciate the honor of being asked to address you on the Municipal Laws of the Province for the subject is an important one.

Municipal Legislation is the basis or fundamental ground work of local government; as much so in fact, as the British North America Act is the constitution of Canada. Highly important therefore is it that Municipal laws should be framed with the greatest care and forethought and maintained at a high standard. In this Province we have passed through various stages of municipal legislation. The first Legislative Act in this direction was in the year 1871 when provision was made for the imposition of taxes for local purposes. The method outlined was both crude and novel, although probably adequate for that period. The Province was divided into five counties. No councillors or other governing bodies were elected by the people. The county officers were called together annually by an officer, styled the Clerk of the Peace, to compile the assessment rolls for the several counties, and, at what was called the Court of Sessions, the Grand Jury presented a statement showing the amounts required for the ensuing year in the various districts for roads, ditches and other purposes. The Clerk of the Peace then apportioned the required sums between the persons whose names appeared on the assessment rolls, based on respective assessments. This was approved of by the Court and the amounts collected by constables. The surveyors of highways, pound keepers and constables and other officials were appointed by the court. Authority was also given for the division of the counties into parishes. These parishes consisted of the families whose homes were gathered around the parish church. If a purely local improvement was de-

sired, the heads of families met together and so expressed themselves in a formal resolution, which was forwarded to the Clerk of the Peace, who levied upon all the inhabitants within a certain area for the cost of the work, which was then carried out.

In the year 1873 the Legislature passed what may be designated the first general Municipal Act. It was provided therein that on petition to the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council by two thirds of the male freeholders, twenty-one years of age, in any locality where there were not less than thirty such freeholders, letters patent of incorporation might issue constituting such locality a local municipality with the necessary powers for the election of councillors and officers, and for raising and expending the revenue of the municipality.

Ten years later, in the year 1883, in consequence of increased requirements and necessities, the whole municipal organization of the Province was revised. The Province was divided into municipalities, and these again were grouped into counties. Each municipality and county had a council. The county system was copied largely from Ontario; in fact, so closely were these provisions followed that many were found to be wholly inapplicable to western requirements. The dual system of having municipal and county councils proved extremely awkward and costly. In the year following, (1884,) after a year's trial of the municipal and county council systems, county councils were abolished and full jurisdiction was given to the local municipalities. The Municipal Act was again the subject of general revision in 1886. In 1890, this Act was repealed and our present act adopted. This has been the subject of annual amendment down to the present time, and still many of the prevailing provisions are obsolete, and contradictory and insufficient for the efficient carrying on of municipal government. In my opinion a substantial revision is again necessary in order to render the whole system less cumbersome and easier to administer. All legislation dealing with, or affecting our municipal institutions should be comprised in one general Act, with an intelligent index, not scattered as at present, and copies should be provided free of cost to all municipal representatives in the Province. In this way general knowledge would be disseminated — a most desirable consummation.

There are many improvements that might be made. For instance the office of the Municipal Commissioner might be enlarged so as to make it a sort of central bureau to which councils could refer to procure relief, as occasion arose, respecting certain classes of subjects. This centralization of authority in municipal government is not new. It exists in many of the old world countries, and is, at the present time, being strongly advocated in Eastern Canada and elsewhere. The powers conferred should be largely supervisory, though reasonable control is essential.

There are not a few principles in our present municipal law that should be wholly wiped off the statute book. One of these that I would particularly direct your attention to is respecting statute labor. Statute labor, like toll roads, is a relic of the past, and should be relegated to obscurity. The making of good roads is not possible under such a system. During the pioneer stage of a country it was probably the best that could have been devised, but the advance of settlement and the desire for better roads has made it imperative that a radical change is necessary. In this Province there is at the present time everywhere evidence of a desire for good roads. In Ontario there has been an active and systematic educational campaign going on for some