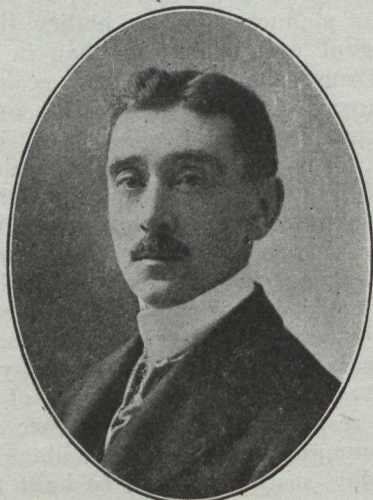


THE CITY OF QUEBEC.

One of the most interesting and instructive addresses delivered before the Canadian Municipal Union Convention was on the history and administration of the City of Quebec by Dr. J. B. Chouinard, C.M.G., who for thirty years has officiated as City Clerk. Gifted beyond the average man in the literature of his native city, Mr. Chouinard charmed his audience with early recollections of the district, its government and its aspirations. To those who came from the new cities of the West his chronicles of the old city were veritable delvings into the past, nevertheless his descriptions of the working of the administration during the last decade convinced his audience that though the city of Quebec is over 400 years old, its citizens have a lively sense of modern conditions and know how to utilize them to their advantage.



MR. ARTHUR ROBERTS, K.C.,
Solicitor of Bridgewater, N.S., New President of the Union
of Canadian Municipalities.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Proportional representation is under attack in Ashtabula, which may be taken as a sign that it is accomplishing some of the things its advocate claim for it. Really, our system of representation based exclusively on geographical districts has broken down. Geography is only one element in a complete scheme of representation.

During the war the government called its aid in semi-official capacities numerous trade associations, labor organizations and the like. The war committees of the United States Chamber of Commerce are a notable example. The government thus recognized the existence of groups because each group had something special to contribute. The action was, moreover, a recognition of special interests to be placated as well as a realization of special capacities. And so proportional representation aims at the highest synthesis through dignifying the parts.
—H. W. Todds in National Municipal Review.

METERING CITY WATER.

In 1908, 49 per cent of the services in the city of Omaha were metered. In 1919, 91 per cent were metered and, if the city services and unused services are deducted, 98 per cent were metered.

In the year 1908, the city pumped 6,144 million gallons of water. In 1919, although the population had increased to about 199,000, as compared with 145,000 in 1908, the consumption had only increased to 7,616 million gallons. Had the consumption not been fully metered, it would probably have been at least 10,000 million gallons, or 30 per cent greater than it actually was. This increased consumption would have necessitated additional pumps, new and larger mains, greater expenditure for upkeep and maintenance, and larger sewers to carry off the extra water.

The Omaha consumption is unusually high for a metered service, but this is due to the large use of water by the stock yards and packing houses which accounts for 36 gallons per head of population of the total consumption of 107 gallons.

The Omaha consumption of 107 gallons per head per day may be compared with the consumption in Ottawa of 175 gallons per head.

MOVING HOUSES TO IMPROVEMENTS.

Calgary has a new plan of assessment, under which much of the surrounding land heretofore lying sterile, owing to its subdivision into building lots far in advance of requirements, will be constituted an agricultural belt, and will be assessed as such. While this assessment basis is operative no local improvements will be instituted. Consequently, many houses built on outlying lots can have no hope of securing municipal conveniences for years. This condition is creating a house-moving boom. The Calgary Herald estimates that upwards of 200 houses will be moved into the improvement area within the present season.

PROTECTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

The following advertisement recently appeared in a Halifax paper:

"Notice is hereby given, that application has been made to the Building Inspector by the under-signed for permission to erect a shop on west side of Elm street between Chebucto road and Oak street. Any person objecting to the erection of this building within the residential district, should lodge a copy of said objections with the Building Inspector, City Hall."

The City Council of Regina, Sask., has before it for consideration an amendment to the fire limits bylaw, which, if passed, will prohibit the opening of business places in the residential districts of the city.

This legislation is in harmony with the efforts of the Town Planning Branch of the Commission of Conservation, which, for the protection of residential areas, has consistently advocated the zoning of towns and cities.

Unless a property owner has some guarantee that his investment will be safeguarded, there is little inducement to build or improve a home, even in the best residential districts, in most of our cities. In an eastern city, a permit was recently issued for the erection of a wood-working factory in the heart of a residential section. Although the residents formally protested against such construction, urging that the area was purely residential and that the insurance rates on adjoining property would be considerably enhanced, the permit was not revoked.

All building laws in cities should contain provisions to protect residential areas and for the securing of neighbourhood assent to the erection and operation of business properties which were considered undesirable by those resident in the locality.

Under the amended by-law in Regina, it is proposed to provide for such conditions by requiring the signatures of a substantial proportion of the property owners in any block, in which it is proposed to operate business premises, before permission will be given by the city.

The requirement that proposals to erect such structures in a residential district be publicly advertised before a permit is issued also seems to be a desirable public safeguard.—Conservation.