

They therefore recommend that the British Columbia government should establish a municipal department similar to those in Manitoba and Alberta. Under this municipal department there should be one or more inspectors, whose duty it would be to see that the books of each municipality, including the school accounts, are kept in a proper manner, that they are duly audited at least once a year, and that a uniform system of municipal accounting is established. It should also be the duty of each municipality to transmit annually to the municipal department a full statement of its financial position. The municipal commissioner of the government could also certify the validity of money by-laws and debentures issued thereunder, as is done in Ontario by the railway and municipal board, and in Manitoba by the municipal commissioner, thus preventing any attack upon debenture by-laws or debentures. This would be an excellent beginning and little harm could result from a further extension of such a system, as time goes on.

Certain sections of British Columbia's municipal act authorize the councils of municipalities to invest their sinking funds in a large number of excellent securities, but they also empower them to invest these funds on the security of first mortgages on land. The commissioners recall that experience has shown that investment in mortgage is, or in some cases may be, a dangerous form of investment for municipalities. Even when the security is good, there is often great difficulty in compelling an influential ratepayer to make prompt payment of interest. Few municipalities in British Columbia have availed themselves of this power. The commissioners think, and rightly, that it would conduce very much to the safety of sinking funds if this power were taken away from municipalities. It might well be made the duty of a government inspector of municipalities to report upon the investment of sinking funds.

A great many British Columbia municipal debentures are marketed in the province of Ontario. The Ontario Act respecting the investment of trust funds provides that the debentures of municipalities in the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta are legal investments for trust funds, but does not include the debentures of the municipalities in the province of British Columbia. The fiscal agents of some of the municipalities in British Columbia have represented that it would help the market for British Columbia municipal securities if British Columbia debentures were placed in the same class as the debentures of the municipalities of these other provinces, and have asked the commission to recommend that the British Columbia government open negotiations with the government of Ontario with a view to having the Ontario Act amended to cover this. The governments of the other provinces of the Dominion might also be approached with the same end in view. We do not think any objection will be raised by the various provinces in granting British Columbia a privilege which it should have had years ago.

### FERNIE'S EXPERIENCE

About twenty-five salesmen of real estate in the prairie provinces recently descended upon Fernie, British Columbia, told their story of easy fortunes to be made, to miners in that famous town and in a little more than a week, returned to their prairie tents with \$50,000 of Fernie's money. That is the chronicle related to *The Monetary Times* by a reliable authority. In the mining town was freely circulated literature specially dotted with the terms used by miners, urging them to buy western real estate.

Some of the land for sale may have been good, some of it probably was not. The citizens of Fernie, however, do not like to think of the fifty thousand dollars lost to local business. The banks' deposits in that district probably show a decline to about that amount. The citizens of Fernie, too, can draw a host of morals from the inci-

dent, which again proves that the real estate salesman has no geographical limit and that every man with \$100 in his pocket is a "prospect."

### SMALL CHANGE

For the shareholders, where there is Union Life, there is no hope.

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Despite its hundred years, we do not see many grey hairs on Hamilton's head.

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The feature of the Balkan war most women worry about is that currants are dearer.

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As the feminine mind would say, the money market these days is a regular hobble skirt.

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The highest form of politeness is to listen attentively to the latest Canadian from Europe telling why money is tight.

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The only hope for the declining game of lacrosse is to merge it with baseball and issue bonds with a bonus of common.

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Vancouver, Winnipeg and Grand Trunk issues in London beg to announce that they are joyfully full to overflowing.

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Hamilton is holding its Centennial Industrial Exposition next week and all the province will visit, despite the way it spells exhibition.

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Madam Kin Seno is the only woman bank president in Japan. A correspondent says he Kin Seno sign of any such innovation here.

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A house worth \$6,000 is to be built in a day at Hamilton, as a feature of the Centennial celebration—but not by union labor, we assume.

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Canadian cities, railroads and industries got over \$20,000,000 in London last month—which is pretty good fishing for a hot July in tight money waters.

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A London critic says Canada is learning not to bite more than it can chew. That is not the trouble. The British investor is giving us so little to bite just now.

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George Ham, the Canadian banker who was imprisoned for three months by the Mexicans—a little trick of theirs—has managed to escape to Canada before they made him a sandwich.

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Jacques Vernes, the well-known French financier, thinks that the efficiency of workers can be increased by inducing them to sing while at work. We dare not try it with the voices of a newspaper office.

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A London cable message says that a garden wall separated the gardens of two houses on the Chelsea embankment. On one side lived Sir John Wolfe-Barry, on the other Eliza Theodora Minturn. Litigation began in 1910 to decide whether there was a defect in the wall, and, if so, who was responsible for its repair. The case was taken from court to court until it was finally submitted to the House of Lords, and decided last week. Although the defect could have been repaired for a small amount, thousands of dollars were expended in law costs. The moral seems to be that Sir John and Eliza, like the little Dutch boy, should have stuck their fingers in the defect, even if it were imaginary.