

upon, whereby it will be possible to work out a tentative programme that will do substantial justice to all the economic groups in Canada. Only through intelligent and restrained discussion, through a live-and-let-live policy, will it be possible to effect that harmony in our life without which solidarity in citizenship cannot be attained. Extremists must give way on both sides; and it must be realized that only in process of time can anything approximating to economic justice be worked out. To that end it would be well if certain interests in the East should cease patronizing Western Canada and particularly western farmers. Surely, what the West has accomplished during the course of this struggle entitles it to better treatment.

It is impossible, within present limits of space, to deal with these questions in their entirety, and further consideration must be left for later treatment. In conclusion, however, we may say that the West is at one with the East in many vital questions affecting the prosperity of the Dominion. Especially are western farmers anxious that the government, as well as all the great associations of the country, should take immediate steps to prevent the dislocation of the economic life of the nation at the close of the war, whether through unemployment or otherwise. To that end it would favor the expansion of our shipping programme; the development of our great national ports and harbors; the construction of branch railway lines; the building of roads, and so forth. The West, in a word, is not parochial or sectional in its interests. It demands a united and free Canada.

#### CITY OF LONDON FINANCES

For the year 1917 the total receipts of the city of London, Ontario, amounted to \$1,314,360 on account of the year 1917, and \$122,528 on account of the year 1916. There is still to be received for 1917 a sum of \$375,482, making a total revenue for 1917 of \$1,727,320. This is almost \$100,000 above the estimates for the year, there being only a few items which did not exceed the amount estimated. The expenditure was \$1,374,886 for the year 1917, and \$136,106 for the year 1916. Amounts totalling \$290,367 are further to be paid for the past year. The total expenses are, therefore, \$1,709,757, which is substantially more than the estimates, but less than the total revenue. The revenue for the year includes an item of \$30,896, which was a surplus from the year 1917, whereas the surplus of the year 1917 is only \$21,228.

The assets of the city amount to \$4,407,893, of which \$647,088 consists of sinking funds, which are all in good condition. The total of outstanding debentures is \$4,187,797. Debenture issues made during the year totalled approximately \$250,000, the largest item being \$100,000 for the London Railway Commission.

The population for the year is 57,301, which is slightly less than the population of 58,055 reported for 1916. Assessment on the other hand has increased slightly. The tax rate for the year 1917 is 34 mills. The general debenture debt was at its maximum in 1915 since when it has declined by \$300,000. The total debt charges for the year amounted to \$505,126, of which 38 per cent. was for sinking fund purposes. Considerable sums of the city's bonds mature in 1921 and subsequent years, and the sinking fund charges and the general debenture debt should then decrease rapidly.

Statements of the affairs of some of the institutions in which the city is interested are given separately. One of these is the Western Fair Association which is reported to be in an excellent position. The receipts for the year were about \$68,000, and the expenses about \$55,000, leaving a balance of \$13,000 to be carried forward. This, together with the previous assets, makes a total of assets of \$122,373 against which there are no capital liabilities. From the water-works a surplus of \$5,361 was realized after paying all charges and expending \$15,385 on capital account.

#### AN ABUSE OF PRIVILEGE

##### One of Principal Fire Causes Has Not as Yet Been Subjected to Any Regulations

By Henry Lye.

Vancouver, B.C., August 2, 1918.

We are accustomed to news of fires which have "wiped out" villages and towns, or have greatly damaged or destroyed factories and mills or granaries, whose existence was of great importance to the welfare, not only of their several localities, but to the province, the Dominion, the empire and to the civilization and the freedom of the world at large, and yet we neither take heed, nor measures to prevent the continuance of such events as make Canada infamous by contrast with other countries. We had the right to expect action on the part of the Commission of Conservation in this direction, but we get nothing but precept and reiteration of statements of which everybody has been made aware almost continuously during the past fifty years. Had the fires branch of this commission been composed of members experienced in the investigation of causes of fires and the adjustment of fire claims we would have had sensible measures for the prevention of fires long ago.

It is my intention to deal with some features of the manifesto recently issued by this commission, but, for the present, to confine myself to an opportunity neglected or ignored.

We all know that many, if not most, of the serious fires have their origin in criminal carelessness, and that the most prevalent practice in this carelessness arises from the habit of smoking. Smokers are now the only people who have liberty of action and exclusive freedom from control. We are exhorted to be self-denying in the use of foods and, when we are not legally restricted in quantity, we are obliged to submit to adulteration by substitutes. We may not have any of the "wine which maketh glad the heart of man," but we have that which may make him melancholy mad. We must forego the glass of beer necessary to the refreshment of the laboring man. The glass of whisky which warded off colds in the wet and cold wintry nights, or the malaria which produced fever, can now only be procured on the production of a doctor's prescription. The housekeeper is bewildered by the restriction in the use of sugar and other commodities which she has always found necessary. The very children are deprived of cakes and candies with which their little hearts were formerly gladdened. But amidst all these deprivations and restrictions and self-denials and dangers of fires the smoker is allowed to revel in the consumption of that which is, comparatively, if not altogether, unnecessary to health or sustenance.

Leaving out the soldiers in the wet and foul trenches, or whose nerves have been racked by dirt, shell fires, gas or want of food during the long days of toil and exposure and the nights of unrest and disturbance, we are face to face with the ordinary smoker, male and female, very few of whom can truly aver that tobacco, in any form, is really necessary to their health or life. To most of these people the use of tobacco is merely a matter of habit, which they selfishly indulge in without caring for one moment as to the necessities and comfort of their families, or of that loyalty which urges self-denial in every direction. It is needless to point out the annoyance caused to non-smokers through the abuse of this habit. Our causeways are littered with matches and the stubs of cigars and cigarettes which have been thrown down whilst yet burning. When we further reflect on the fact that to produce the various forms of smoke, the labor of cultivation, manufacture and marketing would, if rightly used, produce and dispense an immense amount of that food, from which all are debarred, we cannot but conclude that the question of the habit of smoking and its course of menace should have had some consideration and action on the part of the Commission of so-called Conservation.

The Union Insurance Society of Canton has been granted a license in the province of Saskatchewan.

The chairman of the administration commission of the city of Montreal, Mr. E. R. Decary, has given instructions to heads of departments to keep an accurate check upon the hours which each employee at the city hall works.