

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

BY

The Monetary Times
Printing Company
of Canada, Limited

Publishers also of

"The Canadian Engineer"

Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle
of Canada

Established 1867

Old as Confederation

JAS. J. SALMOND
President and General Manager

A. E. JENNINGS
Assistant General Manager

JOSEPH BLACK
Secretary

W. A. McKAGUE
Editor

Union of Canadian Municipalities Convention

Ownership and Operation of Utilities and Municipal Activity in Housing Feature Discussions at Quebec Meeting—Incidence of Municipal Taxation—Recent Progress of Western Municipalities—Commission Government in Small Towns—Relations With Labor

THE 20th annual convention of the Union of Canadian Municipalities was held in the city of Quebec, July 27 to 29. Representatives from all parts of Canada were present. After a meeting of the executive on Tuesday morning, an official welcome to the delegates was extended by Mayor Samson, of Quebec, in which he emphasized the need for serious consideration of growing municipal problems, such as the operation of public utilities. Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, lieutenant governor of the province, formally opened the meeting in the afternoon.

Mayor Harold Fisher, of Ottawa, in his presidential address, stated that unless financial conditions changed, the housing problem was bound to become more acute. The question of handling municipal enterprises was admittedly difficult, and deserved a careful investigation.

The delegates were given ample opportunity to see Quebec, both as an industrial and as a tourist city. On Wednesday they inspected the police and fire departments, and were taken on a boat trip through the harbor. In the evening they were the guests of the city council, addresses being given by Mayor Samson; A. A. Pearson, of Point Grey, B.C.; Hon. Antonin Gaipeault, minister of public works, Quebec; Ald. M. Fiset, Quebec; Mayor Fisher, of Ottawa; Arthur Roberts, K.C., Bridgewater, N.S.; Ald. Dixon, Montreal; Mayor Beaubien, Outremont, and Controller J. H. Ramsden, Toronto.

Bonuses to Industries Opposed

On July 28 the convention placed itself on record as opposed to the practice of bonusing industries; there was only one dissenting vote when this resolution was passed. J. N. Bayne, of Saskatchewan, remarked that if firms were not strong enough to stand on their own feet without the aid of bonuses it did not speak well for these firms. He did not believe there could be any strong arguments in favor of granting bonuses. W. D. Lightall, K.C., Montreal, said that although the principle of granting bonuses was a bad one, there might be individual cases where it would be advisable to grant them. Mayor T. D. Bouchard, of St. Hyacinthe, was strongly opposed to municipal bonuses, and said a law should be passed to put an end to them.

Ald. Dickson, of Montreal, expressed his opposition emphatically. He pointed to Montreal as an example, saying that the annexation of smaller municipalities obliged Montreal to acquire their liabilities. A firm which could not do business without a bonus was not worthy of consideration, he said. Ald. Collier, of Quebec, also spoke against bonuses, and likewise of municipal tax exemptions, which, he held, were equally vicious.

Previous to the discussion of the bonus question a resolution was passed accepting the resignation of G. B. Wilson as assistant secretary and granting him \$500 for his services. It was decided to appoint a permanent secretary at a salary of \$2,500 a year, the salary to be increased later if the finances of the union will permit.

At the opening of the afternoon session, J. D. Saunders, city clerk of Camrose, Alta., and secretary of the Union of Alberta Municipalities, spoke on the recent progress of western municipalities. He said that until the West has a population commensurate with its vast areas, there was no use of talking of establishing industries. Mr. Saunders pointed out that the total population of Alberta was not as large as that of the city of Montreal, and dealt at length with the questions of inflated valuations, taxation systems and the lack of population.

President's Address

In his address President Fisher, of Ottawa, said in part:—

"About the union there is a great deal that might be said and certainly there is much that must be done, if it is to be made the useful and efficient organization it should be. Under favorable conditions an association composed of all the municipalities of Canada, large and small, and separated in some cases by thousands of miles, must be a difficult organization. During the past few years the union had had to contend with exceptional conditions.

"Originally, the union was a fighting organization formed primarily to look after the interests of the municipalities in matters coming before the Dominion parliament or dealt with by the Dominion government. For several years there has been little fighting to be done before the Dominion parliament. The creation of the railway board, with its ever-increasing jurisdiction, removed many matters from the political field where lobbying and other influences of a baneful character had long been felt. The war put an end for a time to private enterprise of the kind that took form in private bills, that were not always of benefit to the public. The acquisition by the government of a great part of the railway system of the country has, for a time at least, done away with railroad building by private companies and, whatever may be said otherwise of the venture, has had the effect of removing a source of aggression which has always been feared by municipalities. Within the year the union did raise a protest against any suggestion that government railway property taken over from private companies should be exempt from local taxation, with the result that a statement was made by the government that there was no intention to seek this exemption. Perhaps the protest was unnecessary, but it certainly did no harm. Apart from this, there has been little work for the union to do in parliament. With no danger threatening in what was the original field of the union, the need of a federal organization has been questioned by some who have not gone into the matter thoroughly.

"During the war many municipalities developed a streak of economy of the kind that shows itself mainly in small matters. They thought that they could not afford to send delegates to our conventions. It is to be hoped that we are

(Continued on page 45)