

CONVENTION OF U. C. M.—(Continued).

the development of land and the building of a home. The development of the sewer, the water-main, the land and the site. When we talk of objecting to Municipal development, we forget that the principle of Municipal expenditure is already recognized and carried out throughout the whole of the Dominion. If a Municipal Corporation were to-morrow to enter into the work of building houses it would not be cutting private enterprise out, because private enterprise could still build houses. I mention that as a preliminary to what I am going to say. We have to recognize that private enterprise is practically killed in regard to building houses. You will not direct capital when the cost of material, the cost of labor, the cost of securing labor and the high cost of development it as great as at present. No private builder is going to start and build houses for the working classes. He may be able to build them for the well-to-do, but not for the purpose of meeting the demand. We may get an individual putting up a temporary building for himself; but remember we have appealed to these men and extracted every cent for Victory Bonds. We have withdrawn the

capital which they had for their own use for war measures. We are, therefore, face to face with the same conditions as Great Britain and the United States have to face, and we ought to try and face them. In Britain it was found after two or three months' careful investigation that the position in regard to the working man engaged in munition industries was this, it did not pay to overwork a man; it did not pay to have him cut off from every social enterprise. The only way has been that they have recognized that the increase of output could be secured by making the worker contented with general conditions. I have seen towns when I was in Great Britain last fall; they have built houses; they started building shacks and they abandoned it. A manufacturer can get workers no matter what accommodation he has got, but it is the type of worker that he gets. The man who has skill and brain to do work must have a proper home to live in. It becomes a business factor in the type of industries of all kinds. Now, we have in these Western Provinces to blame ourselves in a great measure. The United States have appropriated one hundred and ten million dollars for building houses for men engaged in ship-building and munitions.

"Municipal Responsibility in Regard to Economic Development of the Land"

An address was then given by Mr. J. N. Bayne, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs for the Province of Saskatchewan, on the above subject as follows:—

World conditions have brought this subject boldly into the limelight. As the fifth year of the greatest war of either hemisphere approaches, we are confronted squarely with the necessity of applying first principles. The warring nations are obliged to take stock of what can be actually produced from the land. That which is not actually necessary is being relegated more and more to the background. We are now required to make the most of our natural resources and to see that these are not alienated from those who will produce the most and the best for the public weal. Starvation faces millions of people to-day. To give them that nourishment which they need for the preservation of their lives, land, ordinary, commonplace land, must be cultivated and developed. It makes us think that we are back almost to the stage of primitive man when the cravings of hunger made him cast about for some means to assuage them. But eons of time have passed since man was primitive, since each individual struggled for himself. We have now developed so far that the human race knows the benefit of organization and co-operation. We have learned that the people of any community or settlement can bring about better results when united. A municipality is simply a community or a unit of organization established for the mutual benefit of its people and for its general progress and development. It is expected to be the acme of united effort and self-government. The people, with their aims and action co-ordinated, should be in a better position to carry on economic development of the land under conditions where each individual is working by himself although all might have the same object in view.

With a fearful wastage of men and material which has racked a great portion of the world for nearly four years, it is surely a time for organizations, municipal or otherwise, to bend their best united struggles to overcome in some way, and to as large an extent as possible, the havoc which has been wrought. Municipal authorities, be they urban or rural, have indeed a responsibility in the economical use of the nation's birthright — the land. There are various ways in which the municipality's duties in this regard may be carried out. We will endeavor to speak of some of them.

I would mention first what may appear to be a commonplace method. I refer to the construction of streets, roads or highways which, with the least possible wear and tear on the producer's equipment, will bring what he grows from the land to the people who need it for their sustenance. It is indeed the duty of a municipal council to see that the amounts contributed by its various supporters, which are often called "taxes," are carefully expended in the creation of proper streets or roads. The man with a thousand acres, growing good cereals in a region from which it is impossible to transport such grains, would

be of little benefit to the human race. With proper facilities for conveying the grain from his thousand acre farm, he and his products prove benefactors to mankind.

Again, the municipality may, by a proper system of graded taxation, so encourage cultivation of the soil that the land may be developed in a manner profitable to producer and consumer. Possibly a bonus for cultivation may be given, or, as is sometimes done, a penalty for failure to cultivate land by way of additional taxation may be imposed. The results are almost the same, but the bonus instead of the penalty is a little more easily managed and perhaps gives more encouragement to the owners of lands to make the most of them while in their care and keeping. In Saskatchewan, the province from which I come, there existed from 1914 to 1917, inclusive, a special speculator's rate known as the surtax, levied on wild or uncultivated farm lands. This was collected by the rural municipalities of the province and by them spent for general improvements within their boundaries. No regular farmer or settler had any surtax whatever to pay in respect of his farm. Ten dollars per quarter section, or six and one-quarter cents per acre, was the amount of the supertax. It can be readily understood that it was attacked constantly by those who wished to have their speculative holdings advance in price through the efforts and settlement of men who actually farmed or produced wealth from the soil. There was an average of \$680,658.00 surtax imposed during these four years in the rural municipalities of the province which greatly assisted them in carrying on their duties. In the fall of 1917 legislation was passed whereby the "wild lands tax" took the place of the "surtax." It is now levied on a basis of one per cent of the assessed value of the uncultivated land. The municipalities enjoyed this special rate for four years, but after having this assistance in the earlier years of their existence, it was withdrawn and is now payable to the general revenues of the province. It will be readily seen that the wild lands tax will be in excess of the surtax. As already explained, the latter was on a flat rate per acre and amounted to ten dollars per quarter section. The wild lands tax on a quarter section valued at ten dollars per acre will now be sixteen dollars, which fact should further encourage the cultivation of the land. The other prairie provinces have now similar legislation in this regard. In Saskatchewan's three hundred rural municipalities the wild lands tax is collected by them and transferred to the provincial government. In the unorganized territory on the frontiers of the province this tax is assessed and collected direct by the Department of Municipal Affairs. Surely the surtax, or the wild lands tax, is one way of disposing of municipal responsibility in regard to the development of the land.

While dealing with the rural portions of our province, it might likewise be suggested that development would be further encouraged by a more reasonable lay-out or sub-division of our townships, possibly under municipal