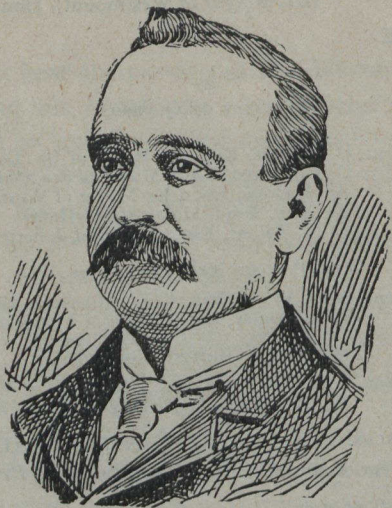


The American Society of Municipal Improvements.



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The extended and rapidly increasing demand for information regarding the American Society of Municipal Improvements, which will meet in Montreal on September 5th, 6th, and 7th. of the present year, has resulted in the following article about the history of the organization, together with a brief review of its objects, results accomplished and other information of interest.

In response to the wishes of the members attending the Montreal Convention, the following notes are devoted to information relating to the society for the benefit of those cities and individuals who are interested in the betterments and advancement of municipalities in America.

The desirability of an association of city officials for united and systematic consideration of the affairs controlled by and relating to municipal corporation had been the source of much favorable theoretical discussion, but numerous difficulties appeared to prevent the practical application of the theory until the question was taken in hand in the summer of 1894 by Mr. M. J. Murphy, at that time Street Commissioner of St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A. The persistent efforts and extended correspondence by this gentleman assisted by the officials of Cincinnati and Buffalo, resulted in a call for a meeting of interested cities on September 19th, 1894 at Buffalo, N. Y., for the purpose of effecting an organization of the officials representing both the legislative and executive branches of urban administration.

The general interest in such matters was indicated by the large representation of cities at this initial meeting. About sixty delegates from the following sixteen cities were in attendance and assisted in perfecting a permanent organization; — Allegheny Pa., Buffalo, N. Y., Camden, N. J., Cincinnati O., Fort Wayne, Ind., Grand Rapids, Mich., Indianapolis, Ind., St. Louis Mo., Memphis, Tenn., Milwaukee, Wis., Newark, N. J., New Bedford, Mass., New Haven, Conn., Omaha, Neb., Portland, Me., and Syracuse, N. Y.

The result of this meeting was the formation of the American Society of Municipal Improvements, the first practical association of any magnitude in America ever perfected for the consideration of city affairs. The agitation of leading municipal problems by the public press for two or three years immediately prior to the meeting at Buffalo had awakened the public interest in public affairs and developed a general conviction of the necessity for the united effort in devising improved and business-like methods in the conduct of affairs common to all. The movement therefore was launched at a most propitious time as it met the full approval of the general public, and the stimulus imparted by such favorable condition placed the society upon a sound and thriving basis, upon which has developed a steady, healthy growth in numbers and usefulness.

The Society was organized on broad lines and its field of operation embraces every department of a municipality with particular attention to taxation, government, sanitation, lighting and public improvements. It binds together for a common purpose the executive heads of the various departments together with the Mayors and Councilmen who are responsible for the general policy to be pursued.

It is the aim of the Association to bring these officers together during the fall of each year for the purpose of considering through papers, discussions and committee reports all questions relating to the best interests of American and Canadian Cities; to promote social and friendly intercourse at such conventions and to circulate the information thus obtained among its members through the publication of the proceedings in pamphlet form. By these means the society endeavors to secure a thorough study of municipal affairs, the dissemination of information relating to same, the promotion of official efficiency and an honest and capable administration of all city departments.

A considerable benefit is derived also by the delegate through the opportunity to visit the cities selected as the places for meeting and examine the public works of same. These cities represent the most progressive elements of municipal practices and government and much can be learned by a personal investigation of their methods. The meetings have been held in the following locations:—

1894, Buffalo, N. Y.; 1895, Cincinnati, O.; 1896, Chicago, Ill.; 1897, Nashville, Tenn.; 1898, Washington, D. C.; 1899, Toronto, Ont.; 1900, Milwaukee, Wis.; 1901, Niagara Falls, N. Y.; 1902, Rochester, N. Y.; 1903, Indianapolis, Ind.; 1904, St. Louis, Mo.

The next meeting of the association will be held in Montreal, Que., on September 5th, 6th, and 7th. inclusive, for which a valuable and interesting programme has been prepared by the officers of the society and the local committee of citizens. In connection with this meeting the associate members of the society have decided to hold the first annual Exhibition of Municipal Supplies, in the Crystal Rink, corner of Dorchester and Guy Streets, on September 5th, to 9th., inclusive.

The meeting of the convention will be held in a part of the Crystal Rink, especially reserved for that purpose.