

Uniform System of Accounting

J. N. BAYNE.

Probably the real benefit of a Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs is shown in the latter part of the report of Deputy Minister Bayne, of Saskatchewan, which deals with annual financial statements and uniform records of accounting. In this Saskatchewan has been signally successful thanks largely to the efficiency of the official of the department itself. Mr. Bayne in referring to an uniform system of accounting has this to say:

"The financial year for each municipality consists of the twelve months comprising the calendar year. Annually at the close of October an interim financial statement is issued for the information of the electors. This gives to the ratepayers in each municipal institution, in concise form, a statement of receipts and expenditures during the first ten months of the municipal year. In a manner it is the giving of an account of his stewardship

financial statement required. There are a few unfortunate exceptions, but the number thus delinquent grows smaller each year. The desire on the part of many municipal councils to have the auditing performed by the best officials available is shown in the fact that a great many have engaged as permanent auditors a reputable firm of chartered accountants. It might be mentioned in this connection that the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan is performing a work among our municipalities which should be lasting. The efforts of its members in raising higher the standard of municipal auditing will have its effect on our municipal life for all time. In order to become a chartered accountant of Saskatchewan, it is necessary for the applicant to have had much experience in the keeping of books, and before he receives his degree each candidate must pass a rigid examination on general commercial and municipal accounting. Naturally each member of the institute is jealous of his reputation. He has often a greater incentive to perform work that is masterly in its thoroughness than a transient auditor who, although efficient, may have his attention diverted by other lines of work.

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP (Continued).

past; we do not under-estimate the achievements of the past, but we live in the future. We do not forget that we are children of our fathers, but we pay the highest honor to our fathers not by attempting to copy their deeds, but by going forth in their spirit to play our part in the great movements of our own day. Each age has pushed back civilization's battle-front. It is ours not to occupy the trenches which our predecessors dug, but rather to press forward to new victories. In the age-long fight between light and darkness, new instruments and methods may become essential to success.

We must look forward to a new industrial and social order. Our great natural resources must not be monopolized by the few but retained for the use of all. Industry and commerce must be democratized. Wealth socially created must be socially enjoyed. The foul octopus of special privilege must be throttled before it drains the lifeblood of the nation. "Property rights" must be subordinated to human rights. Self-seeking must be replaced by social service.

Then, our city slums will vanish. Then, our farms will cease to be places of banishment. Then will the golden age return when "none was for a party" and "all were for the State." Then will be realized many of those ideals for which reformers have worked and patriots have died. Then will be ushered in the day of which poets have fondly dreamed and which, in moments of vision, prophets have foretold.

We need a new kind of patriotism. War ideals must give place to peace ideals. The dominance of the few must give way to the welfare of the many. Our highest national aspiration will not be satisfied by singing "God save the King" but rather express itself in the passionate prayer "when wilt Thou save the people?"

But Canada can realize her ideals only as other nations realize them. No nation, no Empire, no continent is self-contained and independent. We live in an age of airships and wireless telegraphy and international relationships. "Last century made the world a neighborhood; this century must make it a brotherhood."

In this great world task Canada should take no unimportant part. Through her Atlantic door she looks out to the past, to the civilization of Europe, where civilization was cradled when the race was young. The circle is complete and has returned upon itself. We have entered upon a new era.

On the part of each elected official and enables the interested elector to vote more intelligently at the approaching election of municipal representatives early in the following December. At the end of the year a complete financial report is compiled and duly placed before the electors for their information. This annual financial statement, as well as the interim report for the first ten months of the year, is in a form prescribed by the department of municipal affairs. An auditor, or auditing firm, must issue the same in each case. The annual report is to be compiled within two months after the close of the year. Practically all municipal clerks and secretary treasurers have their books so well up to date and in such neat form that the auditor has little difficulty in promptly issuing the fi-

"In previous reports mention has been made of the fact that in Saskatchewan uniform municipal accounting is applied throughout each class of municipal organization, excepting cities, where, for reasons already given, the records are not the same in every particular. However, each town uses the same system of bookkeeping as all other towns, and a similar statement may be made regarding villages and rural municipalities. The records thus used are prepared and prescribed by the department of Municipal Affairs. As a matter of course these systems have been altered to suit the progress of the province as shown in changed legislation. Alterations thus made have been kept down to a minimum.

"Four municipal inspectors call at the offices of the municipal clerks and secretary treasurers and comment on the condition of the offices visited. The report includes remarks on the general conduct of the duties to be performed by the secretary treasurer, a statement as to whether or not his books are up to date, and gives other information showing the standing of the municipality concerned. While the municipal inspector does not usurp the position held by the auditor engaged by the council, the call of the former assists in preventing work from lagging and likewise helps to preserve efficiency and uniformity in the keeping of all municipal records. Particularly where a secretary has just assumed office, advice and instruction are given.

"In a province to which peoples from almost every nation in the civilized world have flocked, it is to be expected that information will be continually desired regarding our municipal systems and methods of taxation. A medley of ideas regarding local self-government is often found in one community. It requires time, particularly in the newer districts, for officials, quite unused to our methods, to adapt themselves. The promptness with which municipal officials have accepted and applied themselves to new conditions speaks well for their capacity to become real citizens of this comparatively young province.

"The evolution of local self-government in the area now comprising Saskatchewan is an interesting history. The beginning was many years ago in the old North West Territories. The standing reached by our municipal institutions to-day is due in so small measure to those public spirited pioneers who freely gave of their time to serve on municipal councils in frontier days.

"But the process of evolution in our municipalities is not yet complete, nor is it likely to be for several decades. A pause would mean stagnation. Unforeseen changes and new problems will confront our municipalities so long as Saskatchewan grows. From the manner in which our local municipal officials have met and solved problems in the past, it may be readily concluded that our municipal institutions are competent to deal with further labors which may arise in the growth of what is already the third largest province in the Canadian federation."