

THE NEW DEMOCRACY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

The year 1918 marked the close of the most eventful period in the world's history; a period that commenced with massacre and rapine, and ended with the passing away of plutocracy and bureaucracy, and—it is to be hoped—militarism. It closed the books of "The Divine Rights of Kings," and "The Might and Majesty of the Sword," and marked the opening of "The New Democracy." By the very justice of the cause for which millions of men have been fighting during four and a half years, the free nations of the world have learned to understand one another, and for the first time in history it has been made possible for a peace to be signed that can be based on the teachings of the great Redeemer of mankind. The old order of caste and class passed away on the cessation of hostilities, and in the signing of peace a new order of "Brotherhood" has a chance to take its place, if the statesmen now attending the "Peace" conference realize that which is expected of them. Indeed, if they don't, the great sacrifice of the best blood of the nations will have been shed in vain.

The encouraging note to municipal men is that their great civic institutions, under the new democracy will be placed on a higher pedestal than ever before. The war has given municipal government a new importance, and to many a new meaning. Men to-day realize that good health, the greatest asset of a nation, depends on good local government; they know that the morals of the nation depend on the same agency; they appreciate the tremendous influence that bright, well-built and clean streets have on the happiness of the people. They have experienced the power of good education in the social and material progress of nations, and there is a strong indication that a keener interest will be taken in local affairs by the best men. The apathy shown in the past towards things municipal in Canada now gives signs of breaking down. Municipal government is coming into its own, so let those of us who have given years of our best to the service of our fellow men, without appreciation, have patience a little longer.

WORKMEN'S COTTAGES.

One of the problems to-day in Canada is the housing of the workers and unless some solution is found soon the difficulties of providing dwellings at low rentals will be increased ten-fold as our soldiers return home. Moreover, the problem is not confined to the larger industrial centres, where the difficulties have been intensified because of rising real estate values in spite of the war, but even in the smaller towns and villages there is a serious lack of housing accommodation. The reason for the shortage is that with the high cost of materials and labor private investors will not take the chance to build workmen's cottages when by very little more expense they can erect houses that will bring them in much more profit. One day a writer of our staff had a conversation with a man who was building houses to sell again, ranging in price from \$10,000 to \$15,000. On being asked the reason for his building houses that workmen could not touch, the builder pointed out some houses which he had just sold for \$10,000 each, and said that in another part of the city in question the same houses would only bring in about \$5,000, or its equivalent in rent, and while it was true he had to pay more for the ground, because of the neighborhood, material and labor only cost the same, and the only addition he had to make was in a better finish. In building larger houses the man made a profit, in workmen's cottages he would lose.

UNION OF QUEBEC MUNICIPALITIES.

At a meeting of municipal executives of the Province of Quebec held three months ago in Montreal, on the invitation of this Journal, a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of re-organizing the old union or of forming a new one. The committee has recommended the formation of an entirely new organization and with this object in view a convention will be called in the early part of the year. The title of the association will be the Union of Quebec Municipalities. This brings every province into line, so far as provincial municipal associations are concerned, with the exception of Prince Edward Island; the two Prairie provinces having both rural and urban unions. Municipal Quebec is now well looked after. The Municipal Department, though it has not been in existence twelve months, has already shown something of the calibre of its personnel. Every encouragement and help are given to those councils that show real governing qualities, but the Minister and his deputy have shut down on every form of extravagance; so much so, that the credit of the municipalities of the province by the St. Lawrence has increased considerably. And now that a municipal association has been formed, principally for educational purposes along the broadest lines, there is every reason for municipal government in the Province of Quebec to be in the vanguard of progress.

THE CANADIAN INDIAN AND CITIZENSHIP.

In a very logical letter to an American newspaper the Rev. Red Fox Skinhrhu (a full blooded Blackfoot Indian) urges the cause of his people to full citizenship in the United States. As in Canada the aborigine of the United States is a ward of the country and as such has no citizenship rights—he not being supposed to have sufficient intelligence to take up its responsibilities. If ever there was any suspicion in the minds of the present generation that the "Red" man was still the degenerate the framers of the Indian laws in both countries would have us believe, the splendid patriotism shown by him in this war of liberty and justice has entirely eliminated it. In Canada long before conscription came into force practically every single Red man of military age volunteered for military service—a record that was not near equalled by any other race in the country, either white or colored. Surely then he has the right to ask the question—if the Red man can fight, why can't he vote?

It has always seemed an anomaly to us that any foreigner, be he black or white or yellow, can become a citizen of Canada after five years residence—without any examination as to his qualifications, which if given would have barred many present citizens—but that the real native is penned up in reservations, without a voice in his own government, because in the early days of the white man's occupation of the country, he fell a victim to his conqueror's worst trait of character, drink, which he mistakenly thought produced the valor that overcame himself. The Dominion Government does not seem to realize that the very schooling given in the reservations has educated the Red man to a far more advanced stage of civilization than that of many foreigners now domiciled in Canada.

Now that peace has come after over four years of bloody war in which the Red man has taken his full share, the least the country can do, if even as a recompense for his sacrifice, is to give him the full privilege of citizenship, and we don't know of any other race that would make better citizens. After all no man is fit to become a citizen of Canada unless he is prepared to fight for her, and in this the Canadian Indian has set a splendid example to us all—and in particular to those many Europeans who have enjoyed our hospitality and protection, but who have done little or nothing, during the last four years to warrant that protection.

The Canadian Indian, in common with his American brother, has in this war proved his right to citizenship, and we have no right to keep him from it.