

THE CANADIAN MUNICIPAL JOURNAL

A REVIEW OF CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

City of Montreal and
United States - \$1.25
Canada, Great Brit-
ain and Countries
in Postal Union - \$1.00

Published Monthly by

The Canadian Municipal Journal Co., Limited

HARRY BRAGG

President

FREDERICK WRIGHT

Editor

All communications to be made to Canadian Municipal
Journal

CORISTINE BUILDING, MONTREAL
Telephone Main 4362

Any article appearing in
these pages may be re-
produced provided full
credit is given to the
Journal.

Vol. XII

DECEMBER, 1916

No 12

CONTENTS.

High Cost of Living	608	West Gains in Population	617
The German Outrages.	608	Convention of Alberta Municipalities	618
Convention of British Columbia Municipalities	610	Evolution Towards Lasting Prosperity	619
Canadian Citizenship (J. S. Woodsworth)	616	A Practical Education (B. F. Freeman)	620
Elimination of Political Parties in Canadian Cities (W. D. Lighthall)	616	School Trustees and Municipalities	622
J. J. Kelso (Ajax).....	617	Churches Exempt from Taxation	623
		People Taxed Unnecessarily on Debenture Issues	626

"Commission of Conservation's Questionnaire."

The Commission of Conservation has sent out to a large number of the mayors a long series of questions regarding the standing of their respective municipalities. There are thirty main questions, covering valuation statistics, industrial conditions, streets and buildings, housing conditions, vacant lots, etc., and as the questions are sub-divided, requiring in all 112 answers, the Commission has asked no small task of civic officials, particularly as many of the questions entail much study and diving into figures. Now the question has been put to us quite plainly as to whether or no the councils were justified into going to so much trouble — whether any really useful object would be served, or if the data, no doubt much of it valuable in itself, was being got together to satisfy the whims of the members of the Commission of Conservation, whose real work and standing would seem to be an enigma to many of our local authorities. Frankly speaking, even with the explanatory letter asking for the information before us, we cannot enlighten enquirers.

We fully recognize that the securing of genuine comparative statements would be of immense value in helping to solve the economic problems of our municipalities, but under the present complex systems of municipal accounting and financing in Canada—no two provinces having the same—which makes it well-nigh impossible for the stranger,

however well versed he might be in civic accounting, to read the financial statement of any given municipality for comparative purposes, we do not see that that part of the Commission's questionnaire under the heading, for instance, of valuation statistics can be of much use. In fact, we believe that the information for comparative purposes would be misleading. We remember some years ago the late Mr. Robb, then city treasurer of Montreal, preparing a comparative statement of the principal municipalities of this country which was necessarily so full of explanatory notes that the real value of the work was lost in the bewildered mind of the reader.

The Union of Canadian Municipalities for fourteen years has been trying to solve the problem of securing reliable statements through uniform municipal accounting and statistics and though it has done good work it has not yet succeeded in its great task, and the consumation will not be brought about until every province falls into line, so that it is not probable that the Commission of Conservation will be able to solve the problem by just getting the already hardworked officials of our municipalities to answer 112 questions, which can only be based on data prepared on the present complicated systems.