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The Coming Year

In wishing the municipal councils for 1920 the best of success we should remind them that never in the history of Canada have the local authorities such an opportunity as in the coming year to prove their work in the social and economic development of the country. Because of being closer to the people than the other legislative bodies and in spite of the criticism hurled against their effectiveness as a social force, the civic authorities in every province have, on the whole, during the last decade, fully lived up to their opportunities, limited though they were. To-day more is expected of them, and we have confidence that, given larger opportunities, the new councils will live up to their larger responsibilities.

One of the larger responsibilities that directly affect the councils at the moment, is the adequate housing of the people. This responsibility is recognized by the Federal and Provincial authorities. The Federal authorities have done and are doing their fair share towards supplying the houses, the shortage of which at the beginning of last year was 40,000. Parliament set aside \$25,000,000 to loan to the Provinces for housing purposes, and the Federal Government through its adviser Mr. Thomas Adams is ready to give the best information on the subject to those interested. The Provincial authorities, with the exception of Ontario, have not done as much other than establish the necessary machinery to enable the municipalities to take advantage of the loan. Much then is left for the municipal authorities to do if the housing shortage is to be made up, and the sooner it is made up the better if only to stop the miserable profiteering in rents, that is too prevalent in every part of the Dominion.

There is too the problem of how best to combat the social evil cancer that is fast eating itself into the economic body of our social life. The mayor of one of our smaller cities took the responsibility

on himself of looking after the public morals of the community. His system was segregation and he saw to it that there was real segregation. Such a system while it is not ethical by any means, is certainly better than no system at all in the curtailment of prostitution. There is no doubt that the evil is growing and must be faced.

Again there is the question of public health and hygiene which have become a vital factor in the progress of urban life. The necessity for open air spaces and playgrounds is recognized to-day with consequent added duties to the local councils.

The above are but a small part of the larger responsibility of municipal government to-day, but which are sufficient in themselves to entail much thought and anxiety. But such is the optimism of those who administer municipal government in Canada that, with the renewed energy through the new members, we have every reason to believe that at the end of 1920 municipal Canada will be in the vanguard of national progress.

GOOD ROADS IN CANADA.

During the next five years Canada is committed to spend \$50,000,000 on one big highway scheme. For this purpose the Dominion Government has set aside \$20,000,000 to represent forty per cent of the whole, and as all the Provinces have entered the compact, thus assuring the raising of the necessary \$30,000,000 to complete the scheme it means that this country is determined to have a main highway system equal at least to that of any other country. This huge amount of money added to the large sums that will be spent during the same period by the 890 municipalities on their street improvements, represents in round figures an aggregate expenditure of at least \$40,000,000 per annum for the next five years on highways, roads and streets in Canada. Surely an indication of the spirit of the times.