

New Municipal and Industrial Organization For Northwest Ontario

By C. BIRKETT.

Temporary Secretary, Union of Municipalities.

The annual meeting of the Central Canada Colonization and Highway Association was held in Fort William, on the 23rd and 24th of November. It was a history making conference as well as an unique one. Representatives were present from the four Provincial Electoral Ridings of Fort William, Port Arthur, Rainy River and Kenora, an area which is larger in extent than that of the Province of Manitoba.

One hundred delegates were present from the different public service organizations. There were representatives from the City Councils, Boards of Trade, Independent Labor Party, U. F. O., Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Motor Club, Municipal Leagues and rural Municipalities. It was an instructive and a business conference. No time was lost in foolish discussion. These delegates had met with one object; that was to find ways and means of improving existing conditions in this part of Ontario, and also to find ways and means of bringing in new settlers.

This part of Ontario is rich in minerals and timber. Travellers passing through the country, sitting in the arm chair of a pullman observation car refer to the country as a barren wilderness. If they could have only heard some of the delegates explain the richness of the country, the wonderful crops of clover, roots, etc., that were being raised,—how they would change their opinions. There are large tracts of land in this immense country that are waiting the hand of the settler. The soil is productive and farmers already settled here speak highly of climatic conditions.

True, it takes hard work to clear the land, but with pulp wood ranging high in price, as at present, a settler is assured of a fairly substantial income while preparing the land, from the sale of this commodity.

One delegate stated that he had farmed in the North of England, and other parts of the Empire, but he had yet to find better crops of roots or better variety than those grown here and shown at the different fall fairs.

Two or three outstanding resolutions were unanimously adopted. The first one of primary importance was the formation of a Union of Municipalities in the four electoral districts. A temporary organization was formed with Mr. Norman M. Paterson, a wealthy Fort William business gentleman as President, the Mayors of Fort William, Port Arthur, Kenora and Fort Francis as the executive Committee, with the writer as temporary secretary.

These gentlemen will immediately begin to organize a strong Union of all the organized and unorganized municipalities in this part of Ontario. They will correlate and co-ordinate all existing efforts and present a united front to the Provincial and Federal Governments. The primary and fundamental function of the Union of Municipalities will be to bring in more settlers, which can only be done systematically, after the building of colonization roads. The new organization has the best wishes of every citizen in Northwest Ontario.

The second resolution which was unanimously accepted has reference to the appointment of colonization agents in the four electoral districts, and the Provincial Government will be asked to appoint these gentlemen. There was a slight difference of opinion as to whether one colonization agent would not be sufficient for the four districts, but the resolution as passed called for the appointment of four officers; one for each riding. Whether one is appointed or four are appointed there is sufficient work to keep them busy for the next twenty years.

The Provincial Government will be well advised to listen to the pleadings of this resolution. It is the consensus of opinion that nothing will do more good to open up our part of the Province than the appointment of these colonization agents.

The third resolution has reference to the building of roads for agricultural purposes only. This part of Ontario is undoubtedly lacking in this respect and previous Governments have not had any definite programme in this regard. It can be definitely said without any fear of successful contradiction, that the Provincial Government has over a period of six or seven years received a million dollars more revenue than expenditures, from these four districts. This million dollars should be immediately spent on the building of roads and the bringing in of settlers.

These delegates did not and do not believe that the Provincial Government is being asked for anything that is not fair and honest. Every dollar spent by the Provincial Government in the opening up of this immense territory will, we think, be returned with interest in the course of a few years.

There was only one rift in the lute; the Hon. Frank H. Keefer, K.C., M.P., Under Secretary for External Affairs, Ottawa, was a guest of the convention and made a fighting speech in favor of these four electoral districts seceding from Old Ontario. It was replete with information in the way of statistics and created a very favorable impression on the minds of his listeners. Being a guest, however, to the convention, his speech was not discussed and no resolutions were passed in this regard. Nevertheless, it can be truthfully said that there is a strong under current prevailing in this regard, and it depends to a marked extent on the treatment of the Provincial Government to this part of Ontario, as to whether this feeling grows or dies a natural death.

BOOK REVIEW

DENNISON GRANT.

Time was, not so long ago, when Canadians bought a novel by a Canadian—if they bought it at all—much as one gives money to some worthy cause. They did it to help a struggling fellow-countryman, and felt, perhaps, a compensating glow of patriotism even if they did not expect to get value out of their expenditure.

But Canadians are discovering that their fellow-countrymen are writing books which are most decidedly worth reading on their own account, and perhaps no one has contributed to this discovery more than has Robert Stead, author of the famous "Kitchener" collection of poems, and of the novels, "The Homesteaders" and "The Cow Puncher." There is not a dull line in anything Mr. Stead writes, and this is particularly true of his new novel, "Dennison Grant" (\$1.75), which has just been published by the Musson Book Co., Ltd., of Toronto. When you get your copy of "Dennison Grant," you will be so interested in the fortunes of the young Easterner who renounces the family wealth on account of his Socialistic ideals, and who finds greater happiness as a ranch hand in Alberta than as a millionaire in a city club, that the hours will slip by uncounted until you find how it "comes out" in the last chapter. And it "comes out" a little differently from what you expected, and yet in the only way it could and be true to the Stead type of story, which always leaves one with the feeling that the time spent in reading it was not lost.