

empowering it to enter upon, place its poles and wires along, and tear up, any street or highway in that large district—the most populous in Canada—without the consent of any municipal authority. Local circumstances threw me into the hottest of the fight and, after the charter had been obtained, I and others, saw the triumph of money and political trickery over honesty and popular right a precedent without limit in its evil presage for Canadian life and character. If money and wrong were inevitably to succeed, it was clear that all our commercial and public life would sink into a festering bog of corruption. It was equally clear that if the public could not preserve these rights, there was a sure end to our liberties, for all their rights could be similarly taken from them and sold for money. The cynical example to our young men that honesty was not the successful policy was one of the most dangerous aspects. Moreover, the triumph of corrupt money was not even good for property in general. It was inaugurating an unlimited reign of plunder, taxes, high costs, and “gatemoney.” And it would with logical certainty lead to what is now called Bolshevism, unless the forces of right and common sense could meanwhile find a remedy.

The Union of Canadian Municipalities was the remedy which then occurred to me. My friend Howland took up my call and, as Mayor of Toronto, convened the Convention of 1901 in that central city, he becoming the first President, and I the first Honorary Secretary.

In Toronto, and other Ontario places, the charter of the Bell Telephone Company was occasioning similar contests concerning streets and highways; although it must be said for that company that