

CIVIC IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE—Continued

Milk supply and food reform by-laws were needed, but they could not be secured, and a by-law for a municipal abattoir had been passed, but the abattoir was not built yet. Apartment houses without fire escapes owned by wealthy men were pointed to and the smoke by-law was characterized as a dead letter.

"Two giants bar the way," said Mrs. Shortt in conclusion, "and they are vested interests and politics." An expert legal adviser in each city was needed by the people.

Electors to Blame.

Mayor Waugh, of Winnipeg, in his address on Municipal Government said that the solution of the municipal problem would mean the solving of all or nearly all urban and social problems of the community. He believed the present system of representative civic government was not altogether to blame. More to blame were the electors for their indifference and lack of co-operation. He was not a convert to a change in the present system, and believed that a great deal towards a solution would come with the elimination of selfishness, self-seeking, and wire-pulling. Clear these away and they would largely clear away their difficulties. He looked to the future of Canada with optimism.

Dr. H. L. Brittain (Toronto), said that of prime importance was the establishment of a committee to deal with municipal statistics. Fire and police departments were negative departments, health and schools were educational. Save the waste on the former and put it in the latter was his urgent advice. He asked that a committee be appointed and that it secure federal co-operation.

Mr. Franklin H. Wentworth, of Boston, said fire protection must not be overlooked. They should get at the man who did not care anything about civic life but only his own gain. He advocated restrictions in the height of buildings. New York was no longer a city in this respect. It was a disease. It was abnormality.

The session then adjourned for luncheon and to hear an address from the Hon. W. J. Hanna, Provincial Secretary, on "Civic Problems in Ottawa."

In his address Mr. Hanna said that conditions in this country could be improved and deputations came to the provincial government on many occasions urging reforms which would be of benefit. However, the question was who should pay for it. It often happened that there was a fine point as to whether the cost should be borne by the Municipality, the Provincial government or the Dominion government. All the improvements have to be paid for by the people eventually, which ever government carried them out. He spoke of the work done, such as better provisions for feeble minded people and indigent children. He promised that there would be further reforms and seemed to be favorably impressed with the proposal to have a department formed in the provincial government particularly to deal with municipal affairs, as advocated by the Civic Improvement League.

He praised the work of Dr. McMurchy in connection with mental defective children and Mr. Thomas Adams for his work in town planning.

He took up the question of making farm life more agreeable so that the boys and girls would stay on the farm. The social service in vogue in the cities should be extended to the country. The mothers in the country as in the city should have the proper nursing and care even before the child is born. As the child grows up he should be given the same opportunities for education in the country as in the city, with manual training, etc. It was one of the duties of those who remain at home to make the home life in Ontario better, to make it more valued, more worth fighting for.

The public should see that the children of the poor get a fair start in life, strict attention should be given to their health, that they have proper environment. He recommended the visiting nurses as a great benefit to the community.

"Censor his movies and see that he does not pick out any wrong heroes," Mr. Hanna said. "Give him compulsory military training."

The Afternoon Session.

Hon. J. J. Guerin, of Montreal, took the chair at the afternoon session. He said from the look of the meeting it augured well for the success of the movement. The Civic Improvement League was a movement which would cater to the interests of citizens in improving both mind and body. It was quite evident from the number at the meetings that the citizens appreciate the endeavors of

those who started the movement. It necessarily meant that the movement would be crowned with success. The seed had been sown in fertile soil and it was bound to germinate.

Engineering View.

Mrs. S. P. Brown, Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, was first called upon for an address. He would define what a civil engineer was and try to show his relation to civic improvement. An engineer had to be many things, from an honest man to an analyst and sociologist.

Mr. W. J. Francis, Montreal, another representative of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, spoke on the same subject.

Town Planning.

Hon. Sydney Fisher, ex-Minister of Agriculture, in opening the discussion on town planning, housing and public health, said they had all heard of overcrowding and the other evils of civic congestion. In the country men, wherever they had a hand in shaping the landscape, had always managed to make a blot, and the prevention of this was as important as the prevention of disfigurement of city streets. He hoped the Civic Improvement League would do something to improve life in the country. Half the population of this Dominion was urban, said Hon. Mr. Fisher. He was afraid that unemployment would be great and serious after the war. Canada was not going to induce immigrants to come here if that were the case. Something would have to be done to make rural life more attractive than the city. They had a complete system of rural government. What can the rural councils do? Better roads could be made and trees planted for shade and utility. Immigrants from the Old Country were unfit to control a Canadian farm, he said. Many of the lands given as farms were in an infinitely worse condition than before. It lead him to feel that while most had their minds on urban improvement, he hoped there was a place for rural civics in the league. He would suggest the appointment of a committee to deal with this subject apart from the urban side.

Housing Problems.

Dr. Helen McMurchy (Toronto), urged the supreme importance of proper housing. Referring to the problem of immigration, Dr. McMurchy said that whatever was in store for them in this regard, there was no question as to making plans and making them now. She next touched upon the problem of the mentally defective. That should receive the League's attention. She said that such a conference as this would have hardly been possible a few years ago. Her third point was that the League would take measures to prevent the spoiling of the great and wonderful dower of natural beauty. She instanced Pembroke, particularly, as a case in point. An unparalleled opportunity was opened before them.

City Maps Needed.

Dr. Frank Adams (McGill), made a strong plea for better municipal maps. Not many cities had these maps, said the doctor, who also gave instances of subterranean borings which had stumbled upon "uncharted" sewers and other kind of pipes.

Mr. W. D. Lighthall, Montreal, Union of Canadian Municipalities, said an important step would be to get immediate action in setting in motion the town planning act. They would bring down a resolution with this in view and he hoped they would all support it. A move should be made to take advantage at once of the act. It was, as a previous speaker had said, an unparalleled opportunity for Canada and one which will not occur again.

Mr. N. Cauchon (Ottawa), urged getting the town planning act adopted at once in the various provinces. Mr. Cauchon said he had visited all the principal towns and cities in Canada and 56 in Europe. There was no comparison between what occurs there and in Canada. There was more public interest in Europe. Many are surprised to find how far behind Canada is in the essential amenities of life when they visit the Old Country.

Public Health.

"The first duty of a statesman is the care of public health," said Dr. Chas. J. Hastings, medical officer of health of Toronto.

He strongly endorsed the power and scope of the Public Health act, of Ontario.

Mr. J. P. Hynes spoke for the use of the protest ballot in elections, saying that there should be no elections by acclamation.

Sir John Willison here took the chair.

Continued on page 56