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FREDERICK WRIGHT

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Municipal Departments for the Provinces

One of the principal resolutions of the conference of the Civic Improvement League was that urging the creation of municipal departments in the different provinces. This together with the announcement of the Hon. Mr. Hanna that such a department would soon be a fact in Ontario would seem to indicate that municipal affairs are looming up in our national life. This official recognition of the necessity for municipal departments was not always so. We remember the time when the Union of Canadian Municipalities started its campaign for municipal departments in the different provinces. That was fifteen years ago and after long agitation, and many articles in this journal, the province of Saskatchewan made a start with a department which, even with its limited powers, has been of inestimable value and help to its municipalities. Then Alberta followed with like results, largely because, like Saskatchewan, the deputy minister knows his business and the ministers, though political, have usually had a large outlook. Had these two municipal departments been in operation before the town boom started in the West there would not have been the criticism aimed against the Prairie municipalities. The curb would have been put on. But better late than never, and with extended powers even better results will accrue. The necessity for provincial municipal departments has been recognized for years by students of civic economy, and the point we wish to emphasize is the constant and persistent agitation of the U. C. M. for their establishment. The Union welcomes this new demand from unofficial bodies for the same thing. It will put new life into the old agitation and surely working to-

gether — the Civic Improvement League and the Union of Canadian Municipalities — it cannot be very long before a municipal department, with wide powers, will soon be in operation in every province of the Dominion.

SIR JOHN KENNEDY.

Though Sir John Kennedy could not be termed a municipal engineer in the strictest sense of the term, having but served, when a young man, for four years as assistant engineer of Montreal, his great work on the harbour of Montreal and on the channel of the St. Lawrence by making it possible for ocean liners to penetrate one thousand miles inland (and turning an inland town into the second greatest port on this North American continent), is sufficiently local in character, though national in scope, for us to lay claim to him as one of Canada's big municipal men. And our excuse for thus claiming the new knight is to pay tribute to a man whose one ambition would seem to be of use to his fellows. Not even blindness has prevented him from giving public service. His work on the harbour was a work of love. The mighty St. Lawrence to him was a huge child to be coaxed. No one knew its vagaries so well, and certainly no one ever got so much out of our national waterway.

He gave of his best, and the conferring of knighthood on John Kennedy was as much an honour to those who were responsible as the recipient. Sir John's son-in-law, Sir Robert Ames, M.P., now doing such splendid work on the Patriotic Fund, may be said to have received his training for public life as an alderman of Montreal.