

Federation of Builders' Exchanges

Canadian National Association of Builders Formed—Toronto
Seems to be on the Fence

DEEMING it essential that a central organization be called into existence as a safeguard to the building interests of Canada against adverse legislation, the harassing efforts of organized labor, and minor difficulties, such as being compelled to erect buildings from poorly drawn plans—and in frequent instances from insufficient specifications—the various Builders' Exchanges of the Dominion convened in the King Edward Hotel, Toronto, on Labor Day, and formed a Canadian National Association of Builders.

Distinctive local organizations were already in existence in Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, London and Winnipeg, but it had long been felt that a closer co-operation of those interested in the building trades was needed. It remained, however, for the Builders' Exchange of Montreal to take the first steps to bring the matter to the attention of the various Builders' Exchanges of Canada. In July, Mr. J. H. Lauer, secretary of the Builders' Exchange of Montreal, approached the Toronto Builders' Exchange with the idea of having them make arrangements for the holding of a convention in Toronto about Labor Day. Owing to the fact that the Builders' Exchange of Toronto was not in a position to look after the Convention, the Toronto Employers' Association was asked to make the necessary arrangements, and, acting in co-operation with the Builders' Exchange of Montreal, a general invitation was sent to the various Builders' Exchanges and Master Builders' Associations from Winnipeg east, to attend a general convention at Toronto on September 2nd.

TORONTO SLIMLY REPRESENTED.

It is to be regretted that out of the one hundred and twenty-five or one hundred and fifty delegates attending, less than a dozen represented the Toronto Builders' Exchange, and that while the Queen City was accorded representation on the Board of Directors, yet there exists an element of uncertainty among the now federated bodies as to the attitude of this organization. If the experiences of the Montreal Exchange, in striving for beneficial legislation, as recounted by Secretary J. H. Lauer farther on in this article, are carefully considered, it is to be hoped that the Toronto organization will yet come to regard this movement more amiably. There may, of course, be something under the surface to have provoked this indifference; but surely if the movement appealed to the far-sighted gentlemen of Toronto as an unwise step it were at least worth while to have sent a representation to at least worth while to have sent a representation to the gathering in an attempt to either balk the movement, or become enlightened as to its possible virtues.

While Toronto may have been selected as a place for the inauguration, solely on account of its central location, still the unanimity of the choice savors of compliment, and it is a pity indeed, even though the local quarters were not at the time in condition to receive the delegates, that some arrangement could not have been made whereby the visitors would have been the guests of their brothers in trade.

The Employers' Association did not demur, because this institution in Toronto, and in fact wherever it exists, is thoroughly alive and anxious at all times to show its merits to employers, whether they be Master Builders or mine operators.

This is something for the Toronto Builders' Exchange to con over. Already the Master Plumbers, the Sheet Metal branch, the Concrete Pavers, Stone Contractors—and Electric Wiremen—all of them eligible to the

Builders' Exchange—are associated with the Employers' Association of Toronto, and it is hinted that even the Boss Carpenters, the strongest branch, have also been in communication with the latter organization of late. Whether through pressure or by invitation, it is a significant fact that at one of the weekly dinners of the Carpentry Branch, certain members of the Employers' Association were given an audience and an affiliation of the bodies was advocated. Two gentlemen from the Builders' Exchange of Australia, who were present, also approved of the suggestion. Nor was the proposition viewed unfavorably, and if a special arrangement could have been agreed upon, whereby the Carpentry Branch should be taken in at a nominal fee, instead of on the somewhat expensive individual basis as set forth in the constitution of the Employers' Association, things might ere now have assumed a sinister aspect. Of course, even this could come to pass without necessarily affecting the membership of the local Builders' Exchange; but it would be up to the latter body to show comparative merit in times of trouble.

KEEP THE EXCHANGE INTACT.

It looks feasible that a distinctive organization should directly legislate for each class of trade (*i.e.*, reckoning builders jointly as a trade), in which case there is great need of local exchanges; but when matters of provincial or federal moment arise, there is need of close co-operation and strong representation.

Since there should, most emphatically, be a central body to look after local affairs in a city so rapidly building up as Toronto, the Toronto Builders' Exchange must see to it that there is no break in its ranks.

If any significance is to be attached to the attitude of the Toronto Builders toward the scheme of federation, and to the supposition that the builders of Toronto are not represented by a unit, some day that section of the Master Builders called the Builders' Exchange may be confronted by a proposition that is too big for it. If there is a disturbing element in the Toronto Exchange it should be sought out. The scheme of federation looks good.

In the course of the convention, which consummated the federation after Mr. L. S. Humphries, vice-president of the Wellington Builders' and Contractors' Association of New Zealand, had been nominated to act as chairman, and the delegates had been welcomed by Mr. Thos. Roden, of Toronto; Mr. J. Herbert Lauer, secretary of the Builders' Exchange of Montreal, delivered a short address on "The Necessity of Unity as a Legislative Power." He stated that the time had come when there was the greatest necessity for stronger representation before the Dominion and Provincial Houses of Parliament, to prevent injurious legislation being carried and to remove from the statute books such legislation as had been found prejudicial to the interests of the general community. Organized labor was continually endeavoring to have placed on the statute books legislation in their interests which would be harmful to the prosperity of the country at large and to industrial conditions generally. The Montreal Exchange had several times appeared before members of the Dominion Government, seeking to prevent certain legislation being carried, but had been unsuccessful, as they had not been able to bring the necessary weight with them to convince the Government that the general employing interests were strongly opposed to certain measures. If representation from the different cities had been there as the result of strong organization, he was certain that the results would have been different.