

CONVENTION OF U. C. M.—(Continued).

WAR CONDITIONS IN THE EAST.

DR. A. C. HAWKINS (Mayor of Halifax): The outbreak of hostilities found the Maritime Provinces enjoying a full measure of prosperity. This was particularly so in my own province of Nova Scotia. Here the coal mines were working to full capacity, the fisheries were yielding an abundant harvest, the various industries, with possibly a few exceptions, were all doing well. The farmers and apple growers rejoiced in phenomenal crops and the city of Halifax, the capital of the province, owing to its great shipping facilities and the fact that the Dominion Government was spending at the rate of a million dollars a year on one enterprise, the Ocean Terminals, was looked upon as the busiest and perhaps the most prosperous city for its size in Canada.

When war was declared and the cry to retrench went forth, the Maritime Provinces kept on the even tenor of their way. The industrial concerns did not reduce the number of their employees. Housekeepers did not discharge their servants. Shopkeepers did not dispose of their help. "Business as usual," was the slogan. People did not stop buying. In fact, they were told to buy, to stimulate business and the merchants made greater use of printer's ink than ever before. The first Christmas season after the declaration of war was looked upon as the busiest and best in the history of the lower provinces.

Recruiting came and with it the mobilization of men, meaning the distribution of much money. Thousands of men were mobilized at St. John, Halifax and Charlottetown and those cities profited directly by the vast sums spent by the men, while the farmer realized a ready market and big prices for all he could furnish.

Enlistments made vacancies in the various trades and callings. In the Island of Cape Breton thousands of coal miners rallied to the colors. Steel and other industrial workers followed. The ports of Halifax and St. John suddenly became alive with the world's shipping. Then came the demand for labor. The miner and the industrial worker must be replaced. The great ocean-going ships must be loaded. Wages began to soar and even to this day there is no let up. The stevedores of Halifax and St. John practically get what they ask. Let me cite an incident which came under my notice a few days before leaving Halifax. One hundred Jamaicans who were returning home from France, where they had been engaged in reconstruction work, were asked to give one day's labor at discharging a sugar steamer. They worked from seven in the morning until five in the evening, and the day being Sunday they received double pay, which is the custom. Each man earned for the one day \$11.40. This will give some idea of the pay secured by stevedores who work week in and week out, sometimes night and day and on Sundays. Men are making big money to-day and they are spending it, and in this manner trade is kept booming. Indeed, it may be said that from the very day war was declared the maritime provinces began to prosper as never before. All lines of business have felt the result. The manufacturing towns, particularly New Glasgow and Sydney, turned their plants into munition works and wages soared. To-day the scarcity of men is the one drawback, both in the manufacturing, mining and farming industries and even in the fishing business. But money is plentiful.

The war has also lent a stimulus to the shipbuilding industry. Two fine steel steamers have already been turned out from the New Glasgow yards, while wooden vessels of various sizes are being constructed in various parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and it is now announced that both St. John and Halifax are to have modern steel shipbuilding plants in the very near future. This will further add to the prosperity of the east.

The explosion of December 6, in which so many persons were killed or injured and much valuable property destroyed in the city of Halifax, will not be without its compensations, thanks to a generous people. The relief committee will have the spending of no less a sum than twenty millions of dollars, the greater portion of which will go to reconstructing the devastated district. This is an enormous sum of money to add to the vast sums now being disbursed in that city, and ensures the outlook of the city for the next ten years.

Summoning up the situation, I am safe in saying that, from a monetary standpoint, the Maritime Province have greatly benefited by the war. Our people, as a rule, are prosperous. Even after the war is ended we look for a

continuance of good times. Owing to our nearness to Europe we confidently look for a great demand for those things which we can provide. Our forests are inexhaustible. Our factories are prepared to furnish structural steel and all that goes into the reconstruction of a city, a railway, a mine or a factory. We have millions of tons of coal as yet undisturbed, and we have a race of people whose faces are always turned toward the sun. Therefore we look to the future with all confidence and at the same time are prepared to do our part in the restoration of the ruined cities of Europe and the general uplift of the human race.

CITY CLERK E. T. SAMPSON (Outremont):—It is my opinion that the time has now come when "ways and means" of broadening the basis of municipal taxation should be considered. The single tax method of assessing only on land has proved a failure in those municipalities wherever it has been adopted. Many proprietors of the more remote vacant lots are considering abandoning same for the taxes due upon them, municipalities are found with increased expenditure (principally higher interest charges) and depleted tax revenues. Many of the municipalities will have to write off in varying proportions, some of their assets in the way of sundry debtors for taxes. Why not change the basis of Municipal Taxation to **occupation jointly with ownership**, and assess an "Annual" not "Actual" value. It is admittedly more scientific and the revenue therefrom is better assured. An Increment Tax could also be considered, being a tax on profits by sales, this would do much to restrain land speculation. This is a great question and well worthy of thorough discussion.

MR. W. D. LIDTHALL (Hon. Secretary):—I ought to say something of how the larger cities are affected by the war. The City of Montreal is a very large manufacturing centre, the principal in Canada, and the manufacturers there have simply shifted from their regular work, to munition and Government, and we have, as you have here, considerable ship building. In the Port of Montreal no such quantities of goods have left the port at any previous time. We are experiencing the results of a splendid port equipment. Our elevator system has been enlarged and improved until it is sufficient for our requirements. Our carriers and piers are so good that the result has been that we are the best war freight port in America, and the quickest. There is a sort of division for war work between New York and Montreal by agreement of the different governments. New York in general sends over the passenger traffic. One would scarcely expect it, but Montreal send over a very much greater amount of freight than New York does. Montreal is a great war freight port at the present time, and the reason is that in Montreal we are able to load a ship twice as fast as they are in New York. The lesson is that it is a great advantage to have the best possible port equipment—and I recommend that lesson to Vancouver and Victoria.

I might go into other questions, as to how we are affected in revenue, in taxation, and in matters connected with out-of-town lots such as you in the West have been affected by. We are not quite so badly affected. On the whole the city of Montreal is pretty prosperous, and expects to remain so, and is growing at almost as great a rate as ever.

MR. DAVIS (New South Wales):—It is quite by accident that I happened to be present to-day. I came to the hotel and found that you are having this Convention, and being interested in municipal matters, and general public works, road making, the generation of power, etc., I thought possibly that I might get a few wrinkles if I was present.

Speaking of how the war affects us in Australia generally, I think we have the same tale to tell as some of the gentlemen who spoke this afternoon. The prosperity is unquestionable. The rate of wages has increased. The price of commodities has also increased, so that one is keeping pace with the other. The difficulties we have met with are in two directions. First of all we have been in the habit of spending a good deal of loaned money, and that has gradually been withdrawn owing to the exigencies of the war, the funds have to go to help the war, so that that source of money has been cut off entirely in Australia, but that has not affected the community at large to such a degree as before the war. The price of wool and the price of butter, which are the principal articles we export with the exception of grain. Meat has gone up by leaps and bounds. We have been greatly handicapped by the want of ships, and the result has been that we have very large accumulations of wheat which cannot be got