

secure registration of transfers; that the convention support the Industrial Research Bureau and its work.

The officers elected for 1919-20 are: President, R. C. Marshall, mayor of Calgary; vice-president, Commissioner Freeman, of Lethbridge; second vice-president, V. E. Forster, Camrose; secretary-treasurer, J. D. Saunders, Camrose, re-elected. The new executive committee is composed of Alderman McCarthy, Medicine Hat; Mayor Clarke, Edmonton; J. Carnegie, Bassano; H. P. Long, Vermilion; and Messrs. Bryan, of Innisfail, Campbell, of Viking, and Fulton, of Halkirk. Lethbridge was chosen as the place of meeting for next year's convention.

Forms of Civic Government

One of the features of the convention was an address on "Civic Government Past and Present," by C. J. Yorath, city commissioner of Saskatoon. He said in part:—

"While many forms of civic government have been placed upon the statute book, there is no one single form which has received general approbation. Matters of vital interest to the welfare and future development of the Dominion of Canada depend upon the legislative and administrative work of the civic government and unless municipal law and regulations are based upon expert knowledge of municipal subjects with some degree of uniformity and unless the administrative work of local authorities is efficiently carried out the best interests of the Dominion will be seriously affected.

"To show that civic government is not a subject which can be solved in the best interests of the country as a whole by individual local authorities or provincial governments it is desirable that some of the most deplorable results of the present system or lack of system of civic government should be realized.

"The combined general debt of towns and cities throughout Canada before the outbreak of war was \$516,979,614 whereas the debt of the Dominion at the same time was \$335,996,850 and the combined debt of the provinces \$178,370,412, or the total municipal debt exceeded the combined debt of the Dominion and the provincial governments. From these figures it will be realized that if a reduction in taxation is to be made, some effective remedy should be applied to the government responsible for the largest expenditure of public moneys—i.e., the local authorities.

"Another national waste is the enormous annual fire loss throughout the Dominion. During the year 1914 the total loss by fire was \$24,300,000, or nearly twice the amount of interest upon the Dominion debt which in the same year amounted to \$12,893,505. Local authorities are largely responsible for this loss as it is part of their duty to pass building by-laws and regulations governing the construction of buildings, but because of the lack of knowledge, a uniform system of building regulations and by-laws throughout the Dominion, and a desire to build up a community as rapidly and as cheaply as possible, ordinary precautions against the spread of fires are not taken.

"Another great national loss and for which civic government is again largely responsible, is the infant mortality. It is estimated that the average annual deaths of infants under one year of age (according to Dr. C. A. Hodgetts, medical adviser, Commission of Conservation) is 25,000. This figure can only be approximated as the registration of births, deaths and marriages is under provincial control and owing to the divergent methods and entire lack of statistics, a definite figure cannot be given.

"There are many other channels through which an enormous sum of public money is allowed to run to waste for lack of experienced control, but the above examples should be sufficient to emphasize the necessity of an immediate reform in civic government.

"Before discussing an ideal form of government it will be necessary to shortly describe what civic government means and in what respect present forms of government have failed.

"Civic government should mean the conservation of life and all those resources which tend toward the economic development of the community; the betterment of social conditions and the elimination of blind wasteful expenditure in

spasmodic and haphazard development of towns and cities without regard to the co-relation of the different units so as to build up a completed scheme of development capable of gradual expansion to meet the needs of the growing community.

"Civic government should control and govern:—

"(a) The proper housing of the people so that conditions are such as to promote a high standard of public health.

"(b) The proper and efficient development of a water, drainage and sewerage system which can be built up unit by unit at a minimum cost.

"(c) The proper relationship of the main arterial and secondary thoroughfares so that the most direct means of communication from one part of the community to another is obtained, thereby reducing the cost of haulage to merchants and others, and the amount to be expended upon street paving.

"(d) The proper protection to property from fire loss by prevention rather than by the establishment of a large fire department.

"(e) The proper provision of rapid means of transit from one part of the community to another in order to eliminate the congestion of traffic and its attendant waste and to provide easy and cheap means of access for the worker to and from his home and place of business.

"(f) The proper distribution of the different sections of the community so that residential commercial and industrial areas are placed in true relationship one with another.

"(g) The conditions under which the workers in factories are compelled to work so as to reduce if not entirely eliminate that terrible scourge, consumption, which is unduly prevalent amongst such workers.

"(h) The proper provision of 'lungs' in the way of parks and open spaces so that the healthful life of the country may be brought as near as possible into the lives of those living in our more thickly populated communities.

"(i) The proper removal and disposal of all refuse which so quickly accumulates in towns and cities.

"(j) The work of the police department so that the laws are properly enforced and the property of the community protected.

"(k) The proper system of assessment and taxation and the financing of its expenditures.

"(l) The receipts and expenditures of public moneys for current and capital accounts.

"(m) The safeguarding of the sinking fund and the investment of same so that it will earn its maximum rate of interest with absolute security.

"(n) The consolidation of all civic financing including that of schools.

"These problems in civic government necessitate the establishment of several civic departments including engineering, legal, finance, health, fire, police, assessment and taxation, cleansing, open spaces and parks, and in addition if the municipality owns its own utilities, water works, street railway, electric light and power, etc. The above are some of the important subjects with which civic government has to deal. A superficial glance at the constitution of and methods adopted by such governments, will convince the most indifferent taxpayer that his money is often being squandered through lack of experienced administration and proper representation.

"Some of the best and most successful business men are termed civic failures after they have for a short while served upon a town or city council and are sacrificed year after year upon the altar of public opinion. Why? Is it the man or is it the system which is at fault? There can be no doubt that the fault is with the system and if a successful business man who has served a term upon a council is asked for a reason, he will usually admit three things—i.e.:—

"(a) That he has not sufficient time to devote to civic affairs.

"(b) That principal work is so diverse and oftentimes so technical that it requires a great amount of study