

Convention of British Columbia Municipalities

Government to Be Petitioned to Assist Municipalities for Loss of Revenue Through Soldiers' Relief Act—Revision of Municipal Act Recommended—Government Aided Railways Not to Be Exempted from Municipal Taxation.

Reeve E. H. Bridgman of North Vancouver District, who has just returned from the recent Municipal Convention held in Vernon, gave the following synopsis of the more important proceedings of that convention:—

"The thirteenth annual convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, held at Vernon on the 11th, 12th and 13th October, was well attended and a large amount of work accomplished.

"The Union was formed thirteen years ago, having as its object the interchange of ideas of municipal representatives who, by their constant association with the ratepayers, can assist the Provincial Government in framing legislation which would be beneficial to all municipalities throughout the Province.

"There were many important issues before the convention, and a very large budget will be placed before the Government at its next sitting at Victoria by the executive of the Union, which it is hoped will receive favorable consideration.

"One of the principal matters was asking for legislation to enable the municipalities throughout the Province to finance during the present abnormal times, and the Government is being asked to assist the municipalities to finance until the war is over, especially as the Soldiers' Relief Act, in the principle of which we all concur, makes the collection of revenue almost impossible. Mayor Grey of New Westminster presented a very valuable resolution to change the present system of taking care of tuberculosis patients in the Province. This was heartily endorsed by the Union, and, if agreed to by the Government, it should place this Province in a very sound position in relation to this most important question.

"Several municipalities pointed out the overlapping of authority in connection with the milk supply and the proper taking care of dairies, and the Union recommended that the Provincial Government should assume further powers, their being responsible for seeing that dairies are kept in first-class condition, to ensure the pure milk supply throughout the Province. It was further strongly recommended that in all cases where cattle were condemned as being tubercular the carcasses should be destroyed; for although it was held that the meat is not unfit for us in some cases, still any return the Government might receive by the sale of affected cattle would be more than offset by this extra precaution which we believe should be taken.

"One most important recommendation we made, urging upon the Government the necessity of re-drafting the Municipal Act, and in doing so to incorporate those portions of other Acts which affect municipal administration; and requesting that Government Municipal Inspector Baird and Mr. McDiarmid, the solicitor of the Union, be given charge of this work owing to their intimate knowledge of the subject. This is a particularly important matter, as at the present time there are so many Acts which affect municipal life which are conflicting, thus making it nearly impossible to carry on municipal affairs in a straightforward legal way.

"Another very important recommendation was that in granting any further extensions or privileges to Government aided railways, municipal revenues should be protected so that no railway should be exempt from taxation on lands

used by them in organized municipalities unless such lands were actually used for bona fide railway purposes.

"A recommendation from the Women's Forum of Burnaby was received, asking that soldiers' wives be allowed to vote on their husbands' property. This, after considerable discussion, was endorsed, with the rider added that all soldiers at the front should have the right to vote by proxy upon forwarding to the returning officer a witnessed document giving their power to vote to some relative or friend, although it was sincerely hoped that before the measure could be made law the war would be over, rendering the request unnecessary."

The following officers were elected:—

President—Mayor Smith of Vernon.

Vice-president—Reeve Bridgman of North Vancouver district.

Secretary-treasurer—H. Bose of Surrey.

Solicitor—McDiarmid of Victoria.

Executive—Mayor Grey of New Westminster, Mayor McBeath of Vancouver, Mayor Smythe of Duncan, Reeve Fraser of Burnaby, Reeve Sullivan of Surrey, Mayor Barber of Chilliwack, and Reeve McGregor of Saanich.

Mayor Stewart of Victoria, retiring president, was unanimously appointed delegate from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities to the Union of Canadian Municipalities.

The next annual convention will be held at the city of Duncan.

DEATH OF NORTH AMERICAN LIFE OFFICIAL.

Mr. Edward Gurney, president of the North American Life Assurance Company, died on September 18th last.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors held on September 28th, Mr. L. Goldman was elected president and managing director; Mr. W. K. George, first vice-president and chairman of the board; Lt.-Col. D. McCrae, Guelph, second vice-president; Mr. M. J. Haney, chairman of the Executive committee, and the vacancy on the board was filled by the election of Mr. Cromwell Gurney.

INSURANCE FEDERATION ON MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN.

The Insurance Federation of British Columbia while apparently quiescent is in the midst of an extended membership campaign. Mr. Ernest A. Browne of the Norwich Union acting-secretary of the Federation while on a business trip through the whole Southern Interior talks Insurance Federation to the insurance men of those districts. He visited Mission, Agassiz, Kamloops, Chase, Salmon Arm, Revelstoke, Arrowhead, Nakusp, Kaslo, Nelson, Cranbrook, Fernie, Rossland, Trail, Grand Forks, Phoenix, Greenwood, Penticton, Summerland, Naramata, Kelowna, Vernon and Armstrong. When the objects of the Federation were explained the insurance men became deeply interested. Later on these men will be enrolled as members in the Federation. The Federation has now 300 active members of which 200 are in the metropolitan district of Vancouver and New Westminster and 85 in Victoria.

Negotiations are in progress and now only await the permission of Ottawa for the construction of six 8,900 ton steel cargo steamers for Norwegian interests in British Columbia shipyards.