

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS RED DEER CONVENTION

Reviews the History and Aims of the Local Improvement District Association—Purpose of the Organization to Work for Betterment of Roads and Bridges.

Following is the address delivered by President Mason, of Battenburg, at the convention of Local Improvement Districts in Red Deer on Tuesday. The delegates were welcomed by Mayor McKee. Mr. Mason said:

Gentlemen,—Before I proceed to address you upon the regular business of this convention, I have a very painful duty to perform, that is, to officially inform you of the lamentable death of the late Arthur Ives, of Penhold, chairman of local improvement district 19, township 4, from injuries received by him in a runaway. I have no doubt he will be remembered by a large number of you gentlemen who were present at the first convention of the local improvement district held at Strathcona last year. He seemed to me to have a full grasp of the different subjects that was brought before that convention. He took a very keen interest in that convention, and if my memory serves me right, he introduced some of the most important resolutions that was passed at that convention, and it was upon the invitation of Mr. Ives that we are assembled here in Red Deer at this time. Only a few days before his death Mr. McNicol, our secretary, received a letter from him making an appointment with Mr. McNicol to assist him in making arrangements for the convention, and he was practically dead in harness working to further the interests of the public in doing all he could to make this convention a success.

I think gentlemen, that you will agree with me that Mr. Ives has been spared for a few years longer would have made his mark in the public affairs of this province. At the time of his death he held several public offices, besides being chairman of the local improvement district, he was chairman of the Penhold school board, president of the rifle association, and was a churchwarden of his parish. Gentlemen,—I think that we, as an association of local improvement districts, cannot do less than pass a vote of sympathy with the widow and family of the deceased. I propose to draft a small and to my mind one of our most important aims, is to gain the consensus of public opinion on questions affecting us respecting better roads and bridges, and the means to obtain them, and to act as the medium between the ratepayers and the department of public works. You will have business of great importance to be brought before you, and which I trust you will solve both to the satisfaction of the people and in thorough accord with the government of Alberta.

I am very pleased indeed to be able to inform you that the government of this province has greatly assisted your association by making a grant of \$400 towards the expenses of your committee. In the early spring of this year your committee met in Edmonton and sat for two days, at which meeting they drew up a constitution and by-laws, which will be submitted to you for confirmation or amendment as to you seems best.

At the same meeting your committee made appointments with the hon. premier, the minister of public works, and his deputy. At each appointment your committee were very cordially received by the respective gentlemen. Your committee explained to the premier and the minister of public works the aims of your association, and assured them that the association was formed with the express purpose of assisting and working with the government in every way.

Your committee further asked the premier as head of the treasury department of Alberta, if he would bring before his cabinet our request for a grant from the public treasury, and which he graciously promised to do. Both the premier and minister of public works spoke in general sympathy with our aims, and both stated they would not shirk any obstacles in any way, but would assist us in any way consistent with their positions.

Your committee also met with the deputy minister, John Stokes, and the tax commissioner of the province, at which were discussed various suggestions of alterations to the present local improvement act. Their attention was called to the districts paying the expenses of their delegates. Your committee are in hopes that at the present session of the legislature provision will be made by an amendment to the act whereby it will be made legal.

No new legislation respecting local improvement districts has been passed since the last convention. You are aware the house was only in session for a short time, and then adjourned to meet again in the fall. We extended an invitation to do Saskatchewan Local Improvement District Association to send a representative to address you, and I am very pleased indeed that they have done so. You will have the pleasure of hearing from Mr. Smith, of Saskatchewan, who, I have no doubt, will give us some hints as to the workings of their association in Saskatchewan, they having been organized several years. I also hope to see this association send a representative to the Saskatchewan convention as by these exchanges it will bring us into closer touch with our sister provinces.

You will also have the pleasure of hearing addresses from several of our public men who, I am pleased to see, are taking so great an interest in this convention. In handing over to our successors best thanks to the vice-president, the secretary-treasurer and to each member of the executive committee, for their very kind assistance given to me since I have held the office of president of your association.

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the three gentlemen from your association agreed.

The convention then elected Mr. Hilliers and Mr. Bartier as members of the executive committee of this association. When upon the receipt of a letter from your secretary, Mr. McNicol, informing me what had been done, I at once wrote to the two gentlemen elected on to the executive committee and extended to them, on behalf of this association, a very hearty welcome. As members of the executive committee, thus are we met here today, as one united association, covering the whole of this great province of Alberta. This association knows no north, no south, east or west—but are working together as one grand united body, and ever ready to give to the government of this province all the assistance which we are able to give them in the building of roads and bridges.

It is not necessary for me here to deal with the importance of local improvement districts, but I should like to say that any man who gives his time and abilities, and faithfully discharges his duties as a member of the council of this province, gives no yet in our infancy, but a great impetus to the future, as we are only yet in our infancy, but a great impetus is taking place every year, and that they get a thorough understanding of their duties as councilors.

I would like very briefly to mention the aims of this association. First to inform all the members of the local improvement districts in Alberta, and to watch in their interests, and any new legislation brought before the legislature. And when a large body of men, like what I see before me at this time, are met together to exchange their views upon any particular subject there is always something to be learned one from the other. It is true that councilors realized the responsibilities that devolve upon them, and that they get a thorough understanding of their duties as councilors.

The second is to get all the people of this province interested in their local councils, by attending the different meetings of their councils, and to hear discussed the matters brought before their respective councils. At the present time, so far as I know from personal experience, very few of the general public ever attend the meetings of their councils; and also to remedy any existing defects in the present local improvement act.

The third, and to my mind one of our most important aims, is to gain the consensus of public opinion on questions affecting us respecting better roads and bridges, and the means to obtain them, and to act as the medium between the ratepayers and the department of public works. You will have business of great importance to be brought before you, and which I trust you will solve both to the satisfaction of the people and in thorough accord with the government of Alberta.

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You handing over to our successors the affairs of the Alberta Local Improvement District Association, we trust that they may have as pleasant a time as we have had, and that they will carry on the duties devolving upon them to the entire satisfaction of the members of this association, and in perfect accord with the government of this province.

Gentlemen, I thank you for your very kind attention during the reading of my address. After the president had concluded his remarks, J. W. Hoadley, M.P.P., addressed the meeting.

The Resolutions Passed. The following resolutions were passed by the convention of Local Improvement Districts Association, Red Deer, November 22nd and 23rd, 1910: No. 1. That this section of 10 of section 48 read "eight hours" instead of "ten hours."

No. 2. (a) Before any property be registered as a subdivision, that the registrar compel the owner or agent of such subdivided property to furnish a statement from the Secretary-Treasurer of the Local Improvement District in which said land is situated showing that all taxes levied against such property have been paid. (b) In the event of any city, town or village extending its boundaries, such city, town or village, shall pay to the Local Improvement District interested all arrears of taxes due on said area, and such arrears of taxes shall become an asset of the city, town, or village interested.

No. 3. That the Department get out a stock sheet so that at the end of each year all implements belonging to districts can be entered thereon. No. 4. That the Department get out a stock sheet so that at the end of each year all implements belonging to districts can be entered thereon. No. 5. That taxes on all lots in any subdivision be raised to \$1.00 per lot, instead of 50c per lot as at present.

No. 6. In view of the fact that there is some doubt as to the present Ordinance authorizing the Secretary-Treasurer to collect arrears of taxes by distraint, that section 59 of the Act be amended so as to include either current tax or arrears of taxes due on such property.

No. 7. In order that all the facts possible be considered by the Surveyor before making a proposed survey, that the Government request their officers to make a thorough survey of the road before making a proposed survey, that the Government request their officers to make a thorough survey of the road before making a proposed survey.

No. 8. Resolved that the Provincial Government be asked to pass legislation to admit of the Province being divided into areas of about nine townships and provision made for the ratepayers of these areas to be organized as municipalities or Local Improvement Districts as the majority wish.

No. 9. Whereas during the last six years, since the present Local Improvement Districts were organized, councils have been making requests for deviations from the road allowances, and have been securing agreements from owners of the land for the purchase of the amount of land for deviations, sending such agreements to the Department of Public Works with the recommendation that the agreement should be completed and the necessary survey made by the Department.

And whereas the same answer has been received in almost every case from the Department to the effect that the matter will be attended to the first time the Government Engineer is in the district. Be it therefore resolved that the minister of Public Works be informed of this delay, and that he be requested to remedy same, either by the appointment of more engineers or surveyors or by seeing that the present work now waiting on the files is completed as such delay is a great inconvenience to all the Districts affected.

That the Department of Public Works be requested to instruct all department road inspectors to confer with the councils of Local Improvement Districts when Government work is being laid out, as the present plan is not conducive to systematic or harmonious work between the Department and the Local Improvement District Councils.

No. 10. Whereas the Province of Alberta receives at present time from the Federal Government the sum of three hundred and ninety thousand dollars or thereabouts in lieu of Provincial lands, and whereas the amounts appropriated and expended on rural roads through-

out the Province in the past few years have been altogether inadequate to meet the need, and whereas it is desirable that a fixed annual appropriation to increase automatically as population increases, and whereas it is absolutely essential, both for the business development of the Province and also for the moral, social and educational well-being of the rural population thereof that good roads be provided as speedily as possible, so as to give the farmers and settlers reasonable access to markets, and to places of worship, schools and other social centres.

Therefore be it resolved that the amount received by the Province annually from the Federal Government in lieu of lands is for the land, and should be expended for the benefit of the land, building up the rural roads of the Province, and this Convention respectfully requests the Honorable Minister of Public Works to introduce legislation to this effect at this session of the legislature.

No. 11. Resolved that any person over eighteen years of age, holding land in Local Improvement District, be qualified to vote. No. 12. That form "D" as given 1908 Amendments be amended by striking out the words "such land" and substituting therefor "all his land."

No. 13. Resolved that no survey for a new road in a Local Improvement District be made without the Council having first investigated the matter, and that the Government request their officer as to where the road should be located that the matter be referred to the ratepayers of the division in which the road is located and that the decision of two thirds majority of the ratepayers of the division or a majority of the ratepayers of the district if the cancellation of an old surveyed road and the survey of a new road has been passed by the Council, and that the surveyor be shown over the ground by a councillor of the district and a ratepayer who has signed such petition.

No. 14. That the minimum rate of taxation be fixed at three cents per acre and the maximum at ten cents per acre. The New Officers. The following officers have been elected: President: Wm. Mason, Bon Accord. Vice Pres: Herbert Greenfield, Edson. Secretary: Jas. McNicol, Birtley. Directors: E. Hillier, Twin Butte; E. J. Fream, Inipitart; D. A. Kennedy, Birtley.

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Whereas it is desirable that a fixed annual appropriation to increase automatically as population increases, and whereas it is absolutely essential, both for the business development of the Province and also for the moral, social and educational well-being of the rural population thereof that good roads be provided as speedily as possible, so as to give the farmers and settlers reasonable access to markets, and to places of worship, schools and other social centres.

Therefore be it resolved that the amount received by the Province annually from the Federal Government in lieu of lands is for the land, and should be expended for the benefit of the land, building up the rural roads of the Province, and this Convention respectfully requests the Honorable Minister of Public Works to introduce legislation to this effect at this session of the legislature.

No. 11. Resolved that any person over eighteen years of age, holding land in Local Improvement District, be qualified to vote. No. 12. That form "D" as given 1908 Amendments be amended by striking out the words "such land" and substituting therefor "all his land."

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No. 13. Resolved that no survey for a new road in a Local Improvement District be made without the Council having first investigated the matter, and that the Government request their officer as to where the road should be located that the matter be referred to the ratepayers of the division in which the road is located and that the decision of two thirds majority of the ratepayers of the division or a majority of the ratepayers of the district if the cancellation of an old surveyed road and the survey of a new road has been passed by the Council, and that the surveyor be shown over the ground by a councillor of the district and a ratepayer who has signed such petition.

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