

MUNICIPAL MEN OF CANADA

By AJAX



COUNCILLOR JACK LOUDET,
President of Union of B. C. Municipalities.

Because of their previous interest in civic affairs most Old Country men on coming to Canada soon begin to follow the municipal activity of whatever community they may be located, though unfortunately they soon lose interest when they find that the administration of the community, instead of being of primary public interest, is at a discount in too many Canadian Municipalities. But fortunately for Municipal Canada there are some Old Country immigrants who do gravitate towards the city or town hall, in the capacity of mayor, alderman or official. These men have introduced a real sense of public responsibility in their respective offices, with the consequence they have given a new meaning to public office. They have inculcated the idea that in many ways local government is of more importance to the citizens than either provincial or federal government, and for this sense of duty towards their neighbors they have been honored by the citizens in most municipalities.

This has been the experience of Councillor Jack Loutet, of North Vancouver, and President of the Union of B. C. Municipalities for the second term. Born in Perthshire, Scotland thirty-five years ago Mr. Loutet came to Canada in 1905 and settled in British Columbia. In 1910, or five years afterwards he was returned to the North Vancouver District Council by the residents of North Lonsdale, which seat he has held ever since. Now there are municipal men in Canada, though not many, who can beat Councillor Loutet's record of ten year's continuous municipal service, but there is no man who has done more to raise the standard of municipal government in Canada than the subject of this sketch. From the first year of his office Jack Loutet has taken a leading part, not only in the adminis-

tration of his own community, but in the municipal government of his adopted province. To fit himself for his exacting duties, (and local administration is the most exacting task in the world of government), he made a study of civic affairs as administered in every part of Canada, and he never lost an opportunity during his travels to investigate the government of whatever city or town he may be visiting. Consequently, he has been able to bring to bear in the discussions on local and provincial municipal administration a really profound knowledge of civics in general.

There is no doubt that his special knowledge, together with his capacity for executive office, had a large influence on the minds of his colleagues of the Union of B. C. Municipalities, in electing Mr. Loutet, while still only a councillor, to the position of president last year. And his re-election this year is evidence of the wisdom of their selection.

Mr. Loutet is now going further in his work. He is about to call a meeting of the Provincial Unions to discuss and arrive at some solution of the taxation problem which is affecting every municipality in the country by first, in the words of Mr. Loutet himself, "settling the respective fields of taxation available to the three bodies (Federal, Provincial and Municipal); secondly, by a more economical method of collecting taxes." Whatever may be the outcome of the meeting (and we hope it will be held under the auspices of the Union of Canadian Municipalities), there is no doubt of the necessity of the councils getting together so that something may be done to lessen the problem of local taxation and its economical collection, and Councillor Loutet, who has made a close study of the subject, should be backed up by all municipal men, in his propaganda.

To some extent the Canadian Municipal Journal can claim Mr. Loutet as a member of its staff. For two years he acted as its British Columbia correspondent, during which period the municipal affairs of our far western provinces became known the world over. Unfortunately for the journal's readers Mr. Loutet had to give up his monthly letter on account of business, and has since only been able to send in an occasional article. It is to be hoped that Mr. Loutet will soon be able to renew his delightful and instructive monthly letters.

TO THE COUNCILS

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THANKS.