

UNION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

Tax Sales Favored as Only Method of Securing Arrears of Taxes

(Staff Correspondence.)

Victoria, B.C., July 11th, 1918.

At the annual convention of the Union of Canadian Municipalities held in Victoria, B.C., on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, July 9th, 10th and 11th, resolutions were adopted to the following effect:—

First. Compulsory annual tax sales favored as the only method to prevent delinquency in taxes, which is so serious at present in the west.

Second. That the Dominion government be called upon to execute a survey in order to ascertain what public works will be required by municipalities after the war, so that provision may be made against unemployment.

Third. The work of the commission of conservation was approved.

The convention was attended by municipal officers from many parts of Canada and the Dominion Civic Improvement League met at the same time. The delegates were entertained by the Victoria City Council. In addition to a dinner given for them, the shipyards and Esquimalt Naval Yard were visited on Thursday. The new Dominion Astro-Physical Observatory at Saanich Hill, near the city, was also inspected.

The general effect of the war on municipalities was discussed and opinions seem to be that though prosperity prevailed at present, this was the result of artificial conditions, such as war contracts and high prices. The president, Mayor Hardie, of Lethbridge, said in his address that proper and intelligent municipal government is of greater importance in the upbuilding of Canada than either the provincial or federal governments, as the former bodies are closer to the life of the people and represent more truly than any other government the calibre of the citizens who made up the population. Mr. W. D. Lighthall reviewed the work of the year and secured the passage of a resolution endorsing the action of the executive in protecting public rights during the consideration of the Consolidated Railway Act in parliament. An attractive address was also given by the Hon. Wilfred Gariépy, minister of municipal affairs for Alberta, on the best method to face after the war problems. Mr. Gariépy claimed that property qualification for citizenship should be replaced everywhere by residence qualifications, as ownership had ceased to command its former respect in Canada.

A letter was also received from the Canadian Bond Dealers' Association concerning the credit of western municipalities. This letter was filed after considerable discussion.

Mr. Thomas Adams, the town planning advisor of the Commission of Conservation, gave an address on Wednesday afternoon before a joint session of the municipalities union and the Dominion Civic League. This joint session was presided over by Alderman Owens, of Vancouver. Mr. Adams' topic was the housing question and details of his address are given elsewhere in this issue of *The Monetary Times*. The main points were that if government housing were resorted to in this country, it should be carried out by a joint partnership of federal and municipal authorities. He stated that the federal government should provide funds and set up a skilled advisory and supervisory board. It should not build houses directly under its own control except for employees in government factories, arsenals, naval establishments or railways. In all other operations housing operations connected with countries, industries and returned soldiers, should be carried out by municipalities with the aid of funds and expert advice provided by the federal government. Departments of provincial governments should, according to Mr. Adams, take the responsibility for the proper administration of municipal housing schemes under the regulations of the federal government, subject to its supreme control in matters of finance. For the present no housing scheme should be carried out unless for some purpose directly connected with production necessary for the prosecution of the war. Mr. Adams explained that he intended to press the matter in British Columbia as soon as work at Halifax was completed, and that he intended to speak on the subject at the meeting of the Union of British Columbia municipalities in Penticton next September.

Mr. J. N. Bayne, deputy minister of municipal affairs for Saskatchewan, also spoke at the afternoon conference on

municipal responsibility. In regard to economic development of land, Saskatchewan, he pointed out, had just adopted a town and rural development act, which brought all English-speaking provinces into line except British Columbia.

Mr. Thomas Bradshaw, of Toronto, who was to read a paper entitled, "The Maintaining of Municipal Credit," was unable to be present at the convention.

Municipal Accounting and Statistics.

A report of the committee on municipal accounting and statistics was presented by Mr. Henry J. Ross, of Montreal, as follows:—

"It is with gratification that we are able to report prospects of a considerable advance in the efforts begun some 11 years ago by the Union for the adoption of Uniform System of Accounting and Statistics. The subject has never been allowed to rest, and it was my privilege to attend a conference in the city of Ottawa on June 19th, 1918, called by Mr. R. H. Coats, Dominion statistician, and comprising representatives from all the provinces save British Columbia and Prince Edward Island. At this conference we had the advantage of the advice of Dr. Davis, of the Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. The principal work of this conference was the discussion of vital statistics. The interest shown was very marked and those present expressed themselves freely, and the result was the practical adoption of a model bill covering the subject. Resolutions were adopted confirming certain acceptable principles, and the schedules to be used in all cases of vital statistics were approved, so that in the near future all the provinces will be furnishing the Dominion Bureau with the same schedule as to births, marriages, deaths, etc. Some adjustments of the clauses and some slight changes in the verbiage were left to a committee composed of the different provinces, and this committee met on June 21st. I was able to have quite a talk with Mr. Coats, especially on the subject of municipal accounting, and went into the matter very thoroughly with a representative of his bureau and we found a common ground which promised to be quite acceptable to the province. The time seems opportune—the government is in a liberal frame of mind and is assuming all the onus and expense of the work, and it will, therefore, be up to the province to do their part in order that the results desired may be attained.

"It should be clearly borne in mind that whatever may be done by the Dominion Bureau is done without a desire or the least intention to dictate a policy, but in so far as these statistics are concerned, they were born and nourished by the Union of Canadian Municipalities, and whatever measure of success may be attained will reflect to the credit of the union. On behalf of the committee, therefore, I do not hesitate to urge upon the provinces and the municipalities a prompt recognition of the forms, and that the provinces may see fit to eventually adopt laws to make them regular or may we say compulsory.

"I regret that circumstances do not permit my attendance at the convention, but perhaps may be permitted to wish one and all not only a pleasant sojourn in the old city of Victoria, where I spent the best part of a year (31 years ago), but that the matters that are discussed may prove of great benefit to those interested."

RUSSIAN BOND INTEREST PAID

The semi-annual interest on \$50,000,000 of three-year 6½ per cent. Imperial Russian government bonds was due on Wednesday, the 10th instant. Payment was made at the office of the National City Bank of New York. The source of the funds is not definitely known.

NEW TORONTO SELLS BONDS

Messrs. G. A. Stimson and Company, of Toronto, have just purchased \$27,658.02 town of New Toronto bonds, bearing 6½ per cent. interest, and repayable in fifteen annual instalments. These were issued for local improvement purposes. New Toronto adjoins Toronto on the west, and is bound to be a big manufacturing town.

The Royal Bank of Canada has closed its branch at Newcastle, Ont.