

The Winnipeg Strike

There was one phase of the Winnipeg strike that is of special interest to the local governing bodies, namely, the attempt made by the strikers to practically take over the administration of the city. This is Sovietism pure and simple. Naturally the attempt failed, and rightly so, and we congratulate Mayor Gray on the firm stand that he took on behalf of the citizens. What would have happened had the Mayor been a spineless leader can easily be imagined. Chaos would have reigned. When the strike committee attempted to determine the conditions under which food, water, gasoline and oil should be distributed it was trying to usurp the functions of the City Council, which alone can determine, and that only under special conditions, the distribution of food, etc. Such usurpation cannot be tolerated for a moment in a democracy like Canada, and the sooner this fact is realized by labour, whether it be organized or not, the better it will be for itself as a unit, and for its members as private citizens. The municipal council being elected by the people, must carry out its mandates, and no pressure from any self constituted body is strong enough to di-

vert the powers entrusted to the Council. If organized labour wants to take an active part in local administration, it must be by constitutional means, that is, through the polls.

Another phase of the strike that is also of interest to municipal administration was the attitude of the police. There is no doubt that their attitude was that of passive resistance so far as putting into practice their duty as guardians of law and order, and as such they were undependable. This phase brings up the very delicate question of the right of the police to form unions of their own, particularly bearing in mind that the principal weapon of organized labour is the strike. No one doubts for a moment the right of the police to organize for their own protection, but one does doubt their moral right, considering the conditions of their employment, to look sympathetically on the strikes of others to the extent of being undependable in their duty to the citizens who employ them for their protection. It is to be hoped that the Dominion Association of Police Chiefs will take up this question seriously at its Edmonton convention.

Public Retail Markets

One evening in May one of the lecture rooms of McGill University was given over to the study of Public Markets, and it is doubtful if that room had ever, in all the history of the famous seat of learning, been used to better purpose, even though it was just for a talk on retail marketing. The lecturer was Mr. G. B. Branch, of the Federal Bureau of Markets, Washington, D.C., who for five years had made a close study of the public markets in the United States and his lecture and his slides were full of information. More than that he gave his audience food for thought. He showed how location would make for success or failure, and how proper management paid; but above all, he showed the necessity of well appointed—not elaborate—public markets in the solving of high prices in foodstuffs. A further point that Mr. Branch made, and proved, was that Public Markets were an incentive to greater production in foodstuffs, particularly when the surrounding country was properly circularized with the right kind of advertising matter. In fact one could not help but be impressed with the thoroughness of the Washington Bureau of Markets—of which Mr. Branch is a product—in its investigations, particularly considering the limitation of its opportunities because of the comparative small number of public markets in the United States—less than 300. In Canada we are much better off in public market accommodation, that is, in the number of markets in proportion to the population, but our American friends are far ahead of us in studying up the possibility of the Public Market as a factor in the community life of the people.

As illustrative of the potentiality of the public market there are at least two instances of successful privately owned markets in the United States—successful because properly managed—in both of

which are overhead charges reduced to a minimum inasmuch as no telephones are allowed in the stalls and no dealer is allowed to deliver the goods bought. The delivery constitutes a separate department through which parcels can be delivered for 10 cents each. We hope in a future issue to publish a report of the investigations of the Washington Bureau with the hope that something of a practical nature may be done in Canada to make our public markets of real benefit to the citizens.

THE GOOD ROADS CONGRESS.

The Canadian Good Roads Congress which was recently held in Quebec was the most successful convention of its kind ever held in Canada. Eight of the provinces had government representatives and many of the municipalities sent their engineers, all of which goes to show the keen interest in the good roads movement by Provincial and Municipal Canada. Even the Dominion government sent its Commissioner through whom Federal aid to the extent of twenty million dollars was promised to the provinces. When the Dominion, Provincial and Municipal authorities' programmes have been carried out Canada will be one of the best roaded countries in the world, not even excepting Europe, though the countries there have been many centuries building roads. For this proud position we have much to thank the Canadian Good Roads' Association which under its old name, the Dominion Good Roads' Association, did such splendid pioneer work in educating the people of Canada to the advantages of well built roads and the fact of its last convention being the success that it was is still further encouragement to the executive to carry on the good work.