

TOWN PLANNING—(Continued).

all the town planning regulations in Ontario would not have prevented that great loss of life which occurred. The problem there is to get the settler on the land. The town springs up as a result of the settler going on the land. Legislation is necessary. I agree with Mr. Adams absolutely as to the necessity of providing for sufficient clearances around the town to render it reasonably immune from fire. But the great loss of life in the recent holocaust occurred not in the town but in the rural districts miles back from the township lines, where the Government must get the settlers. There he makes his clearing and must burn the slash and brush which he finds on the land. It is impracticable to clear the whole country first and place the settler upon it. There must be inspection as to the manner and time wherein the settler shall burn the cuttings from his land. Sixty-seven people perished outside of Matheson, in the rural districts largely. There was a large loss of property in the town which would have been avoided if there had been sufficient clearance. If the people are not permitted to settle irrespective of the desire of the Provincial body, the settlements could be kept together so that they might hew out clearances which would prevent fire being such a menace as it proved to be recently."

Mr. Adams—"I was only alluding to the losses which took place in the main street of Cochrane and other towns like it. I meant the losses of property. Town-planning includes proper planning of agriculture settlements in new agricultural territories, so as to avoid all the difficulties which it is humanly possible to avoid. The Conservation Commission has shown how it could be planned instead of cutting the country up in squares, and allowing men to settle where they like. I do not want to put forward town planning as a cure for all evils. That is only one of many things to do, and you must have the regulations to which Commissioner Harris refers, and I think he will find there is no body more active than the Commission of Conservation is to get proper fire regulations in rural territories."

Deputy Minister Bayne, Saskatchewan—"I was greatly interested in the discussion relative to the autonomy of cities. In Saskatchewan we have a Department of Municipal Affairs, and there is a certain amount of supervision by the Provincial Authorities over all our Municipal Institutions. It was never intended from the start that this Provincial Department should interfere with the complete autonomy of any city. It was rather created with the view to assist each city. It would be ill advised for any province to act in that manner. Surely the interests of the cities of the province form the interests of the province itself. In our department of municipal affairs, we find no clash between the Department and the Municipalities. It is fact that we give more advice to the Municipalities of the smaller towns than we do to the cities. The cities naturally have more autonomy, and they have their own expert solicitors and advisers. In granting them autonomy, the provincial authorities naturally still have a certain amount of co-operation and oversight. A good instance is our existing local Government Board which reviews the proposals of each city to borrow on debentures. The fact that the Provincial Government does not interfere, but insists on looking into the reasonableness of proposed loan, means that debentures sell at higher prices. That is one instance of where provincial oversight gives real and material assistance to the cities themselves. It has likewise been mentioned that there should be some oversight for these new towns. We have in Saskatchewan a townsite inspection. No railway or any other company lays out town sites unless it has been approved officially by the Provincial Government which examines that site. This legislation was passed a few years ago. Previous to that time some of our railway companies located towns without thought to all appearances. Our town site engineer goes carefully over the plans, and they see that the town develops according to plans which will be advantageous to the coming rate-payers. I mention this to show that, even including the larger cities in the supervision, it does not mean at all that the Provinces are acting in a manner antagonistic to the interests of the cities."

This Closed the Session.

Returned Soldiers

A. R. DOBLE, President of The Khaki League.

MONDAY 8 P. M.

The second session of the Convention was opened at 8 P. M., under the Chairmanship of Alderman Robert Ryan.

Dr. W. H. Atherton of the Last Post Fund for the decent burial of friendless deceased soldiers asked permission to move the following resolution:

That this Union of Canadian Municipalities endorses the principle of it being the duty of the governments (Federal and Provincial) to see to it that those ex-soldiers and ex-sailors who having served the Empire, and been honourably discharged, die in indigent circumstances shall be provided with a decent and honourable burial."

Referred to resolutions committee.

The Chairman then called upon Mr. Doble to give a paper on Returned Soldiers.

The Union of Canadian Municipalities is to be congratulated upon giving at these meetings foremost consideration to the problem of the returned soldier. Apart from the actual winning of the war there is no question which is of more vital interest to Canada today. As the winning of the war we believe is now well on the way, it is therefore none too early to deliberate on the treatment of those brave men who have offered the supreme sacrifice in behalf of Canada and Empire. Nor could there be any nobler work for those who remain than that of ensuring amongst the fruits of that sacrifice a better Canada where in those who have endured so much shall enjoy not only the reward of their labors, but shall play their part in carrying to completion in times of peace yet to come the structure whose foundations have been cemented with their blood in this war.

That these men will demand, and that they will be able to enforce their rights in that future it is idle to deny. A quarter of a million returned soldiers united in a common bond of service, acting and voting together will have immeasurable power and influence, and it should be our business to direct that influence towards the common good. The question is therefore, that of dealing with the returned soldiers in such a way as to secure the desired result.

So far the problem has been approached, both in official and unofficial quarters in a somewhat experimental manner, for it is perfectly true that we can only cope with these difficulties which are thrust upon us as we gain experience. The charge is made that, on the one hand, official tendencies are in the direction of too much severity and on the other, that private enterprises are apt to run to too great leniency. In regard to the latter, it might be observed that there are other ways of spoiling men than with kindness and that one would rather err on the side of leniency than of severity. But is either necessary? Will not a true appreciation of the problem suggest a solution which will be found fair, reasonable and satisfactory.

I would like you to consider to-day the returned soldier not as an invalid to be coddled, not as a child to be coaxed, not as a school boy to be disciplined, not as a suppliant for charity, but merely as an item. All bookkeepers know what an item is. It has to be posted into the ledger. It goes either on the credit or the debit side. It is an asset or a liability. So with the returned soldier. Each man will be either an asset or a liability to Canada, there is no middle place for him, he is a cypher, a negligible quantity, only in the grave, then he will be but a memory and God grant an ever green and glorious one. But when he comes back alive to us he is an entity, an item, and on which side of the ledger are you going to post him? You Mayors and Municipal Treasurers, your Chairmen of Finance Committees, your Auditors, all who draw up and read Municipal balance sheets, where do you put your water works and buildings, your plant and equipment and where do you show your bonds and debentures? Where are you going to put your returned soldiers. They must go on the debit or the credit side, they will be assets or