

CONTROL TAXATION, SUPERVISE OUTLAY

Convention of Local Improvement Districts Opposes Direct Taxation--Will Meet During Next Session of House to Watch new Municipal Legis- lation--Organization and Officers

What will no doubt be an organization of far reaching influence, the voice of which will command the respect of the government had its inception here on Thursday last when the Saskatchewan Local Improvement Districts Association was formed.

There were about eighty delegates present to attend this convention which met in the Oddfellows' Hall at 9 p.m.

The chair was taken by S. Chivers-Wilson who in speaking of the object of the meeting said that the local improvement councils are nearer the people than any other organization and they are elected for certain purposes. Money voted by the legislature for local public improvements throughout the country should be expended through the representatives of the people in the local improvement districts. We do not want to antagonise the government in any way for all we wish to do is to assist them. We insist, however, on obtaining the best results from the expenditure of public money consistent with economy. The department should bet their estimates from the local councils.

The chairman then asked for an expression from the meeting regarding the object of their gathering together, and W. P. Oser moved seconded by A. S. Gower that the delegates present organise a provincial association. This motion was discussed by several delegates and carried unanimously.

The name chosen for the new institution was The Saskatchewan Local Improvements Districts Association.

Election of Officers

It was decided that the executive of the organization should consist of a president, three vice presidents secretary treasurer and an executive committee of twelve.

The following were elected:
President—S. Chivers-Wilson.
1st Vice—W. McCorkell.
2nd Vice—W. P. Oser.
3rd Vice—H. Brierley.
Sec.-Treas.—J. D. Fitz-Gerald.
Executive Committee—W. H. Chambers, W. J. Foster, A. H. Salmon, A. J. Bradley, J. Drinnan, D. K. McLeod, David Vansen, John Hearst, D. Wilson-Paul, R. Pascoe, J. Tranberg, C. Acker.

A resolution committee consisting of Messrs. R. Percy, J. R. Mitchell and S. Gower was appointed to report to the morning sitting, the meeting then adjourned.

Morning Sitting

The convention re-assembled at 8 a.m. Friday morning, the President in the chair.

The committee on resolutions handed in their report which was taken up clause by clause. The first resolution was similar to that adopted at the Grenfell convention and was passed as follows: Moved by J. R. Mitchell (Grenfell) seconded by R. Percy (Fleming) That appropriations for the improvement of roads within Local Improvement districts be based as far as possible on estimates furnished by the secretary treasurer of districts on behalf of council, such estimates to be based on amount of taxes assessed.

That after the votes had been passed by the legislature the secretary treasurer of the local improvement districts shall be advised by the government of the amount apportioned for expenditure within the district.

The next resolution was as follows moved by R. Percy, seconded by J. R. Mitchell:

That in the opinion of this convention the present system of exempting railway and land corporations from taxation is inequitable and a great injustice is being done settlers who have been improving and developing the country in the past, and that all such lands should be called upon to pay their share of the just taxation from the date of formation of the district, in which situated; from at least the year 1902.

It was moved in amendment by W. H. Chambers (Douglas) seconded by L. Gabriel (Dubuc) that the words, "Dominion government lands land corporation reserves, and abandoned homestead lands" be inserted in the resolution as affected by the exemption.

There was a warm discussion regarding the benefit speculators derive from the development of the country, while they in many cases do not improve the land. J. J. Campbell, Davidson, said that the speculators' land had advanced \$17 an acre by having improved his farm adjoining while the former got advantages which cost him nothing.

The amendment passed.

The question of taxing abandoned homesteads was a matter of some concern and the general impression was that if improvements were made to homesteads and arrears of taxes against it when abandoned the government should make the man who re-entered for this land pay these arrears.

The following motion was adopted. Moved by E. Slater (Stoughton) seconded by A. H. Salmon (Riga) That the Dominion government be memorialised to have taxes assessed against abandoned homesteads charged up against them and paid on re-entry.

After considerable discussion it was decided not to pass a resolution dealing with the proposed change in the local improvement districts, but to leave the matter till the commission reports are published.

The question of appointing a finance committee was up for discussion but

it was decided to leave this to the hands of the executive.

Annual Meeting

It was decided to hold the annual meeting of the association on the second Tuesday after the convening of the legislature.

It is generally conceded that the municipal legislation which will follow the report of the commission will be the most important measure that the House will deal with for some time, and in which the farming community especially, is particularly interested. The local improvement organization will meet in convention before this matter is taken up at the next session so that with the whole country represented, the decisions and recommendations of this body will, no doubt, be respected by the government.

It was moved by L. Gabriel seconded by W. J. Vanisee—that the government be requested to make provisions in the proposed municipal act for recognition of our association.

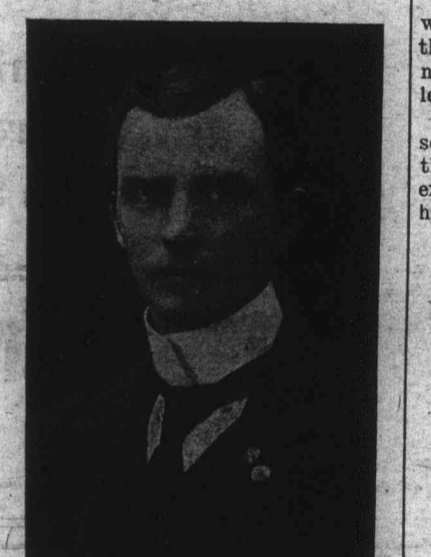
This resolution which was adopted, was proposed so that it accepted by the local government the affairs of this association could be legalised.

With an executive of 17 members it was thought that the quorum should be fairly large, but when distances were taken into consideration it was decided to make the quorum five.

Unoccupied Land

The business of the convention was well over by 11 o'clock and there was a free and easy discussion. The first topic dealt with was the taxation of unoccupied land. It was held that vacant lands derive appreciation in value from the improvements around them, and they should be taxed high. This opinion was expressed by S. Gower.

Mr. Bradley, Milestone, told his experience with this matter and in his



S. CHIVERS-WILSON,
First President of the Saskatchewan
L.I.D. Association.

district they found that when they struck the maximum rate provided the speculators became discouraged and sold out. The speculator has a good mission in this country and while they should be made pay as much as anyone else they should not be discriminated against. J. J. Campbell, Davidson, advised against a rebate on taxes for payment at a certain date. The speculator is the man with the money and generally the farmer has to pay the full amount.

In answer to a question as to the best method to make roads on a new district, Mr. Oser said that modern graders are a curse to the country and that the best thing to do was to use the prairie trail and put the money in the sloughs.

The convention adjourned at 11:30 to meet in the afternoon for further informal discussion.

Concluding Sitting

The convention re-assembled at 2 p.m. with the second vice president in the chair. The discussion took a wide range extending from secondary education to noxious weeds. There was a good attendance and all subjects were thoroughly threshed out.

Tax Unjust

The first subject dealt with was the secondary educational bill. There was a storm against the farmers being made to pay the cost for the higher education of the children of the residents of the villages, towns and cities while the country children in the majority of cases will not require these higher educational facilities for years, and in many cases will be without primary schools for some time.

A. A. Campbell, Carlyle, condemned the government proposal in the strongest terms, while W. H. Chambers said that if the government insisted on imposing this tax the people should make it an issue at the next election. They wanted to keep the association out of politics, but they must protect themselves against all parties. L. Gabriel thought that in any case the convention ought to stick to the principle that those who receive secondary education ought to pay for it themselves. This direct taxation is something new and something uncalculated for. E. Slater, Stoughton and the secretary, J. D. Fitz-Gerald both took strong ground against the one cent an acre tax on the farmers while the towns, villages and cities were exempt. The following motion moved by J. R. Mitchell and seconded by S. Gower was passed unanimously:

"That the secondary education bill

before the legislature is a discrimination against the farmers of the province in imposing a direct tax of one cent an acre, while exempting villages, towns and cities."

The question of public expenditure came up on the following motion, moved by S. Sell, seconded by E. Slater: "That this association opposes the principle of public expenditure set forth in circular No. 21000 sent out to local improvement districts by the public works department, believing as we do that the said districts should superintend all such expenditure."

The general impression is that the road gang system is too slow for this country as it would take a thousand men to do the work. It would, in the opinion of some, take five years before half of the province was covered. The present system of expenditure was severely criticised. J. J. Campbell of Davidson cited a case where he did a piece of road work worth \$30 but it cost the government \$250. He got the contract, and the government was to blame. Mr. Cowan, Carnduff, told of a piece of road work that was incomplete today because the men who were at work on it came from such a distance that it cost the government \$200 for the men going and coming from the work. S. Chivers-Wilson advised the convention to give the government a chance but he would like to protest against the public money being spent in such a manner. The councils should spend the money for public improvements. He condemned the government patronage system, but he felt that the new method should be given a year's trial. W. P. Oser was inclined to support the government scheme so long as A. Salmon and L. Gabriel condemned it. The motion passed.

Noxious Weeds

Following the noxious weeds discussion the following resolution was passed: Moved by J. L. Cowan, seconded by S. Gower that local improvement councils be authorised to appoint weed inspectors and that the cost of weed destruction be borne by the government.—Carried.

Registration

Owing to the trouble in ascertaining the rightful owners of farm property it was decided to ask the government to compel registration of contracts and bills of sale. This matter will be taken up by the executive.

It was well on in the afternoon when the program was exhausted and the convention adjourned to be called next year during the session of the legislature.

The following delegates were present when the convention opened, although many were detained at the exhibition grounds attending to exhibits:

- W. H. Wilson, 6-A-2, Faramede.
- C. A. Armstrong, 8-A-2, Whitewood.
- D. McLeod, 8-A-2.
- Samuel Sell, 8-A-2, Whitewood.
- G. T. Partridge, 4-H-3, Weyburn.
- H. Cadwell, 3-C-2, Willooghby.
- J. L. Cowan, 2-A-1, Carleton Place.
- J. C. Warner, 4-B-2, Fletwood.
- Jas. Keich, 7-B-2, Fitzmorris.
- L. McLundy, 7-D-2.
- S. Chivers-Wilson, 9-P-2, Regina.
- W. J. Foster, 2-B-1, Carnduff.
- J. R. Moore, 6-J-2, Tyvan.
- W. H. Chambers, 3-B-2, Douglass.
- S. Martin, 2-B-2, Douglass.
- W. P. Oser, 2-E-2, Wolseley.
- J. Russell, 10-P-2, Craven.
- J. Hearst, 1-A-2, Oxbow.
- J. J. Campbell, 13-A-3, Davidson.
- W. H. Salmon, 6-B-1, Riga.
- R. Percy, 6-A-1, Fleming.
- J. Sutherland, 15-5-2, Strassburg.
- C. E. Yates, 13-2-2, Strassburg.
- W. Liannel, Summerville.
- M. E. Olmstead, 3-E-2, Midale.
- G. G. Thompson, 9-E-2, Ellishoro.
- J. C. Moore, 8-P-2, Regina.
- G. H. Potts, 13-C-3, Riverview.
- E. Slater, 5-D-2, Stoughton.
- J. A. Wilson, 8-5-2, Belle Plaine.
- S. Grover, 11-M-2, Loan Creek.
- J. H. Brierley, 8-D-2, Grenfell.
- W. H. Ferguson, 3-N-2, Auberton.
- Andrew Martin, 3-N-2, Pilot Butte.
- C. Magnuson, 3-E-2, Midale.
- B. Sanguin, Stoughton.
- S. Getty, 3-W-2, Caron.
- John Wood, 6-P-2, Pense.
- W. J. Vancie, 8-R-2, Grand Coulee.
- N. McDougall, 4-A-1, Moosomin.
- W. W. Campbell, 4-B-2, Carlyle.
- L. Gabriel, 11-B-2, Dubuc.
- Jas. McAlister, 9-R-2-17, Pense.
- F. W. Post, 22-B-3, Rosthern.
- J. R. Mitchell, 19-D-2, Grenfell.
- W. B. Blizard, 9-D-2, Grenfell.
- M. Van Dusen, 4-H-2, Filmore.
- Jra B. Brown, 1-D-2, Beinslat.
- J. B. Morton, 4-C-2, Kisbey.
- B. J. Freesan, 22-A-3, Rosthern.
- J. R. Drinum, 11-H-2, Abernethy.

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MONTREAL FIRE

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