

THE GOVERNMENT OF CITIES

Convention of Municipal Magnates
Representing Both Sides
of the Boundary.

BENTLEMAN FROM HAMILTON, OHIO.

Told How the People's Money Was
Saved by Having Commission
Instead of Council.

Hamilton, Sept. 6.—(Special.)—This morning's session of the Municipal Convention was presided over by Mayor Teetzel, with a much larger attendance than yesterday.

J. A. Culham read a paper on "Municipal Reform in the United States." The paper dealt largely upon development of municipal government improvement as found in the United States, speaking particularly of Hamilton, Ohio, where the board of aldermen was wiped out and the government of the city put in the hands of five commissioners, who, in the first year of office, saved in city expenditure some \$20,000. Mr. Culham followed this with a resume of the municipal law relating to councils and city officers. He urged the convention to take some steps toward improving conditions in municipal affairs in Ontario, and he suggested the appointment of a committee to consider the advisability of forming a Canadian Municipal Improvement League in Ontario. The objects of the National Municipal League were, first, to multiply municipalities and methods and compare them with all who realize that it is only by united action and organization that good citizens can secure the adoption of good laws and the selection of good men of trained ability and proved integrity for such positions, or prevent the success of incompetent or corrupt candidates for public office. Second, to promote the thorough investigation and discussion of the conditions and details of city administration and of the methods for selecting and appointing officials in American cities, and of laws and ordinances relating to such subjects. Third, to provide for such meetings and conferences and for the preparation and circulation of such addresses and other literature as may seem likely to advance the cause of good civic government.

A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Culham for his paper.

Report of Special Committee.
Following the paper came a report from the special committee appointed to consider the resolutions presented yesterday. This report was made by Frank Macleagan, Q.C., and in some respects the resolutions of yesterday were changed. The report was as follows:

1. That, in the opinion of this convention, the Assessment Act should be so amended as to distribute the burden of taxation more equitably, and to end in view, the assessment of personal property should be made without regard to the debt owing on account of it.

2. Provision should be made in the Assessment Act that real property belonging to or in the possession of any person or incorporated company, and extending over more than one ward in any city or town, may be assessed together as a going concern in any one of such wards at the option of the assessor, or that the assessment of the property as a going concern may be made in any city or town, and two or more of such wards in such manner as he may deem convenient, and that in either case the property shall be valued as a going concern as forming part of a going concern.

3. The property of incorporated companies, other than charitable banks, should be liable to assessment to the same extent as that of any private individual or partnership, and sub-section 2 of section 38 of the Assessment Act should be amended accordingly.

The resolution re the sale of land for taxes was presented at the meeting yesterday afternoon, and the whole report was passed by a unanimous vote.

The Way They Do It in Belleville.
At this stage a discussion took place on Mr. Culham's paper, and the Belleville delegates gave an interesting account of the working of municipal reform in that city. The aldermanic reform in that city was greatly reduced at the last election, and the aldermen elected at large. Each alderman in Belleville is a member of every committee, and all committees meet on the same night. The changes made in Belleville have resulted in a great improvement in the personnel of the council board, and while more work and better work was being done, there was less expense to the city. It was found that by electing aldermen at large the undesirable class of aldermen were shut out.

The general trouble, as voiced by the delegates, was that under the statute, as it is at present, it was impossible for the wards to be abolished and the number of aldermen reduced, as it leaves to the council the power of introducing the reform which they would not do. It was more desirable to have the reform question dealt with directly by the ratepayers.

Two-Year Term for Mayors.
Finally, the following resolution was passed on this important subject:

Moved by Mayor Keating of St. Catharines, seconded by Ald. Robertson of St. Catharines:

That the Legislature be asked to amend the Municipal Act so as to provide that mayors of cities and towns may be elected for a term of two or three years, one or more of which shall be subject to election annually, as determined by bylaw to be carried by the ratepayers.

On motion of S. H. Kent, seconded by Ald. Graham of London, the following resolution relating to the voters' lists was passed:

That, in the opinion of this convention, the polling sub-divisions made by councils of cities and towns in which the manhood suffrage registration act is in force should be for municipal purposes only. That the number of voters for municipal elections in a sub-division should be increased from 200 to 300, and that an election should not be void or voidable for the reason that a polling sub-division which contains more than 300 voters has not been divided; provided it does not contain more than 400 voters. That the Board of Registrars should define the polling sub-divisions for elections to the Legislative Assembly and that those not so defined should register with the Board of Registrars under the Manhood Suffrage Registration Act.

Local Improvement.
City Solicitor Macleagan introduced a motion dealing with the frontage assessment for local improvement rates, and the matter was referred to the committee on local improvement.

That sub-section 1 of section 650 of the Municipal Act be amended by inserting after the word "council," in the third line, the words "upon the value of the land only, and not on the improvements thereon," and by adding at the end of the said sub-section the words, "and the value per foot of frontage of the land to be exempted from any general rate or assessment for the like purpose shall be estimated for the purpose of such exemption, and shall be stated in the notice of assessment provided for in section 2 of the said act, and such valuation shall be subject to appeal under sub-section 5 of said sub-section."

More Delegates.
The following additional delegates registered this morning: Ald. John Morton, Fort William; R. E. Wilson, Mayor of Guelph; Ald. Charles Graham, London; W. B. Smith, Town Clerk of Ingersoll; Ald. H.

HONORED THE CRACK SHOTS

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