

INVITATION TO SPRINGFIELD CONVENTION.

Mr. Woodruff.—“I wish to extend a cordial invitation to every delegate and member of this Union of Canadian Municipalities, to attend the annual meeting of the National Municipal League at Springfield, Mass., November 23rd to November 25th. The City Manager's Association will also hold its annual meeting there, and at least eighteen city managers will be present on that occasion, and there will also be held a meeting in the interests of municipal research. Various workers in that cause will hold a conference the same week. The Massachusetts Town Planning Association want all bodies of this kind or officials of city planning bodies, and others, covering all the various phases of civic life, to gather there.”

Mayor Dr. Young of Saskatoon.—“I would just like to say that we regard the Union of Canadian Municipalities as a very important organization. You would expect, therefore, that in such an organization, some better order should be observed about elections. We have felt that there was not sufficient opportunity given for discussion of what is in the best interests of the Union of the Canadian Municipalities. I think that you should have something in the form of a nominating committee which would take into consideration all the facts and the time and the place and the men. I give notice of motion that I will move at a future meeting that before the election of officers, a nominating committee shall be formed, which shall have the power to bring in not only nominees of the meeting but the time and place where the meeting shall be

held. In this way more consideration of these important matters can be obtained.”

The President.—“The election has been conducted in the way in which it has always been conducted. The delegates for the various Provinces have always adjourned for a few minutes in order to make out their lists of officers.”

Mayor Church then conducted the new President to the Chair.

Alderman Boyd.—“I thank you for the honour you have done me in electing me to the highest office in the Union. We are here in the general interests of Canadian municipalities. We are not here to be elected to office. We must have officers if we have a union. I am here in the general interests of the Dominion of Canada and the municipalities which go to compose it.

If we can get together annually, and get in touch with each other by correspondence, I feel that by that alone we do a great work for the municipalities of the Dominion. When the convention breaks up, I hope we can go away feeling that we know each other not only personally, but as municipalities, better, and that in Victoria you will have the biggest delegation that ever came from the East. I will do my utmost to see that all the municipalities in the east will send at least one representative. No doubt there will be momentous questions to consider next year, and we will want the advice of every member composing this large and important union, and I hope that before we have a meeting again we will have questions to settle apart from the difficulties caused by the war.”

Different Forms of Municipal Government Aldermen and Committees

ALDERMAN E. LARIVIERE, Montreal.

EVENING MEETING.

Chairman President Alderman L. Boyd. K.C.

The fifth Session of the Convention opened with Alderman E. Lariviere's address on Aldermen and Committees:

I have been invited to express an opinion on the most advantageous and practical municipal administration. This is a delicate and complex problem if considered in the light of the events which have, in the municipal domain, marked the last decades. It, however, becomes very simple if given its only natural and logical solution, that is to say, if the people choose intelligent, disinterested, well informed and honest representatives, who are free from all connection with cliques, all systems of administration will give satisfaction. On the contrary, if these representatives lack civic spirit if they only endeavor to flatter their electors, if they give more attention to their own interests than to those of their constituents and of the ratepayers generally, all modes of administration will be unsatisfactory.

This solution, however logical it may be, cannot unfortunately serve as a basis for a study on municipal governments, and although it is in itself an undeniable principle, is not always put into practice.

We will therefore limit ourselves to the existing conditions and I will try to find the best answer to this intricate question: “What is the best method of governing a city?”

In most of the large Canadian and American cities, the administration has been, for the past few years, entrusted to two bodies: Board of Commissioners and Aldermen. Has this change in the former system brought about the desired reforms, has it put a stop to the abuses for which past governments were blamed? Does the condition of municipal finances or the quality of public works or the efficiency of the service show that those who established this new mode of administration were right? I regret, Gentlemen, not to be able to reply in the affirmative. In certain places, the people are clamoring for a change of administration; and I may add that, three years ago, a delegation visiting certain American Cities, administered by two bodies, was told by several representatives, that this system was defective and gave un-

satisfactory results. These representatives, while not pronouncing themselves, as a body, against the established form of civic government, none the less freely expressed their personal opinion; and this opinion, as I already stated, was far from being in favor of the existence of a Board of Commissioners and an Aldermanic representation.

As regards the City of Montreal, I must say, Gentlemen, that the administration by a Council of Aldermen was so sharply criticized that the Legislature, in order to satisfy public opinion and to redress what was considered as an evil, deemed it advisable to establish a Board of Commissioners, presided over by a Mayor, without, nevertheless, abolishing the Council. Desiring to put to a serious test this new method and to remedy the alleged defects of the old system, it conferred upon this Board all administrative powers, leaving to the Aldermen only the right to legislate.

Yes, Gentlemen, the Board of Commissioners of Montreal has, since 1910, the entire control of the City's affairs; control over the finances, control over the staff, control over the awarding of contracts and the execution of public works, etc. What has been the result of this change? I do not hesitate to say, although I know that the Legislature thought that such a reform would be beneficial to the city, that this new system has in no wise answered public expectation, but, on the contrary, has given deplorable results. This is evidenced by the fact that during the past six years the debt of Montreal has doubled, the number of employees has trebled and the salaries of the latter have increased in a considerable proportion, as shown by the following figures:

Debt of the City in 1910	\$ 45,000,000
Debt of the City in 1915	\$105,000,000
Salaries and Wages, 1910	\$1,800,000
Salaries and Wages, 1915	\$4,500,000

These figures, Gentlemen, need not be commented upon; this extraordinary increase of our debt speaks for itself as does the excessive increase of the staff. There are certainly grave defects in the system and we will now try to find what are these defects.

In my opinion, the principal cause of the unsatisfactory results which the establishment of a Board of Commissioners has thus far given is the lack of knowledge of the matters connected with the civic administration in those who form part thereof.