

Teaching Citizenship Via the Movies

In last month's issue of the Journal a suggestion was made in a review that educational subjects should be encouraged in the thousands of "Movie" houses that crowd our urban centres. It was even suggested that, unless a movie house shows a film of an instructive nature at least three times a week, its license should be taken away. At that time the writer had in mind the films supplied by the Municipal Reference Library of New York, that deal with such subjects as Citizenship, Child Welfare, Education Fire Protection, Municipal Government, Health, etc. We now find that in addition to the above, both the Dominion and Ontario Governments have prepared excellent films describing Canada's industries, one of which, on wheat, gives the complete story of our great national asset, from the preparing of the ground, and the sowing of the seed, to the loading of the steamer at Montreal with Manitoba No. 1 Hard; another, on our Fishing Industry, gives a stirring picture of the dangers that the fishermen of this country have to go through to get their livelihood; a third film gives the story of electricity—its development and use, and so on.

But the great mass of the people have never, and are not likely to see these inspiring pictures—possibly the greatest educational possibility in Canada to-day, unless more use is made of the "movies." Moving pictures are here to stay; of this there is no doubt. They have gripped the imaginations of the people to such an extent that they have taken, if not usurped the place of perhaps more prosaic, but more elevating forms of entertainment, principally because of the attractiveness of the pictures. This being so, there is no reason why Canadian picture theatres should not be utilized for the betterment of the people by the presentation of pictures of an instructive character, and in this the local authorities can do much by making it a condition of a "movie" license that at least one educational film be shown at each performance. If Canada would preserve her national character—her pride in her industries, her social life, and her people, she has no better chance than in the picture houses. There she can visualize nightly before the people these very characteristics in pictures.

The Credit of Western Municipalities

At the Victoria Convention of the Union of Canadian Municipalities a resolution was presented in which the provincial authorities were urged to see that those municipalities that were behind in the interest on their bonds be brought to time. Though the resolution was tabled after some sharp criticism from some of the western delegates, largely because a wrong inference may be drawn from the wording: "there are at present a number of municipalities who are many months behind in the payment of their interest and principal on Debentures," it is to be hoped that the hints suggested will not be lost sight of by municipal men, namely, that investors in municipals, like anything else, get very "scary" when a municipality defaults on its interest. It must be remembered that many of the holders of Canadian municipals live outside the country—Great Britain and the United States—and these investors have not always the means of finding out—even if they cared to—the underlying reason for the non-payment of interest on even a single bond that may be held by them. What is more, the default of one Canadian municipality, even in its interest charges, affects the financial credit of the whole of municipal Canada, so that it is to the duty of each municipal union to urge its members—particularly the weakest—to live up to their financial obligations. The suggestion put forward by someone at the Victoria Convention that Eastern bond dealers had over persuaded some of the smaller Western councils to put out bond issues to their undoing did not allow much credit for the intelligence of these councils, whose fault, perhaps, was over confidence in the near future, but

certainly it was not that of being easily persuaded by outsiders. The Western men of Canada are not that kind.

There is no doubt that the Western municipalities of Canada have been harder hit by the war than those in the East—though all have been affected. Coming so soon after the land boom broke, when the tax on land was the chief source of local income, the war found every municipality in the West very much unprepared, and the marvel of it all is how well they have come out, especially when it is taken into consideration that outside farming, that would benefit the rural municipalities only, there have been no war industries to help increase local revenues. For the last four years it has been one continual struggle on the part of every council to meet their municipal obligations, and the fact that they have, with one or two small exceptions, speaks volumes for their tenacity of purpose—to pay their debts. When the war is over such continuous sacrifice and determination should, and no doubt will, inspire confidence in Western municipalities, but we do suggest that the stronger municipalities do give a helping hand to their weaker neighbours and so keep up the good name of municipal Canada.

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