

Convention of B. C. Municipalities.—(Continued).

I trust that as many of you as can spare the time will avail yourselves of the opportunity of seeing something of the Coldstream Municipality before you return to your homes. It will entail some risk, but it is only the danger of being not as fully satisfied, as you may perhaps have been, with your present choice of abode. Should any of you succumb to the charms of the District and decide to stay, I can assure you of a very hearty welcome in a neighborhood where an outdoor life can be enjoyed the whole year round.

Reeve Bridgman of North Vancouver responded:

On behalf of this Convention, it is a very great pleasure to me to respond to these addresses of welcome which we have heard with the greatest of interest, and I think that every member present will agree with me that the action of the Union in naming Vernon as the 1916 place of meeting meets with the approval of all. To attend this Convention probably entails a certain amount of valuable time away from business, but I am convinced that it is in the best interests of the Union to arrange for meetings in the Upper Country one year and at the Coast another. By so doing we see all the different parts of the Province and meet the different municipal representatives thereby holding the Union together.

The question that has been raised by Reeve Giles of not bringing forward too much before the Union that has to go to the Government, I think you will hear from our President that the Union's intention is to deal with only the more important issues.

Without keeping you any longer, I would just like to say that I for one and I think you will all agree that we shall be very pleased to take advantage of the visit to the Coldstream and take a motor drive through the orchards.

It is now twenty years since I was last in Vernon, in 1896, and certainly the growth has been wonderful, the climate is the most noted throughout this Province. I assure Mayor Smith and Reeve Giles that we are only too pleased to be with them, and I trust that the Convention will be both successful and pleasant to all the representatives from the different parts of British Columbia.

Mayor Stewart asked that before the Credential Committee reports that all delegates hand in their credentials.

MOVED by Mayor McBeath, seconded by Councillor Fletcher of Point Grey that this Convention invite a deputation representing various churches to address this Convention for half an hour commencing at 9.30 a.m. tomorrow re the exemption from taxation other than local improvement taxes on the actual ground upon which churches are built.—Carried.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

Mayor Stewart of Victoria, as President, then presented an address as follows:

It affords me great pleasure to extend to you a most cordial welcome, to this, our Twelfth Annual Convention. It is customary on such occasions as this, for the President to render an account of his stewardship covering his term of office, therefore I take this opportunity of laying before you a brief synopsis of my endeavors on behalf of the Union during the past twelve months.

During the past two years we have gone through strenuous times, I refer to conditions brought about by the great European conflict—a struggle without a parallel in the history of mankind—but present indications are that we shall soon be on the highway to a satisfactory conclusion of this war in which our Province, our Country and our Empire are so vitally interested. As a Nation and an Empire we have shown the world that, while we may have been slow in starting, we will not cease our efforts until we have freed small nations from the heel of the oppressor, and thus maintain those high ideals which the British Empire has always represented, has always fought for, and for which many of our best men and women have given up their lives and all they held most dear.

Our Province is now on the up grade. Trade conditions are better than they have been for a long while, and this is a matter for congratulation; what is true of the Province is true of the Dominion as a whole. Bank clearings have largely increased during the last four months, and unemployment has much diminished.

Local improvement work is now almost at a standstill. The people now see the folly of extravagance in this direc-

tion. It has taken considerable time for people generally, to realize that following boom times, there always follows a period of reaction, during which they are compelled to practice the most rigid economy in order to keep their heads above water, and I do not think that the people of the Province as a whole, are ever likely in the future to under estimate the value of thrift either in the expenditure of public or of private money.

It is a matter of regret to me that every Municipality in the Province of British Columbia is not yet in membership with this Union. Possibly some effort might be made to persuade these Municipalities who are not yet members, to become members. I feel convinced that, if those Municipalities who are not yet members of this Union only knew the good that such a body as ours is capable of accomplishing along the lines of more satisfactory Civic Government, they would not hesitate to join and add their representations to ours, so that we could go to the Government armed with an even more influential vote than we have at present. There has never been a time when the old adage "UNITY IS STRENGTH" was more true than it is today.

Your solicitor has prepared for you a detailed account of all the matters which were referred by last year's convention to the Executive, for presentation to the Provincial Government at its last Session. It will therefore not be necessary for me to make any extended reference thereto.

The Executive of the Union met in Victoria on March 8th, 1916, to decide upon the best manner in which to present the Union's case to the Government. On the following day we took up with the Government all the matters passed upon and approved by the Convention at Chilliwack. Subsequently your solicitor and myself met the Municipal Committee of the Provincial Government almost every day for six weeks. Reeve Bridgman of the District of North Vancouver was also in attendance at a number of meetings, and I cannot speak too highly of the valuable assistance he rendered us. Occasionally we also had other members of the Executive in attendance when they happened to be in Victoria. We had many strenuous sessions, and in some instances we failed to achieve our object, but, on the whole, we believe we can claim to have a large measure of success. This is borne out by the fact that we were instrumental in having a much larger number of changes wrought in the Municipal and Local Improvements Act this year than has been the case for many years previously. With reference to the changes that have been made, while they may not have been all that we could have desired, I have no hesitation in saying that, on the whole, they are changes which will make for much better Civic Government.

Here, I desire to place on record my deep appreciation of the unflinching courtesy of Mr. Schofield, the Chairman of the Municipal Committee, towards the representatives of the Union. He invariably kept us informed as to when any matters were coming before his Committee which were likely to be of interest to the Union. Your Solicitor, or I were such frequent visitors to the House during the last session of the Legislature, that we were inclined to think we were members, and were almost looked upon as such.

The business to come before us at this Convention is of considerable importance, and I am sure that, as heretofore, it will receive your earnest consideration. Permit me to say, that I trust each and every delegate will have no hesitation in expressing their opinion on any matter that may come before this Convention. This is the place in which to give expression to your views on any matters affecting the present and future welfare of Municipal Government in this great Province. If there is any point about which you are not sure, do not be afraid to rise and ask for an explanation, which I am sure will be gladly given, as we do not wish any of the delegates to leave the Convention under a misapprehension about any matter whatever.

We are here for the purpose of consulting one another on matters pertaining to the well being of the various municipalities throughout the Province, and of formulating suggestions to be forwarded to the Provincial Government, upon which legislation can be based for the better Government of our Municipalities.

The present Session of this Union is perhaps as important as any Session we have had. The election of a new parliament, the advent to power of a new administration,