

The Union of Municipalities of the Province of Quebec

It is now nine months since l'Union des Municipalités de la Province de Quebec was launched with great éclat at a convention held in the City Hall, Montreal, and now at another Convention the executive of the new union gave an account of their stewardship. The official report was a record of splendid endeavour and successful achievement not only for the benefit of the actual member municipalities, but for the benefit of all municipal Quebec and we feel safe in stating that though but a few months old, the Quebec Union of Municipalities is today one of the strongest organizations of its kind in the Dominion.

While such an excellent result reflects great credit on the municipal spirit of the Province, it was not brought about without much labor and organization on the part of the officers, particularly Secretary Prieur and Treasurer Furse, both of whom have spent many days in the executive offices devising ways and means to build up the Union; and they have been well backed up by the President and his Vice-Presidents.

In the organization of this Union the Province has been divided into districts or zones—seven rural districts and seven urban groups or districts. The purpose of creating these districts or groups is to enable the general executive to analyze and better meet the wants and ambitions of every district in the Province. That this system of sub-dividing the Province has been successful was evidenced in the well attended sub-convention of the Union that was held in one of the rural districts some months ago.

One of the principal objects of the Union is concrete usefulness to its member municipalities, as was stated very clearly in the prospectus and is provided for in the by-laws. In the acceptance of this undertaking the executive took on a heavy responsibility, and, so far as the opportunities and income allowed, right nobly have the officers carried out their task. This has been made possible by the voluntary co-operation of special committees made up of experts and authorities in their respective professions—legal, engineering, accountancy, etc.—who offered their services to the Union. As time goes on and the Union becomes better organized with corresponding monetary returns these committees of experts will be increased to cover every phase of municipal administration. The feature of an advisory board of experts is peculiar to the Quebec union as no other municipal union has attempted such a task, either in Canada or the United States, or in any other part of the world, so, that if only for this enterprise alone the Union has much to be proud of.

But What Of The Future.

The Quebec Union has already justified, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the necessity for its

existence. It has brought home to the municipal councils of the Province of Quebec not only their opportunities and their responsibilities, but a wider sense of their duties; it has given them a new dignity and a new power in the confidence that in all their just demands they have with them and behind them an organization ever ready to fight for their interests. The Union is giving a new meaning to Municipal Quebec. No longer are the municipalities of the Province the creatures, and the local councils the puppets of the politicians. Singly they were, but united they are able to successfully resist the encroachments of any combination of private or political interest or interests. This has been made possible by the establishment of the Union. Was it not worth while?

Those Councils that have joined the Union think it was, and they are wise in their generation, but what of the Councils that have not joined the Union? Are they going to stand by and allow their fellow councils bear the burden of fighting their battles, for every municipal reform brought about by the union is shared by all? Have they the interests of their communities so little at heart that they are not willing for the sake of a small fee to avail themselves of the benefits to be derived from membership of the Union? It is for all councils, not already members to answer.

Union Is Strength.

The ambition of the executive is to have every one of the 1,316 rural and urban municipalities of the Province of Quebec members of the Union.—And why not?

If only purely from self-interest it is surely the duty of a council that really wishes to serve the community to seek every means that will help in good administration. This is exactly what municipal Union gives. It is also to the interest of a community to join with other communities for self-protection of its public rights and the vested rights of its citizens against nefarious charters and charter sharks. Union gives this protection, not in itself, but by the power derived from a combination of many municipalities acting together for a common purpose.

But there is something bigger and grander than self-interest in municipal unionism, for no community lives unto itself. The community must take a neighborly interest in the nearby communities or it will mentally and spiritually starve—it would lose its soul—and the larger the interest and the broader the scope through the inter-communion of many communities, the richer will be the reward to each community. It is to bring about this larger inter-communion of municipal thought and ethics that Municipal Union will find its grand opportunity to build up the civic life of the nation. This is the purpose of a municipal union. What about the consummation which will not be complete until each one of the councils are enjoying the benefits of membership? Again we say it is for those Councils not already members to answer. Why not now by joining up?