

## Civic Affairs in Manitoba

H. E. MORTON.

Winnipeg and its suburban municipalities are up in arms against the proposal of the provincial government to levy a flat tax of one mill more upon all rateable property in Manitoba. Asserting that they are heading straight for bankruptcy the suburban councils of municipalities surrounding Winnipeg have met, formed an association, consulted the Great War Veterans and obtained their approval, and have now submitted to the Government a bill for the repeal of the Manitoba Patriotic Tax. This is the culmination of trouble which has raged here for over a year in regard to the manner in which the patriotic tax is being levied. The municipal representatives take the attitude that as a soldier fights for the whole Dominion, the patriotic fund is a matter for the Government, and feel that if Manitoba, the only province levying the patriotic tax, abandons it, the Federal Government will be obliged to step in and take over the responsibility.

### The Jitney Question.

If jitneys are not abolished in Winnipeg, a serious and far-reaching alternative lies in wait for those who will be called upon in future to adjust transportation difficulties. The general feeling locally is that a continuance of both jitneys and street cars along the lines of present competition is impossible and even for the time being, with anything but inefficient service. It is therefore apparent that the time has arrived when the city council will have to decide as between the jitneys and the street railway and in order to be armed with sufficient authority the council has an amendment to its charter before the provincial house which will enable it to deal with the anomaly which exists, for anomaly it is. It is admitted, even by those who favor the continuance of the jitney service, that the railway company under its new manager is accomplishing alterations in its service which will go far towards the making of an ideal service. A study is being made by Manager McLimont of the whole transportation as it affects the city, and his endeavors are being so recognized that the entire elimination of the jitneys seems only a matter of time. On the other hand, if the city fathers fail to realize the position in which the company finds itself placed and the jitneys are not eliminated, then it seems that the former should be relieved of its obligations which include the paying of a percentage of its gross profits, taxes, and other burdens imposed upon it under its charter with the city.

### Winnipeg and its Hospitals.

The Board of Control at a recent meeting heard from a large delegation of members of the board of directors of the Winnipeg General Hospital that unless more generous help was forthcoming from the city, that institution could not possibly be maintained. The delegation asked that the city make an extra grant of \$60,000 to help the institution meet its most pressing obligations. The members of the delegation pointed out that they had not asked for any special assistance for the last five years, but that they were now forced to do so through conditions over which they had no control. A number of figures were given showing the exact present financial position of the hospital, and it was stated emphatically that conditions were that serious that unless the city came to its assistance, it would be practically impossible to continue operations. To a question as to how the money should be raised, the members of the delegation expressed themselves in favor of direct taxation, but this will have to be decided by the city council if it decides to make the grant asked for.

### The Civic Pensions Scheme.

The new pensions scheme for Winnipeg civic employees referred to in earlier editions of this journal is still under consideration. The proposal to make the new scheme compulsory for all is meeting with strong opposition by both the Federation of Civic Employees, also by the non-syndicated members of the city hall staff. It is generally claimed that it should be optional for old employees—men who are in the city's service at the time the new by-law is put into force—to either come in under the new regulations or remain as they are at present, which means that the existing pensions scheme would also have to be in effect and the intention of the framers to do away once and for all with this anomaly would be bearing no fruit. All the suggestions made will be carefully looked into by the committee in charge of the project.

### To Abolish Board of Control.

Controller Chas. Gray has prepared a public statement giving in detail his reasons for believing that the welfare of the city can be best served by the abolition of the Board of Control which was referred to in the February number of this publication. He declares electoral influence is continually brought to bear on public officials in a manner which renders it impossible for controllers to exercise unbiased judgment in matters of public welfare. At the present time, he says, the question of real public service is fermenting in the public mind, and the people as a whole are easily responsive to a moral idea regarding civic government. The outcome of the awakening of public interest in communal things as far as Winnipeg is concerned has, he holds, created a strong demand for a better form of government. The original idea of the Board of Control was, he states, to get strong financial and executive men from all branches of the citizens to give a certain part of their time to rapid decisions as on contentuous questions, but it has, he says, developed into a body, which, instead of being purely executive, has taken certain powers rightly belonging to the expert, and this condition hinders the heads of the departments in the work they are paid to do as experts. The question is attracting much notice, and a doubt exists as to whether the council will after all decide to submit the decision to a referendum of the citizens, so great is the opposition in influential quarters.

### DEALERS IN FOOD BE'ING BROUGHT UNDER LICENSE.

The license system of the Canada Food Board is being rapidly extended to all dealers in foodstuffs. It will be illegal to transact business in any of the following trades after the dates given below, except under license from the Food Board:

Licenses become Operative.

Produce Wholesalers.....	March 15, 1918
Produce Commission Merchants.....	
Produce Brokers .....	
Wholesale Grocer .....	April 1, 1918
Wholesale Grocery Jobber.....	
Wholesale Grocery Commission Agent....	
Wholesale Grocery Broker .....	May 1, 1918
Retail Grocer .....	
Retail Butcher, Retail Baker, Retail Produce Dealer, Retail Flour, and Feed Dealer, Retail Fruit and Vegetable Dealer, Retail Fish Dealer .....	
	May 15, 1918

Every effort is being made to furnish all wholesale and retail Dealers in food and food products, with forms of application by mail, but any failure to receive such notice will not be deemed a good and sufficient reason for neglect to obtain the necessary license by the dates given above.

The following licenses became operative on the dates given:

Wholesale Fish Dealers License.....	Jan. 1, 1918
Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Dealers License	Feb. 1, 1918
License to sell cereal products.....	Jan. 1, 1918
License to operate a mill for grinding Wheat and other grains .....	Dec. 1, 1918
Baker's License .....	Mar. 1, 1918

### BUILDING IN WESTERN CITIES.

Building permits issued in twelve Western cities during 1917 totalled \$5,167,850, showing a decrease of \$1,282,341 from the figure of \$6,450,191 in 1916. Western cities that showed gains are as follows, the 1917 figures being given first and 1916 following: Edmonton, \$309,800, \$208,140; Lethbridge, \$99,688, \$84,122; Regina, \$416,460, \$222,175; Saskatoon, \$582,739, \$146,150; Yorkton, \$63,445, \$42,325, and Kamloops \$9,825, \$7,700. The following showed decreases for the year, 1917 figures are given first in each case: Brandon, \$180,338, \$244,873; Winnipeg, \$2,212,450, \$2,507,300; Moose Jaw, \$295,460, \$318,945; New Westminster, \$81,515, \$85,307; Vancouver, \$768,255, \$2,412,889, and Victoria, \$147,875, \$170,265.