

## Field Notes

### Union of Manitoba Municipalities

The seventh annual convention of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities was held at St. Boniface on November 23rd, 24th and 25th. It was conceded to be the largest and the best convention yet held in the history of the union. Delegates were present from almost every municipality in the province. Many questions of utmost and great importance came before the convention and many splendid and practical addresses were delivered by experienced and practical speakers, well versed on the various subjects taken in hand.

J. F. C. Menlove, the retiring president, occupied the chair, and he directed the course of discussion throughout the various sessions. His annual report was a somewhat lengthy one, enumerating the progress and the importance of the work being performed by the union.

He stated that the previous convention at Portage la Prairie had terminated most successfully and that throughout the year many of the motions and sentiments voiced at that convention had had their effect, the object for which they were designed.

He reported on some of the results obtained from those resolutions and requests. It was requested that the noxious weeds act should be amended so that the municipalities would be allowed to keep the fines imposed under that act to assist them in defraying the expenses of enforcing the same. This in the wisdom of the committee on agriculture was not allowed.

The requested amendment to the charity aids act, giving power to the municipalities to recover hospital fees from public ward patients summarily before a justice of the peace is now law, but does not apply to female patients.

The amendment to the charity aids act requiring that a public ward patient whom the municipality is to be held responsible for, must be employed in that municipality if not a resident for one month by a ratepayer, has become law.

The amendment of giving power to unincorporated municipalities or villages to purchase land for park purposes was granted. The collection of taxes, the cost of well-boring and well-boring machinery has been allowed. The important requests, particularly from the rural municipalities surrounding the large cities to have the same powers for local improvements as enjoyed by urban communities has been granted and an act passed covering the whole question.

The appointment of a good roads commissioner had been asked for, and in compliance with that request a good roads or highway commissioner in the person of A. McGillivray has been appointed.

The report of the secretary-treasurer, John Carsdale, councillor of Blanshard, was also received at one of the early sessions. He reported good progress in the work of the union and dwelt on the fact that many privileges had been secured, one of which was the right given to farmers to take small spruce trees from the forest reserves. He reported the financial standing of the union extremely good.

There were many questions of importance passed upon, but none more important than the good roads question. Highway Commissioner McGillivray read a paper which was well received. He stated that there must be a standard system of construction, under supervision of first-class superintendents. Perfect drainage was also a most essential feature. Some definite policy must be adopted and a certain plan of improvement should be laid down and adhered to as closely as possible.

#### SPLIT-LOG DRAG FAVORED

In his address Mr. McGillivray paid tribute to the split-log drag, when he said:

"The split-log drag is an implement of great value in maintaining the surface of the roads, especially the earth roads. Its cheapness, simplicity of construction, and ease of operation make it suitable to existing conditions in this country at the present time. As pamphlets have already been sent out from the department of public works to the councils of the different municipalities illustrating its construction and operation, little need be mentioned here about it in respect of these points. In order to obtain the best results at a minimum outlay from the working of this drag, its application must be systematically undertaken and the road surface never permitted to remain in a broken state for any length of time. In the spring season and after continued rain storms these naturally become rutted by the wheels of vehicles, and if left in this condition these ruts form receptacles for the water from the next succeeding storm, and render them more susceptible to the cutting action of even the lightest vehicle, and so on until the radius of the highest wheel becomes the measure of their depth or the road becomes a regular mire. Now, if these ruts were filled in after the frost has left the ground in the spring and after rains, this difficulty would be obviated and the roads kept in a constantly passable condition, without the expense of costly repairs, which must certainly follow its neglect.

"In order to successfully perform its work the drag should be applied when the soil is wet, but not

too sticky. Hence a large mileage of roads will obviously require treatment about the same time, and to work every mile to the best advantage a large number of drags must be employed. It seems, then, that the most practicable solution of the difficulty would be for a number of farmers resident along the different highways to undertake this work and for each to devote an hour or two with a man and team on a day after continuous rains, when it could be most advantageously performed on the portions of the roads most conveniently situated, and to receive a reasonable remuneration for their time and labor. An hour's work on one drag should accomplish the desired result on a mile and a half or two miles of road, if worked at the proper time."

Reeve Henderson, president of the Manitoba Good Roads Association, addressed the convention on the importance of the roads question, and dwelt on the necessity of an educational movement among the farmers and municipalities in order to show the



M. D. WORDEN, TEACHER AT VANSCOY, SASK.

He is responsible for an innovation into rural schools. On November 4th a seed fair and judging classes were held. A large crowd turned out and the children were enthusiastic.

benefits to be obtained. Mr. Henderson presented a series of resolutions which it was proposed to submit to the government.

#### DISCUSS TAXATION SYSTEM

The rebate system of taxes came up and was discussed at length. The resolution read: That the rebate of ten per cent. on taxes be done away with, and that taxes be put on a straight basis. Any taxes not paid by December 15 should have a penalty of ten per cent. additional added. It was moved that this resolution be approved, but it was most vigorously opposed by John Seator, of Daly.

Major Adolph, of Brandon, offered as a compromise that those who wished should be allowed to retain the old system, and those who wished to do away with the rebate system should also be allowed to do so.

The compromise carried unanimously.

#### HEALTH OF THE PROVINCE

The second day of the convention opened with a paper prepared by Dr. R. M. Simpson, chairman of the provincial board of health. He stated that in the United States 10,000,000 people were suffering from syphilitic diseases, and that 7,000,000 were suffering from forms of venereal diseases. These terrific scourges were the chief cause of degeneracy and depopulation in that country, as in Canada. There were always 350,000 people sick in the United States from typhoid fever and 500,000 sick from tuberculosis. The deaths from the latter disease totalled 200,000 a year in the United States.

Dr. Simpson stated that the municipalities were not paying nearly enough attention to the question of public health. Some of them did not pay their health officer more than \$25 per year. He was the most important official that a municipality had. The need of good water was emphasized, and it was pointed out that the province had made provision for testing the water free of cost. Water was easily contaminated from closets, and the receptacles used in farm privies should be constructed with the utmost care. Dr. Simpson gave specific directions with reference to the steps which should be taken to prevent disease and dealt at some length with the dangers connected with the entrance of the fly into residences. He emphasized the need of screens and the removal of filth from the neighborhood of the house.

The resolution dealing with a phase of the noxious weed question was number ten on the list, and the proposition made in it was that power should be given to the municipalities to enter on a farm and plow down the weeds in case the owner of the property failed to deal with them in a proper manner. At the present time the municipalities have the power to cut, rake and burn, but have not the power to plow down.

The request for this additional power came from the southwestern portion of the province and the delegate explained that the trouble had arisen in the case of non-residents, whose farms were at times in a deplorable state. It was alleged that there were cases where nothing but plowing was satisfactory. Many delegates spoke on the matter, and it was maintained that in many cases plowing would do much more harm than good and that the cost would be excessive. Noxious Weed Inspector O'Malley spoke on the subject, opposing the change, and the resolution was laid on the table.

#### MILK INSPECTION

The work of milk inspectors of Winnipeg came in for some criticism, and a resolution was introduced to provide that the work of inspecting the dairies of the province should be done by the municipality in which the dairy was located. Representative Mager, of St. Vital, stated that there was a feeling in his municipality that the dairy inspectors from Winnipeg were favoring the dairyman who dealt with the large dealers and that the independent dealers suffered. Representative Henderson, of Kildonan, said that a case had been reported to him, where, as was alleged, a dairyman had been the victim of an inspector. The inspection amounted to a persecution, and it appeared that this Winnipeg official was seeking to put the dairyman in question completely out of business. Chairman Menlove called attention to the fact that the proposal would affect every town and village in the province, and that it would relate not only to the milk supply, but also to the meat supply. The resolution was defeated, no one voting for it.

Another resolution which affects the railways of the province was one dealing with the losses sustained by farmers and others from fires which were caused by locomotives. Farmers complained that when their crops were burned, it was useless to enter an action against the railway companies, however

(Continued on Page 1717)



PUPILS AND THEIR PARENTS WERE GATHERED AT VANSCOY SCHOOL TO ATTEND THE FIRST SEED FAIR ORGANIZED BY A PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER IN CANADA