

serting a clause in the bill protecting municipal taxes against exemptions. The only assurance given in the House was that as the Government was not buying the Grand Trunk system outright local taxes could not be interfered with. But the taking over, controlling and operating a railway system by the Government are but steps to full and actual ownership. When that time comes the local authorities will find it impossible to collect the railway taxes under the present law, meaning that an intolerable burden will be placed on the other taxpayers. It was in anticipation of such a situation that Mr. Lighthall, the Hon. Secretary of the Union, sent out a large number of telegrams calling the attention of the councils to the position and the re-

plies received showed that the local councils realize to the full its gravity. It seems to us that strong action by every municipal council in the country is necessary if anything is to be done to protect their interests, and the time to do it is now, before the Grand Trunk becomes the absolute property of the country. The Federal authorities are never anxious to pay local taxes on Government property as many municipal officials know only too well, so that it is well that the question should be settled before the Government officials have a chance to get out of paying what is morally and should be legally due in local taxes for Government railways.

Civic Administration

Mr. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Secretary of the National Municipal League, whose reputation as a propagandist for all that is best in civic government is known to our readers, gave an address recently before the Montreal Canadian Club on the subject of "Civic Administration." In advocating the commission-manager form of government as the best system he did not forget to urge that sound citizenship and personal responsibility were very necessary to success in municipal government whatever form it took.

As Mr. Woodruff put it, the question that each citizen should ask himself is not what can the Government do for me, but what can I do for the Government. In these words lie the true spirit and the real inwardness of civic administration. Without sympathy and understanding between the administered and the administrators there can be no real progress in community government, and yet there is not a municipal council in Canada but what at times feels the lack of sympathy with and appreciation on the part of the citizens of their endeavours on behalf of the community. So much so is this the case in many of our cities that the local authorities

have come to look with suspicion upon many civic uplift movements as being directed against themselves by interested parties. Elected as the local authorities are by the citizens to carry on the local administration to the best of their ability, for the benefit of the whole community, it is not very encouraging to have to meet criticism from, say a proprietors' league whose interests are selfish because one-sided.

Mr. Woodruff in his address showed very clearly the necessity for more expert knowledge in the administration of municipal government. This does not mean that local government must be left to the experts but rather that it is up to the local councils as business or professional men to at least use the same amount of acumen in the running of the community's affairs as in running their own business or profession. Or to put it another way the Councils should confine themselves more to legislative work and the deciding of policies and the larger questions, leaving more of the purely administrative work to the executive officers. This is practically the system in Great Britain and works out well.

Grand Trunk and Municipal Taxation

Union of Canadian Municipalities takes action in Railway Legislation.

Because of the fear of a number of municipalities through which the Grand Trunk operates, that they might lose a large part of their taxes should this railway, through the recent legislation at Ottawa, become in any sense the property of the Dominion, the Executive of the Union of Canadian Municipalities by request sent out a large number of telegrams calling the attention of the councils to the seriousness of the situation. As the result of the replies to the telegrams, all asking the Executive to take the necessary action to protect municipal rights, the following clause was prepared, which the Dominion government was asked to have inserted in the Grand Trunk Bill:

"That nothing in this Act or any amendment thereof shall diminish, or prejudicially affect any right of assessment or taxation now or

hereafter appertaining to any municipality or municipal institution over or upon the property or income of the railway or any of its subsidiaries, branches or accessories."

The Minister of Railways (Dr. Reid) gave an assurance in the House of Commons that no legislation was necessary to protect the municipalities in the Grand Trunk deal for the reason that the railway in question was to be kept in the form of a company. This assurance the Minister afterwards confirmed by letter. Other ministers have also given the same assurance. Nevertheless, while the government assurances have considerable value, there remains a considerable fear among many municipal men that there is danger to such taxation in view of any form of government ownership, and that it is due to them to remove all possible doubt, so as to safeguard the future, and in view of the large amount involved.