

Conditions in Canadian Municipalities.

Mr. William Bennett Munro read the following paper before the National Municipal League in New York:—

"The progress of urban concentration in Canada has not been sufficiently rapid to render the problem of municipal administration difficult of solution for a while. During the last three decades the proportion of the total population of the Dominion contained within towns and cities of over 5,000 has increased from twelve to twenty-four per cent. This increase has been extremely uniform and steady. Furthermore, it has not been accompanied, as in the United States, by any marked concentration of foreign immigrants in the larger centres; these have in the main distributed themselves over the agricultural regions of the North-West. At the present time Canada's ten cities of over 25,000 contain only 16 per cent. of her total population, while in the five cities of over 50,000 are comprised only ten per cent. The main political problem of the Canadian people is still that of national and provincial, rather than of municipal government.

Varied Types of Government.

"Since the organization and control of local government is vested with the provincial and not with the federal authorities, there is, in the cities of the seven different provinces, no exact conformity to any type of city political organization. In framing their general charter laws and in formulating special charters for particular cities, the provincial authorities have been guided partly by English and partly by American experience. Variations in the structure of municipal organizations in the different provinces are attributable to this diversity of influence. In general, the Maritime Provinces have borrowed largely from England, while Ontario and Quebec, and the western provinces have been disposed to incorporate into their municipal systems many features distinctively American."

After explaining the method of electing the mayor and city council, and the making of appointments to the city departments, Mr. Munro continued:—

"On the whole this system of municipal administration has proven satisfactory, and that it has done so must be attributed in a considerable degree to the non-identification of municipal with provincial or national politics.

Municipal Ownership.

"The movement toward municipalization of various public services has been making in Canada about the same rate of progress as in the United States. It has not been by any means as rapid or as successful as in England, or in the other Colonies, such as Australia. At the present time most of the Canadian cities own and operate their own waterworks; some few have municipalized their lighting facilities, but beyond this the movement has not progressed. The other civic services, such as transit and the like, are still almost entirely in the hands of private corporations operating under lengthy franchises. A fair degree of success has attended the experience of municipal ownership, but not such as to warrant any general application of the policy. On the other hand the strict supervision and control which the provincial authorities have exercised over the granting of franchises has served more or less effectually to protect the cities against the private corporations."

A Fine Accumulation.

For 1905 the assessed valuation of franchises in the City of New York is \$302,193,550. At the tax rate of \$1.51 the annual revenue from these franchises would be over four and a half million dollars. The accumulated taxes due the city for six years are over twenty million dollars. The corporations resisted in the courts the payment of this tax, and after a long legal battle the Court of Appeals, on April 28, 1903, unanimously sustained the tax.—New York World.

The Press Generally.

It is agreeable to note that the press of Montreal is sufficiently active in its opposition to the new gas contract. La Presse denounces it as both "illegal and immoral." La Patrie would like to believe in the good faith of the majority, but finds the bargain they propose very far from what the people had the right to expect. La Patrie and the Witness both appear to have been deceived by Ald. Lapointe's amendment, both failing to note that under the new conditions imposed expropriation is made practically impossible. The Star and the Gazette have no editorial opinion on the subject so far.—Herald, Montreal.

(Le Canada also agrees with the Herald against the contract.—Ed.)

The City's Share.

It is rather unfortunate that the officials of the Power Company could not give any definite information, when asked by The Herald yesterday, as to what revenue would come into the city by virtue of the agreement to pay three per cent. on the gross earnings of the Gas Company in the city, or what a saving of five cents per thousand feet would aggregate to the citizens. That information ought really to have been before the aldermen before they voted on Monday.

On a calculation, however, it becomes fairly clear that in hurry to get the contract through without actually breaking the law Ald. Lariviere gave away rather a nice little sum.

Three per cent. calculated on the old rate of \$1.20 would amount to 3.6 cents per thousand. This, for five years, would amount to eighteen cents. Ald. Lariviere, to get within the law, gives away twenty-five cents in the five years. Thus the rates would be:—

Without Percentage.	With Percentage.
1905..115	1905..115
1906..110	1906..115
1907..105	1907..110
1908..100	1908..110
1909..100	1909..105

We gain 3.6 cents each year, but we lose five cents in 1906, another five cents in 1907, another ten cents in 1908, and five cents in 1909. Total gain, eighteen cents; loss, twenty-five cents.

Deducting the 3.6 cents from the figures of the second table, it is found that what the company first offered works out at an average of \$1.06 per thousand, while what the bountiful aldermen prescribe works out at \$1.074 a thousand.

It is easy to see how utterly absurd was Ald. Ames' request to let the resolutions lie over for a day or two to be considered. Consideration was the last thing their authors desired. And after all, what is a cent and a half a thousand between friends like the aldermen and the lobbyists.—Herald, Montreal.

Suspicion Keeps Back.

Dr. Charles L. Crane, President of the Municipal Reform League, gave the Canadian Club at Ottawa some information as to the methods of street railway companies in Chicago, and especially as to the leverage gained by getting hold of radial railways terminating in the city. The suspicion that a similar motive animates the owners of the city railway and the radials here is the chief obstacle to the latter obtaining entrance into the city. It is difficult to negotiate in an atmosphere of suspicion, and the only way to remove suspicion is to recognize the municipality and people of Toronto as having absolute control over their streets, subject only to the rights held by the Toronto Street Railway Company during the remaining years of their franchise.—News, Toronto.