

REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE UNION OF B. C. MUNICIPALITIES.

(Continued).

palities took very strong exception to this clause; that there was no good reason why the Courts should be kept open at the expense of the Municipalities, and the money to run these Courts be taken by private individuals or private corporations. In reply, I received a letter from the promoters in which they said that they would be very glad to accede to our request, and when the Bill was introduced to the House it lacked this feature.

B. C. Telephone Company, Ltd.

It will be remembered that in 1916 the Union was successful in obtaining an order from the Board of Railway Commissioners that no change in the tariff of tolls of the B. C. Telephone Company should be approved by the Board until the Union of British Columbia Municipalities had been notified and given an opportunity of making representations before the Board. In December last the B. C. Telephone Company applied to the Board of Railway Commissioners at Ottawa for an order approving their tariff of tolls, and were directed by the Board to serve the Secretary of the Union, who sent the same to me. On instructions from the President I called a meeting of all the Municipalities using the telephone service, within easy reaching distance of Vancouver, at my office on the second of January last, and at that meeting it was decided that sufficient copies of the tariff should be obtained and one sent to the Clerk of every Municipality in which the B. C. Telephone was operating, which was done, with a letter stating: "If on examination you find there is any complaint which might be successfully urged to the Board against the tariff, or, if you have any complaint, as to service, you might take the matter up direct with the Board of Railway Commissioners at Ottawa, who will, on your complaint, assign a time and place for the hearing of your complaint, or if you prefer, I am directed by the President to inform you that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities will give you every assistance in its power to enable you to place your case before the Board." I received no request for assistance from any Municipality.

Soldiers' Relief.

This matter was, at the Convention, referred to a Special Committee to draft a proposal, Reeve Bridgman being chairman. Under his instructions I sent a circular letter to all of the Municipalities for information as to how their Municipality would be affected by the various proposals which had been made, to which a large number replied, and, after carefully tabulating the replies and going over the legislation of other Provinces, Reeve Bridgman called a meeting of the Committee from my office on the 20th of January last, which was also attended by Mr. Fillmore and a Committee of the Great War Veterans' Association, Provincial Command, and the whole matter was gone over. And, at a subsequent meeting on the 2nd of February, a clause was drafted which met with the approval of the Joint Committees, which clause was transmitted to the Inspector of Municipalities, and to the Premier and Members of the Municipal Committee, and received their approval, and is now embodied in the Act as Section 38, Chapter 63, of the amendments of 1920.

Kettle Valley Railway Agreement.

In this matter the Bill, as presented, contained the following clauses:

1. To extend its present branch railway line from Penticton Wharf, in the Municipality of Penticton, British Columbia, southerly a distance of about three miles to the shore line of Dog Lake in said Province.
2. To operate or cause to be operated, the Railway from Penticton Wharf to the slip at the north end of Dog Lake, and to provide such rolling stock equipment and service as the tariff thereon, both passenger and freight, may reasonably require.
3. To exempt until the first day of January, 1931, from all taxation whatever or however imposed by, with or under the authority of the Legislature of the Province of British Columbia, or by any Municipality or School District in the Province, the capital stock, franchises income, tolls and properties and assets which form part of or are used in connection with the operation of the section of the railway above provided between Penticton Wharf and the point on the Okanagan River near the said Demonstration Plot; provided always that the exemption from taxation herein granted shall be deemed

to be applicable to and shall apply to only such parts of the Company's railway undertaking between Penticton Wharf and the point on the Okanagan River, near the said Demonstration Plot as shall actually be constructed and operated under the terms of this agreement.

On receipt of this Bill I was of the opinion that the language was sufficiently wide to cover exemption of taxation within the Municipality of Penticton, I accordingly telegraphed Penticton Municipality Clerk, and afterwards made protest before the Municipal Committee and to the Premier, and I was assured by the Premier and the Attorney-General's Department that the language was not capable of such construction, and that if it were, and if the Kettle Valley Railway should hereafter attempt to obtain exemption from taxation for the Incola Hotel or the Wharf at Penticton or the Railways within the Municipality of Penticton, legislation would be promptly introduced to make it absolutely certain the language did not, and never was intended to cover such exemption. The Premier informed me that he had the authority of the President of the Railway Company for saying that such exemption never was contemplated, although perhaps the language was not so free from ambiguity as it might have been.

Other Legislation.

Other Legislation with which I have dealt, or have been consulted, outside of that authorized by the Convention consists of an amendment to the "Motor Act" consequent on the judgment handed down by Mr. Justice Macdonald in the Victoria case, the amendment to the "Cemetery Company Act," and an amendment to the "Local Improvement Act," which authority the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, on the application of the Municipality to overhaul and correct or amend the assessment for local Improvements when any defects exist or hardship has resulted as a consequence of the local improvement assessment. The City of Victoria Private Bill, and the amendment to the City of Vancouver Charter, and the West Vancouver Private Bill I did not interfere with, or have anything to do with, in accordance with the general understanding that the Union does not interfere with Private Bills for the benefit of one Municipality.

Resolutions Passed at Last Year's Convention.

Of the resolutions looking towards an amendment of the "Municipal Act" passed at last year's convention, nearly all were adopted and form part of the "Municipal Act Amendment Act, 1920." In fact, I think it is safe to say that there never was a year in which so many of the recommendations of the Union have been carried into effect. Those which were not adopted are not matters which it seems to me are of sufficient importance to be brought forward again.

I might say that in all of the above matters everything was reported promptly and immediately to the President of the Union, and no step was taken by me in any particular except on his advice, approval and instructions.

In conclusion, it seems to me that it would be wise, in order to avoid confusion and misconception in the minds of the Municipalities, if you would change the name of the office which I hold from that of "Solicitor for the Union" to "Counsel" or "Parliamentary Agent," or "Counsel and Parliamentary Agent for the Union," in order that there might be no misapprehension that my office is not the office of solicitor in the strict sense of the use of the word "Solicitor."

It as moved and seconded that the written report of the Solicitor be referred to the Resolutions Committee.—Carried.

Financial Statement.

Secretary-Treasurer A. W. GRAY presented the following financial report:

Collection folio No. 44-46.....	\$1,120.00
Balance in bank	286.52
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	\$1,406.52
Exchange	\$ 7.35
Expense account	1,288.14
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	\$1,295.49
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	\$1,406.52
	1,295.49
Balance	\$ 111.03
Outstanding cheque	11.22
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Sept. 30th, balance as per bank statement....	\$ 122.25