

# Convention of Alberta Municipalities

(BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT).

The twelfth annual convention of the Union of Alberta Municipalities opened in Edmonton at the palatial Macdonald hotel on Wednesday, November 8th for two days sessions. President Dr. Costello, Mayor of Calgary, occupied the chair, and out of fifty three of a membership forty-nine were in attendance.

The convention was declared formally opened by his honor Lieutenant Governor R. G. Brett, and Mayor W. T. Henry conferred the freedom of the capital city of Alberta upon the delegates, Mayor N. Holmes of Claresholm and Mayor W. D. L. Hardie of Lethbridge, replying on behalf of the convention.

Resolution and credential committees were struck and then the convention proceeded to take up the program. Secretary Treasurer, J. D. Saunders of the town of Cabrose gave a paper on "Tax Enforcement Proceedings" as applicable to towns and villages, declaring the act cumbersome, costly and unwieldy, while D. Mitchell, assistant city comptroller of Edmonton gave a good paper on "Control of Municipal Expenditures." Mr. Mitchell showed, in answer to a question by Ex-mayor William Short, K.C., of Edmonton that since Edmonton had established the comptrollers' department, a saving of over three-quarters of a million dollars had been effected in current expenditures in 1915 over 1914, and that the estimated saving of 1916 over last year was in the neighborhood of one-quarter of a million dollars.

At the afternoon session of the first day, Dr. T. H. Whitelaw, medical officer of health for the city of Edmonton and president of the Alberta Medical Society, gave a comprehensive paper on "Municipal Health Problems" advocating town planning as a remedy for slum and evil conditions. George T. Kinnaird, patron of the union, and a member of the firm of Kinnaird and Henderson, independent auditors for the city of Edmonton, gave an address on "Municipal Audits" declaring that auditors were the family physicians of the municipality.

In the evening the City of Edmonton tendered a banquet to the delegates, their wives and friends, at which the cabinet members and legislators of the province were present, representatives of the clergy and militia, all the heads of the various civic departments and the ladies.

The toast list was patriotic and representative and the speakers included His Honor Lieut. Governor R. G. Brett, Hon. Ducan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture; Hon. Wilfred Gariepy, Minister of Municipal Affairs; A. F. Ewing, M. L. A., Mayor Costello of Calgary; Mayor Hardie of Lethbridge, Mayor Halladay of Hanna; Mayor Holden of Vegreville, Right Rev. Bishop Henry Allan Gray; Rev. Dr. McQueen, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church; Lieut. Colonel James Cornwall of the 218th Battalion; Lieut. Colonel Eduard Leprohon of the 233rd Battalion, Mayor Hawthorne of Medicine Hat, Alderman O. Bush of Edmonton, M. R. Jennings and others.

A good paper given at the convention was on "Free Hospitals" by Mrs. W. M. Davidson of Calgary who is touring the province in the interests of governmental established free hospitals. The women of Alberta have already petitioned the Alberta government on the matter, advocating the surveying of the province into hospital district, each district to take a referendum vote on the question, taxation to be the means of maintaining the hospitals being able in due course to attach the properties.

Ex-Mayor William Short, K. C., of Edmonton, discussed his paper given at the eleventh annual convention of the union held at Bassano on "Municipal Taxation Problems" and he advocated taxation on a frontage basis.

The secretary treasurer of the union in presenting his report showed that total receipts for the past year amounted to \$738.96 while disbursements were \$575.07, leaving a balance on hand amounting to \$163.89.

The second day's session saw the election of officers for 1917 and Howard Stutchbury, secretary of the Military Hospital Commission gave a paper on "The Care of the Returned Disabled Soldier."

The officers for 1916-17 are:

Patrons: Hon. R. G. Brett, Lieut.-Governor.

Hon. A. L. Sifton, Premier of Alberta.

Hon. C. W. Cross, Attorney General.

Hon. Wilfred Gariepy, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

E. Michener, Leader of the Opposition M. L.A., Red Deer.

George J. Kinnaird, F.R.C.A., Edmonton.

Hon. President: Mayor M. C. Costello, Calgary.

President: N. Holmes, Mayor of Claresholm.

First Vice-President: J. P. Holden, Mayor of Vegreville.

Second Vice-President: A. C. Hawthorne, Mayor of Medicine Hat.

Secretary-Treasurer: J. D. Saunders, Secretary-Treasurer of Camrose.

Executive: Mayor H. E. Osmond, Didsbury.

Mayor W. T. Henry, Edmonton; D. W. Marnock, Lethbridge; Councillor R. J. Chrystal, Carstairs; Thos. J. Stacey, secretary-treasurer of Fort Saskatchewan; Secretary-treasurer Johnson of Olds and W. J. Seed of Vermilion.

Next year the convention will meet at Calgary.

The resolutions passed at the convention, among them being a number of amendments to the Towns Act and Tax Enforcement Proceedings which affects only the villages and small towns, are as follows:

## Moratorium Provisions.

Moved by Ald. John McNeill, Calgary, seconded by G. R. Marnock, president of the Lethbridge board of trade.

"Whereas this convention is entirely in sympathy with such measures as protect the property of bona fide soldiers and sailors, but

"Whereas difficulties would arise in preparing a list of unpaid taxes which would be free from containing properties owned by soldiers and sailors at present enlisted and men who may in future enlist for active service and

"Whereas it is necessary for the proper and efficient government of our cities, towns and villages, that they should not be restricted more than is absolutely necessary in the collection of the revenues required for the administration of their government, and

"Whereas, prospective purchasers of properties at tax sale, or of tax sale certificates would require assurance of being able in due course to attach the properties,

"Resolved that in the opinion of this convention the Moratorium provisions should apply only to soldiers and sailors actually enlisted in the overseas naval and military forces or in the armies and navies of His Majesty the King and of our allies and

"That the Moratorium act should be so amended that it will apply only to men enlisted as above and

"That in order to facilitate the carrying out of tax sales, soldiers' and sailors' property be not excluded from the lists, but that such bona-fide soldiers and sailors should be given until eighteen months after the conclusion of the war to redeem their property, and that such redemption be arranged so that the costs attached will be borne by the respective cities, towns and villages." Carried.

## Discount for Taxes.

Moved by R. J. Chrystal, seconded by J. E. Welton: "That this committee recommend that the government make provision for villages to allow a discount for taxes on similar basis as permitted to towns."—Carried.

Moved by H. H. Halliday seconded by Thomas B. McClellan:

"Any village or town may put an upset price at any tax or tax enforcement sale, equal to all taxes and costs against any parcel of land."—Carried.

Moved by J. B. Holden (Vegreville):

"That in view of the present method of Tax Enforcement proceeding being unsuited to existing conditions the executive of this union appoint a committee to investigate other possible methods and to confer with the department of municipal affairs as to a remedy."—Carried.

Moved by W. McMullen (Tofield):

"That the department be requested to change the present form of assessment and Tax Roll by the addition of a column headed 'Legal Costs.'"—Carried.

## Equality of Pensions.

"Whereas the Canadian Army is a citizen army composed of men from all parts of Canada in all walks of life and

"Whereas in the majority of cases the officers and men before entering the army were of equal social and business standing in the community from which they went into the army, and