

# The Municipal World

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in the interests of every department of the Municipal Institutions of Ontario.

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THE MUNICIPAL WORLD,

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ST. THOMAS NOVEMBER 1, 1902.

The City of Liverpool, boasts of having one of the best street railroad systems, not only in Great Britain but in Europe. The city owns the system.

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Voting on by-laws to bonus the Weston Shoe Co. and the Dickson Foundry Co. took place in the village of Campbell rd on the 7th October last and resulted in both by-laws being carried.

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Municipal ownership received a big lift at a special election held recently, when the voters of the city declared themselves ten to one in favor of purchasing the West Duluth water plant and the gas franchise of the company. The vote for the by law resulted favorably by 1,337 to 146 votes.

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The street railway system of Berlin, Germany will shortly pass into the hands of the municipality by purchase from the present owners. The city council after an investigation of the public ownership of the tramway system at Glasgow, Scotland, and elsewhere, concluded in favor of that plan.

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The Court of King's Bench of Manitoba recently quashed a by-law of the municipality of Whitewater for the reason that the document purporting to be a by-law forbidding the receiving of any money for a license to sell intoxicating liquors, did not bear the seal of the corporation, and the document purporting to be a by-law to submit the first mentioned by-law to the vote of the ratepayers had neither the seal of the corporation nor the signature of the reeve or person presiding at the meeting at which it was passed.

## A Two Year Term for Municipal Councillors.

The length of time for which Municipal Councillors are chosen should be determined mainly by two considerations—the desire to maintain an active popular control and the desire to have an experienced and capable council.

We have compared the county council election returns of 1899 with those of 1901 and find that 42% of the county councillors were re-elected and in each of thirty councils this percentage was increased to one-half or more. The election returns for all of the local municipalities were also examined and in January 1902, 79% of the members of the (505) township councils of the Province were re-elected and in 120 of these townships all the members were continued in office. In the (135) villages 62% of the members of the councils were re-elected and in 93 villages this was increased to 78%. In the (105) towns, 55% of the members of the councils were re-elected and in 77 towns this was increased to 64%. In cities 63% of the members were re-elected and, taking the Province as a whole, two-thirds of all municipal councillors in office during 1901 were continued in office for 1902. These figures indicate that the habit of re-election has been acquired and that legislation providing for a term of at least two years for municipal councillors will meet with general approval in the townships and a large majority of the towns, villages and cities throughout the Province.

In the province of Quebec, the councils of parishes, townships, towns and villages are composed of seven members, who remain in office for three years, subject to the condition that two councillors must be elected or appointed two years consecutively and three every three years. The mayor or head of the council is elected by a majority of the council and holds office for a year.

In Nova Scotia, county councillors are elected annually. In the towns the mayor is elected annually and a councillor every two years.

In Halifax, the aldermen are elected every three years, one-third being elected every year.

In New Brunswick, the county councillors are elected annually.

In Manitoba, councillors are elected annually except in cities where one alderman for each city ward is elected every two years.

In British Columbia, the members are elected annually.

In England, the term of office for a councillor is three years, members retiring in rotation every year.

The great need of municipal government is continuity. This can only be obtained by partial renewal. The County Council Act introduced a two year term in a way that makes it possible to elect an entirely new council.

If the Municipal Act was amended to

provide for the election of members of councils for two years, one half to retire the first year and the mayor or reeve, with the remaining councillors the second, the electors would still remain an active popular control and continuity of procedure would be provided for. Municipal office would then be accepted by many capable men, who are adverse to undergoing the turmoil and excitement of annual elections. Experienced members would always be found at the council board and a business-like management of every department of the municipal service would result.

Before a member elected for the first time has learned all that a member of the council must know about the working of the affairs of his municipality, in order to be really useful, it becomes necessary to devote all his spare time to the preparation for a new election and at the end of the year he thus becomes theoretically responsible for much that, if he had been better informed in time, he would have done all in his power to prevent. The necessity for a long annual canvass in order to ensure re-election has driven many men from the council whose services would have been extremely valuable.

Councillors who agree with us should bring the matter to the attention of their representatives in the Legislature so that it may be considered during the next Session.

Two instances have recently fallen under our observation of non-compliance with the existing law as to the granting of bonuses to manufacturing institutions by township councils. In one case a by-law was finally passed providing for the exemption from taxation of an institution of this kind for ten years and in the other, the assessment of a company's property and plant was fixed at a definite figure annually for twenty years. In neither case, apparently, had the by-law prior to its final passing received the assent of the electors of the municipality, qualified to vote on money by laws. These by-laws are illegal and an application for the purpose will result in their being quashed. Township councils are simply inviting expensive and vexatious litigation by thus neglecting the observance of the plain provisions of the statutes. Section 9 of the Municipal Amendment Act, 1900, makes provision for the granting of aid by way of bonus to manufacturing establishment and clause (a) provides that "no such by-law shall be passed until the assent of the elector has been obtained in conformity with the provisions of this Act, (the Municipal Act), in respect of by-laws for granting bonuses to manufacturing industries." By clause (g) of section 10 of this Act it is enacted that the word "bonus" where it occurs in section 366 a or sub section 12 of section 591 of the Municipal Act as amended by this Act shall mean and include "a total or partial exemption from municipal taxation, or the fixing of the assessment of any property for a term of years."