

# The Municipal World

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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

K. W. MCKAY, EDITOR,

A. W. CAMPBELL, C. E.

Associate

J. M. GLENN, LL.B.

Editors

TERMS. \$1.00 per annum. Single copy, 10c.; Six copies, \$5.00, payable in advance.

EXPIRATION OF SUBSCRIPTION. This paper will be discontinued at expiration of term paid for, of which subscribers will receive notice.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS. Subscribers, who may change their address, should give prompt notice of same, and in doing so, give both old and new address.

COMMUNICATIONS. Contributions of interest to municipal officers are cordially invited.

HOW TO REMIT. Cash should be sent by registered letter. Draft, express or money orders may be sent at our risk.

OFFICES—28 Elgin Street, St. Thomas. Telephone 101

Address all communications to

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD,

Box 1252, - - - St. Thomas, Ont.

ST. THOMAS, SEPTEMBER 1, 1896.

The first report of the Deputy-Registrar General, based on monthly returns of contagious diseases occurring in municipalities, is published in another column. It is most desirable that a report should be sent in from every municipality if these statistics are to be of value to the medical health officers of the province. To facilitate the making out of monthly returns, the Registration Department has supplied special post cards, and if deaths are entered in the registers when received the work of making out the returns is trifling. Clerks will notice that they are required to report whether there have been any deaths from contagious diseases or not. Division registrars should co-operate with the department by sending in their returns promptly on the 5th of each month.

\* \* \*

In the city of Guelph special auditors have for some time been engaged in an examination of the treasurer's books, and a deficit of some \$18,000 is reported. Among the reasons given are: 1st. The combination of the offices of clerk and treasurer. 2nd. A lack of system in keeping the books and records of the municipality. 3rd. Inefficient auditors. There is no excuse for this state of affairs, and we believe that the members of the various councils who have allowed the business of the city to drift along in such a careless way are not entitled to much consideration.

The special auditor concludes his report as follows: "For the future a proper annual audit and an adequate fee paid therefor will be the truest economy."

\* \* \*

Among the various publications received at this office during the past month is a voters' list from a township in the county of Frontenac, and, although it is dated 1896, we find that among the

different qualifications entitling the voters to be entered therein the terms "landholder's son," "occupant" and "wage-earner." We do not know what authority the assessor had for so designating the persons entered in the assessment roll, or the clerk for placing persons thus qualified in the voters list. The Municipal Act section 79 gives the qualification of municipal electors as "owners," "tenants," "income voters," and "farmers sons," and the Manhood Franchise Act requires the assessor to enter on the assessment roll the name of every male person of the age of twenty-one years who has resided within the province for nine months next preceding the time fixed by statute or by-law for beginning to make the assessment roll, and provided such person was, at the time fixed as aforesaid for beginning to make the roll, and is at the time of the assessment living in the municipality, and has resided there continuously from the time fixed as aforesaid. This qualification is to be designated by the letters "M. F."

The acts requiring the use of the terms "landholder's son" and "wage-earner" have been repealed, and we do not know that the use of the term "occupant" is authorized.

\* \* \*

The great majority of the Collectors' Rolls for the various municipalities in the Province will be completed on or before the 1st of October. Before delivering the roll to the collector, the clerk is required to attach thereto a certificate under his hand, stating that it is the collector's roll for the municipality for 1896. It is also advisable to give the name of the collector in the certificate, and attach the seal of the corporation. It is imperative that the certificate should be attached, and a roll unsigned by the clerk is not sufficient authority to entitle the collector to distrain, and he and his sureties are not liable under their bonds for the amount of uncollected taxes. In cities and towns where the council have passed the necessary by-laws, the clerk may include in the certificate the statement required by section 4, sub-section 2, of the Assessment Amendment Act of 1896, the statement to include the total amount of taxes levied and collected under and by virtue of such roll or rolls. The name and amount of each rate levied by the municipality which is required by law or by-law imposing it to be kept distinct, and accounted for separately, and specifying the aggregate proceeds of each such rates so levied and collected.

To sprinkle carbolic acid about the house, or to burn a sulphur candle, or to suspend sheets and towels wet with some proprietary liquid, may be excused in the case of untrained attendants, but it is about time that health officers should cease to countenance and advise the employment of such methods in the disinfection of houses.—*Bulletin of N. J. Board of Health.*

## Township Commissioners.

A plan whereby the work of road improvement and maintenance may be carried on in a business way is a subject that many councils have been and are considering. It is well known that in most municipalities there is no particular system, other than that which suggests itself as the work becomes necessary. Many councils are now considering better systems of road improvement and maintenance but unless these systems are put in operation on business principles, the result will be inferior work and increased taxation.

The business of a municipality should be transacted at meetings of the Board, and in this connection, we have to suggest that the council should not delegate by resolution, one or more of its members to take charge of works for which they make appropriations. This is permitted by section 479 of the Municipal Act, but we believe it is in the interest of true economy that members of a council should have no direct dealings with the electors. Human nature is the same the world over, and the favoring of doubtful voters and ward magistrates in the purchase of material and by giving out small jobs of work, has been known to be the means of continuing in office many representatives who, under other circumstances would never have thought of violating the terms of the solemn obligation to which he subscribed when assuming office.

Another result of the proper system would be the doing away with the acrimonious discussion of trivial matters which so often occupies valuable time at the nomination meetings, with the result that a particular member may be made the scapegoat of a retiring council.

We have nothing new to suggest in the way of a plan for carrying on municipal improvements, but would say that the work should be placed in the hands of a commissioner, who should be a man specially adapted for the work, and whose tenure of office should be as secure as that of the average clerk or treasurer. The commissioner should have charge of all road and bridge improvements, and be required to report to the council at each meeting. No works should be undertaken unless they are reported by the commissioner and approved by the council. The commissioner would not require to be actively engaged during the whole year. He should have charge of all township machinery and materials required to be used in the work connected with his department. The many economies that would result will readily suggest themselves to councillors of experience.

Canada has 6,000 miles of roads and highways.

The country roads of the United States do not compare favorably with those of any nation in Europe. During the spring season in many districts of the Western States the roads are practically impassable.