

THE HOUSE OF REFUGE QUESTION.

A Vote of the Ratepayers Likely to be Taken in January.

The Huron County council has asked the municipalities to take a vote at the January elections on the question of building a Home of Refuge. For the benefit of the public we give herewith extensive clippings from the exhaustive report submitted to the county council year before last by their committee appointed for that purpose.

THE REPORT

In accordance with the instructions contained in the resolution of this Council at its January session, your special committee have endeavored to obtain all the information possible relating to the cost of lands, buildings and maintenance of the various institutions called Houses of Refuge, for the care of the poor, in the Province, and other information of a kindred nature. Your committee have aimed at giving to the Council the very fullest information concerning this important matter, and the information has been obtained without reference to the leanings of the members of your committee. The sub-committee thought its first duty was to obtain a correct account of the amount spent by the various municipalities of the County under the head of "Charity." This allows a comparison—though an imperfect one—to be made between the cost of keeping the poor in our own County and the cost in a County having a House of Refuge. The returns under this head embrace the years 1887 and 1888, and are as follows:

Amount spent by the various municipalities of the County of Huron upon charity in 1887 and 1888:

	1887	1888.
Ashtfield.....	\$188 59	\$216 00
Bayfield.....	88 68	54 88
Blyth.....	49 80	55 47
Brussels.....	147 73	191 58
Clinton.....	218 71	322 96
Colborne.....	200 50	277 15
Exeter.....	193 69	226 72
Goderich Town.....	536 05	851 09
Goderich Township.....	282 75	848 38
Grey.....	202 00	193 00
Hay.....	42 88	66 50
Howick.....	264 11	118 35
Hullett.....	80 00	30 00
McKillop.....	156 50	175 25
Morris.....	No Return.	
Seaford.....	181 57	201 22
Stanley.....	102 00	147 18
Stephen.....	65 50	129 65
Tuckersmith.....	278 98	470 00
Turnberry.....	171 69	234 84
Usborne.....	353 25	296 08
East Wawanosh.....	172 11	70 00
West Wawanosh.....	156 52	173 00
Wingham.....	207 26	100 68
Wroxter.....	No Return.	
Totals.....	\$4,251 57	\$4,739 91

It will thus be seen that directly out of the local municipal exchequers has been paid the sum, allowing for municipalities not reporting one half the average, of \$9,449 in two years. To these sums must be added the sums of \$284 and \$483, respectively, which are the amounts estimated by the County Treasurer as spent by the county for the same purposes as the local grants in the same years, and these two make a grand total of no less than \$10,216, or \$5,108 per annum.

Every member of the County Council is also aware that these sums do not in any way represent the full amount of the charity bestowed by this county. Private charity by individuals, churches and societies, is largely given to the very same parties that received municipal aid.

Another large item of expense to the County is in connection with the running of the jail. The manner in which this expense is paid is as follows: The Government pays for all prisoners who are charged with indictable offences, and the County pays for all others. The last quarter the Government was charged with 119 days and the County with 1513 days. Of this 1513 days, 1433 days is chargeable to the maintenance of indigents. In consequence of this the County had to pay \$643, against \$46.37 paid by the Government, or about 14-15ths of the whole expense. If there had been no indigents confined the Government would have had to pay nearly two-thirds, and the County something over one-third. In this way the cost to the County was for indigents alone over \$400 for the quarter. This quarter is not above the average, so that the County pays annually about \$1,600 for maintenance of indigents in the jail.

The question naturally arises—how much of this large sum would be saved to the local municipalities by the erection of a House of Refuge? From information in the hands of your committee it is quite evident that only a very small proportion of the charity grant to indigents would necessarily remain. It is not pretended that there would be no amount to be spent by the local municipalities for charitable purposes, but it is established beyond all question in the counties where Houses of Refuge have been erected, that adding the items for charity and increased County Grant for House of Refuge, together, the result is a less sum by a considerable amount than the sum previously spent for like purposes. The Special Committee appointed by the County Council of Ontario County to report on this sub-

ject at its June session, and of whose report we have been favored with a copy, on this point report;

"The erection of Houses of Refuge appears to have obviated, except in the smallest degree, grants to indigents by the minor municipalities."

The various Houses of Refuge in the Province are as follows:

County of Elgin—Township of Southwold, 8 miles west of St Thomas.
County of Waterloo—Berlin.
County of York—Near Newmarket.
County of Lincoln—Township of Grantham, a little over half a mile from St. Catharines.

County of Middlesex—Township of Adelaide, near Strathroy.

County of Norfolk—Gore of Woodhouse.

County of Wellington—Township of Nichol, midway between the Villages of Fergus and Elora.

County of Welland—Township of Thorold.

County of Brant—Township of Brantford.

The average cost of these institutions is the sum of \$18,660.66, including land, buildings and furnishings complete, but the present feelings of all concerned is that large farms are a mistake. The weight of evidence goes to show that 40 or 50 acres are better than 100 or over. In many cases the buildings are much more expensive than need be, and the officials recommend cheaper and plainer ones. The smaller institutions, such as would be ample for the County of Huron, do not average in cost over \$12,000.

The Committee next call attention to the number of inmates, committed temporarily and permanently during 1888, and the cost per head of these institutions:

	Inmates	Cost per head.
Elgin.....	109	\$55 64
Waterloo.....	113	49 66
York.....	157	57 98
Lincoln.....	52	83 68
Middlesex.....	127	54 60
Norfolk.....	75	40 33
Wellington.....	114	63 97
Welland.....	59	
Brant.....		

The average cost as above of each inmate in the Houses of Refuge was the sum of about \$58. This does not include interest on capital account. We have also ascertained that the average cost of maintenance, including salaries, food and clothing, of each inmate in five of these institutions during 1888, per week was as follows:

Elgin.....	\$1 07
Middlesex.....	1 05
Waterloo.....	95¢
Wellington.....	1 23
York.....	1 11½
Average.....	1 17

Not taking into account interest on capital.

These institutions, however, yielded certain revenues which materially decrease the expenditure. These revenues are derived from the products of the farm and the labor of the inmates, and are given as taken from a return to the Legislature:

	Revenue.
Elgin.....	\$ 915 00
Waterloo.....	2,540 00
York.....	1,862 00
Lincoln.....	1,610 00
Middlesex.....	1,246 00
Norfolk.....	1,258 00
Wellington.....	
Welland.....	
Brant.....	600 00

The following shows the actual cost of maintenance of each institution, after allowing for revenue:

Elgin.....	\$ 4,199 76
Waterloo.....	1,764 88
York.....	7,740 86
Lincoln.....	1,940 76
Middlesex.....	4,888 20
Norfolk.....	1,181 75
Wellington.....	7,292 66

The balance of the report, relating to the expenditure for charities in municipalities of counties which contain a poor house, and other important information, will be published in subsequent issues.—Ed.

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