

# The Municipal World

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ST. THOMAS, NOVEMBER 1, 1901.

We have recently received a number of enquiries for the question drawer, to which no names were subscribed. We beg to notify our readers, that in the future we can answer no questions through these columns, unless they have appended to them the *bona fide* names and addresses of the persons by whom they are respectively sent.

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Mr. C. G. O'Brian has succeeded Mr. E. P. Johnston as clerk of the village of L'Original.

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The electors of the City of St. Thomas have passed a by-law granting a bonus of \$20,000 to Messrs. Thomas Bros. of Norwich, to aid them in erecting and carrying on a brush, broom and woodenware factory in that city.

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The city council, of Kingston, decided at a recent meeting to rent 22 voting machines, made according to the pattern invented by Mr. P. A. Macdonell, for use at the municipal elections in that city in January next.

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A Milwaukee man has invented a voting machine which uses the ordinary ballots. As the paper passes through the machine, the voter indicates the candidate for whom he desires to vote and his choice is recorded. When the polls are closed the index to the machine shows just how many votes each candidate has received, and the record can be corroborated by the ballots which have been preserved as marked.

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A decision of Judge McDougall with reference to certain hotelkeepers' assess-

ment cases appealed to him from the Toronto court of revision, was handed out recently. His Honor upholds the contention of the assessment department that the only household goods in an hotel exempt from taxation are those in the personal use of the hotelkeeper and his family. Another point, however, raised by the solicitor for the hotelkeepers, is also sustained by the decision, namely, that it is unfair to assess an hotelkeeper for his personalty, and also to assess him on an income gained from that personalty.

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A new edition of Webster's International Dictionary has just been issued by the G. & C. Merriam Co., of Springfield, Mass. It has deservedly received the highest commendation from educators, authors, professional men, and newspapers throughout Great Britain and her colonies and the United States of America. Having given it our careful perusal, we are pleased to add our mead of praise. It is an indispensable addition to the home, school and office. It is a never failing source of instruction and information, and in binding is rich, substantial and ornamental.

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#### Collector's Bonds.

We extract the following from a news paper report of the proceedings at a recent meeting of a village council in Ontario:

"Moved and seconded and resolved, that the collector's roll for 1900 be accepted and the collector's bonds be cancelled which was so done."

We have repeatedly called the attention of municipal councils to the illegality and danger of this course. These bonds should be retained, *uncancelled*, by the clerk, among the municipal records. By doing otherwise councils are simply going out of their way to court trouble and loss.

#### The Public Ownership Idea.

The question of municipal ownership of municipal services is being discussed almost continuously all over America and Europe, and the actual progress the idea is making is well shown in a general summary made by Edwin Barrit Smith in *Self-Culture*. He says:

Of the fifty largest cities in the United States, but nine now depend on private waterworks, these being San Francisco, New Orleans, Omaha, Denver, Indianapolis, New Haven, Paterson, Scranton and Memphis. While about 200 cities and villages have changed from private to public ownership, only about 20 have returned from public to private ownership. Over half the changes to public ownership have been made since 1890, and only about one third of the reverse changes within the same period. Gas plants are owned and operated by 168 English cities, 238 German cities, by Brussels and Amsterdam, and by 11 Am-

erican cities. Electric lighting plants are owned and operated by nearly 300 American municipalities, by many English and Austrian cities, and by 12 German cities. Fully one-third of the English street railways are publicly owned and operated by the municipalities, notably in Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield and London, and but few expiring franchises are renewed.

Toronto has her public waterworks system working well, and no person would be listened to who suggested a return to private ownership. There is a strong and growing public opinion in favor of municipalizing the gas service, while it is generally conceded that the city made a mistake—notwithstanding the enlightened bargain made—when the street railway was leased ten years ago. If it fell into the city's hands to-day it would not be turned over to the company on any terms.

The gas, electric light, electric power, telephone, telegraph, and transportation services all seem destined in the future to be publicly owned. As privately owned these services are used to confer fortunes upon the few instead of benefit upon the many, and the people are growing wiser than they were.—Toronto *Daily Star*.

#### A Line Fence Appeal.

An interesting appeal from a fenceviewers' award was recently heard by His Honor Judge McDonald, county judge of Leeds. The particulars are as follows:

A. B. called upon three fenceviewers of his township under the Line Fences Act, to decide what share of a Line Fence between his land and that of his neighbor, C. D., should be built. Each of these parties had, in the past, fenced the land but for some time C. D. had allowed his share to become useless and had also ceased to use that part of the land adjoining his portion of the fence. After having examined the premises and considered the matter, the fenceviewers awarded that C. D. should build his share of the fence within thirteen days and pay all the costs of the proceedings, as A. B. had already built his share of the fence.

C. D. appealed from this award to the county judge on the ground that he did not occupy his land, that the fenceviewers had not ordered a lawful fence to be built, and that notice of the award was not given to him in time to enable him to build his share. His Honor, after having heard all the parties interested, their counsel and witnesses, set aside the fenceviewers' award and by his decision held that each party should pay his own costs. The reasons given by the presiding judge for deciding the appeal as above, were that C. D. did not occupy that portion of his land adjoining the fence and that the fence ordered by the award to be built was not what the township by law defined to be a lawful division fence.