

which the voter's list to be used at the election is based was returned by the assessor, and also the date when that assessment roll was finally revised. The clerk is also obliged to furnish such certificate to any person requiring it on payment of twenty five cents for same. In case the municipality is not divided into wards or polling subdivisions, the clerk as returning officer is to act in the same capacity as a deputy returning officer and to provide all such things for his own use as such deputy.

## HOW TO IMPROVE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

In the November *North American Review* the subject of "How to Improve Municipal Government" is discussed by an ex-mayor and three mayors of United States cities. These contributions, coming from men who have made a study of municipal law, and who in administrating the affairs of great cities have seen the weak points in the municipal machine, are of especial value and interest. Of course the subject is treated from a standpoint of American municipal procedure, which in many respects differs from ours. But there are general principles laid down which are equally applicable to Canadian city government. Each of the four writers, with singular unanimity, advocates the separation of the executive and legislative branches. It is urged that as city councils have the power to order taxes and to make appropriations, besides making ordinances and authorizing public works, their prerogatives are necessarily great and need balancing, and the best check to hasty or irregular legislation and foolish appropriations would be found in a legislature of two branches, each having a negative on the other. Mr. Hart, ex-Mayor of Boston, thinks that at least the power of removal of subordinates should be vested in the mayor. He would also give mayors the appointing power, subject to the confirmation or rejection by the council. In return they should be required to give reasonable information to the council on their own acts, as well as on those of the departments under them; and executive appointments might well undergo the ordeal of aldermanic acceptance or rejection in order to prevent mayors from ever thinking that, even for the time they are supreme. "All public servants," says Mr. Hart, "should receive salaries, and all perquisites should be abolished." This is a doctrine which in connection with municipal government will have many advocates, as it is manifestly unfair to expect busy business men to give brain, time and energy to public affairs without some compensation. We have always to a certain extent concurred in this view, and believe that the chairmen of the various committees of our city council should receive emolument, and each be responsible for the proper administration of the affairs of the committee over which he presides. But Mr. Hart thinks that the great desideratum in municipal government is the dividing of the council into two branches—the executive and legislative. He says on this point:—"The city council holds the purse strings, it orders the taxes and it incurs the debt for which all taxable property is in effect mortgaged. This power is so great that it should not be exercised by one body alone, nor until the matter is at least twice discussed in public by rival branches. Even under a public law limiting taxes and municipal indebtedness, some discretion will rest with the city council. This discretion is less likely to be abused by two rival houses than by one house, especially if the latter be so small as to resemble a board of directors." But while advocating this separation it is acknowledged that a clear division of the departments is extremely difficult, and has not been attained anywhere. A point on which all four writers are also unanimous is the necessity for the better class of citizens interesting

themselves more in municipal affairs. No city will ever be well governed that does not invite the highest inducement to men of light and leading. The problem of city government can never be solved except by the city itself and by its home citizens. Instead of relieving men of municipal duties, the latter should be increased, and a great duty well discharged should receive its reward. Mr. Davidson, the present Mayor of the city of Baltimore, says that one of the chief difficulties in municipal government arises from the apathy and indifference which the majority of the better class of citizens display with regard thereto. This disposition can have no other tendency than to gradually delegate the most important functions of a municipality to those whose training and qualifications poorly fit them for the discharge of duties involving large responsibility. There is no American city, he says, where this condition of things has not been a matter of more than ordinary solicitude among the earnest thinkers, who while recognizing the dangerous tendencies involved in the avoidance of the duties and responsibilities of public office have discovered no remedy. Reference is made to the city of Berlin, where a refusal to serve in some of the highest municipal offices is punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both; where the obligation to do so is regarded in such a sacred light that neglect or indifference is at once a mark of dishonor and unworthy citizenship. Mr. Noonan, mayor of St. Louis, thinks that politics, properly understood, are, in municipal government, rather to be desired than otherwise. Politics he says, means only the science of government, the regulation and government of the state, the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity, the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals. Certainly if this were what was generally understood as "politics" no one could object to their being introduced into every municipality. But it is the other form of politics—Partyism—which is the curse of municipal rule where it obtains. And Mr. Davidson of Baltimore, feels so strongly on this point that he hesitates not to say that the whole question of more efficient city government will be solved when politics are permitted to have no more place in the management of the cities than an individual or corporate enterprise.

We are always pleased to receive letters, complimentary of the MISCELLANY from such men as J. R. Ketchum, Esq., municipal clerk of Madoc, a gentleman who has grown grey in the service of his municipality, having been connected with municipal affairs over half a century. He was elected a councillor in 1848 under the regime of the old District Council, and afterwards as Deputy Reeve on the formation of township councils until twenty-one years ago, when he was appointed to the clerkship, which office he has held ever since. He is now 73 years old, and thinks he may have to retire very soon unless he wants to die in harness. We wish him the compliments of the season, and that he may for many years yet be able to give the benefits of his fatherly experience to the municipality.

IRA MORGAN, Esq., of Russell County, whose death occurred on the 19th December, aged 63 years, so well known throughout Ontario as a leading agriculturalist, was equally well known in his own vicinity in connection with municipal matters, he having represented the township of Osnabrock for thirty-six years as a member of the council. He held the position of warden during eight years in succession. His was a most remarkable record, for popularity is so fickle that the worthiest of men seldom hold such positions as councillor for a dozen years in succession let alone three times that number. The late Mr. Morgan also held the office of Division Court Clerk for 35 years.