

# THE MUNICIPAL WORLD.

## Distribution of Commutation Money of Statute Labor Defaulters.

The attention of clerks and treasurers of townships, and of pathmasters appointed in rural municipalities (in which by-laws for the general commutation of statute labor have not been passed) is called to the duties imposed upon them respectively by section 110 of the Assessment Act, which provides for the collection of statute labor not performed. Unless careful attention be paid to the duties prescribed by this section, pecuniary loss to the road-divisions interested, and inaccuracies in accounts are almost certain to result. In the first place, all pathmasters in a municipality should take particular pains to have their statute labor lists in the hands of the clerk before the 15th day of August in the year for which they have been appointed, as required by subsection 1, as amended by section 9 of the Assessment Amendment Act, 1899.

Before so returning his list, the pathmaster should carefully note all defaulters in the proper column thereof. Subsection 1 of this section, as amended by section 6 of the Assessment Amendment Act, 1901, requires the clerk to place the amount of the commutation money so returned by the pathmasters, against the names of such defaulters in his collector's roll for the year in which the statute labor should have been performed, in case the lists in which their names appear, have been returned to him before the 15th day of August of that year (as they should have been) or within such time thereafter as will enable him to place such amounts on his roll before he is required, by law, to deliver it to the collector, otherwise on the collector's roll of the year next following, to be collected at the same time and in the same manner as ordinary municipal taxes.

When sending out his statute labor lists in the year following that in which the commutation money has been collected, the clerk should notify each pathmaster of commutation money collected from owners of property situated in his road division, during the previous year, and also send the township treasurer a certified list of the amounts due the divisions and names of respective pathmasters. Subsec. 2 of sec. 110, empowers the overseer or pathmaster to expend this amount upon the roads in his statute labor division, and also provides that he "shall give an order upon the treasurer of the municipality to the person performing the work." We draw attention to the fact that, in this instance, a pathmaster is not required to report to the council, and apply for its order or cheque in favor of parties doing the work, under his supervision, to the amount of the commutation money, which the clerk has notified him is at his disposal. He is authorized to give his personal order on the treasurer to and in favor of the person who has done the work and is entitled to receive the money,

and the treasurer's duty, under this subsection, is to honor it.

## Municipal Socialism in Australia.

T. George Ellery, in Spring Number of "Municipal Affairs."

Melbourne owns a stone quarry from which most of the road material required in the city and all "screenings" for foot pavements are obtained. It has been a commercial success, and has prevented an undue price being demanded by outside contractors. Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide give public organ recitals. The first of these cities has a magnificent town hall, with seating capacity of 4,000, in which is placed "the largest, finest-tiled and most powerful organ ever built." The cost of this organ was £16,300, and until recently the municipal council permanently retained Mons. Wiegand, a noted Belgian organist, at a salary of £500. Markets for vegetables, produce and cattle are controlled by the municipal council of Sydney. One of these, the Queen Victoria Market, is a magnificent pile of architecture, erected at a cost of over £750,000. The other Australian capital cities also maintain municipal markets, which are generally lucrative. Abattoirs are generally under municipal management, but those in Sydney are controlled by the state government.

The gas and electric lighting services are controlled in Sydney by private companies, but the city council is now taking steps to establish an electric lighting plant. There are in New South Wales seventeen country municipalities owning gas works. Melbourne owns and operates an electric plant, as do also some other cities.

In New South Wales, the tramway system (partly cable, partly steam and partly electric) is controlled by the state government, and is immediately under the superintendance of three state railway commissioners. In Melbourne, on the other hand, there is an extensive cable-car system, worked by the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company, under lease from the Melbourne Tramways Trust. The Trust is composed of eighteen members, elected annually—seven from the Melbourne city council and one from each of the municipal councils of the eleven suburbs into which the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company's statute authorizes the extension of the tramway lines. The Trust constructed all of the lines, amounting to 43½ miles of cable and 3¾ miles of horse traction, with money borrowed for the purpose upon the security of the revenues and properties of the municipalities, and the lines were leased for thirty-two years from July 1, 1884, to the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company, who accepted the liability to keep the lines in repair, and properly furnished, to pay license fees for all cars, drivers and conductors, and municipal rates, and to pay to the Tramway Trust

the interest payable upon the borrowed capital, with an addition of one and one-half per cent. during the first ten years, two per cent. during the second ten years, and three per cent. during the third ten years of the lease, to be invested by the Tramway Trust as a sinking fund, calculated to pay off the capital borrowed at the termination of the lease, when the lines (not the rolling stock) will revert to the municipal authorities in good working order, and free of cost. The total capital borrowed is £1,650,000 at four and one-half per cent. The sinking fund on December 31, amounted to £52,000, nearly all invested in Victorian municipal debentures.

The city of Launceston, although very small in comparison with the largest city centres, is municipally in some respects more advanced in its operations than any of them. It has charge of the sewerage, water and electric light works, undertaking not only the public work associated with these, but work for private individuals as well. It installs premises with fittings for electric light, either for cash, on the hire purchase system, or at a rental. It has charge of the thoroughfares, and from its quarries and works supplies stone and metal, and also executes private cementing and asphaltting work. It has a fine public hall capable of seating three thousand persons, having a large stage, banquet-room and all the usual accessories, the whole being heated with hot water pipes. It provides a museum and art gallery, swimming, lunge and Turkish baths, (the latter heated on a system superior to any in Australia,) and recreation grounds, and has power to subsidize local bands.

Its provident fund rules compel thrift on the part of its employees, and practically establish the old age pension system. From this fund it advances money on building society principles to members to enable them to become property owners, so that even the lowest in position can early in his years of service have his own house to live in, and in his old age be the recipient of a small pension.

A judgment given by Meredith, C.J., recently is of interest to purchasers of property at tax sales. A lot was sold for taxes. The tax purchaser obtained a deed of the lot from the town in which the land was incorrectly described. The purchaser at the tax sale then approached the owner of the lot and got a deed from him, thinking that the mortgagor would be cut out by the tax sale deed. He built a house upon the lot, and then the mortgagor brought action to set aside the tax deed. It was held that sales for taxes mean sales for taxes, for which the land might rightly be sold.

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A new paving in London, Eng., is formed of big blocks made of partially pulverized stone obtained from Cornwall and South Wales, and held together by Trinidad pitch.