

The Municipal World

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

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With the present issue we enter upon the fifth year of publication. Our thanks are due to the many councillors and officers who have favored us with their support, and assisted in making the "World" an authority on all questions relating to our system of local government.

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD occupies a unique position, being the only paper of the kind published. Its subscribers are the representatives of the people in every part of the province. All questions submitted referring to municipal matters are fully answered. We explain in a practical way devoid of technicalities the many problems of municipal engineering with which councils have to deal.

Every legal decision of interest is noted, and practical suggestions relating to Municipal work appear each month. New Legislation is explained and improvements in the present laws suggested. Our subscribers are kept informed on all matters of general interest to councils. Every municipal appointment appears in a calendar specially prepared each month.

We invite correspondents to use our columns for the discussion of municipal topics.

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The Good Roads papers commenced in this issue, were prepared by A. W. Campbell, C. E., editor of the Engineer Department of THE MUNICIPAL WORLD. They contain the best information available on the subject. All estimates and prices may be relied upon. Members of councils will find them a valuable guide in determining all questions of road construction and maintenance.

A reference to the road laws in other countries on page 11 of this paper shows, that in the United States, the good roads agitation has brought about the passing of new laws in many states. The tendency of reform in roadmaking is to divide roads into two classes, viz.: township and county. This is most desirable when permanent road improvement is undertaken. Among other questions to be considered in solving the road problem is that of the term for which township councillors should be elected. Under the present system, councillors do not have an opportunity to display their ability to carry on municipal work in an economical manner. This could easily be remedied by extending the term of office of township councillors. School trustees are kept in office three years, one being elected each year, the result being that experienced men always form the majority. In the townships, if the reeve and one councillor were elected each year—the councillors retiring in rotation, experienced men would always be found at the council board. Municipal office would then be accepted by many who object to the annual election. Road and bridge improvement, which now cost one-third of all taxes collected, would be carried on in a uniform manner. A new member with ideas would have men of experience to advise him, and an economical management of every department of the municipal service would be the result.

* * *

Every municipal council in Ontario will receive an invitation to send a delegate to the annual convention of the Ontario "Good Roads Association" to be held in Toronto on the 7th and 8th, of February.

The question of good or bad roads is important to every community. The results of our present system are not satisfactory except in a few municipalities where the roads have been maintained under efficient supervision.

The object of the convention is to obtain the best information from every part of the Province, discuss reforms proposed, and if possible decide what should be done to procure better roads.

* * *

Many members of councils are inclined to give all municipal offices to the lowest tenderer and pay no attention to the statutory enactment that "No council shall assume to make any appointment to office, or any arrangement for the discharge of the duties thereof by tender or to applicants at the lowest remuneration." The duties appertaining to any position and the time necessary to properly perform them should first be ascertained, and a reasonable remuneration therefor decided on. When this is done, consider the qualifications of the best men available for the position, irrespective of personal or local considerations, and then make the appointment.

The question of a clerk's duty as custodian of municipal records was recently brought forward in the York township council, where it was stated that a ratepayer, against whom the council had a suit pending, had been allowed to look through the records and accounts and take copies of them. In matters of this kind the clerk is directed by section 247 of the Consolidated Municipal Act, which provides that any person may inspect any documents in the possession of, or under the control of the clerk. It is not to be supposed that in any action at law a municipal council would desire to withhold information for the purpose of enforcing a claim against an individual. This is very often the case when private individuals are concerned, and each is endeavoring to maintain his position, whether right or wrong. A municipality should not commence legal proceedings unless the best information or official records show their claim to be a just one. Municipal records should always be open to inspection.

* * *

Reeves and deputy-reeves should see that the certificates entitling them to a seat in the county council are in proper form. Section 65 of the Municipal Act will direct them in this matter. The section is positive that no reeve shall take his seat until he has filed his certificate. This is the evidence of the right of the person presenting it to a seat in the county council. The county clerk is, in the first instance, made the judge of its legal sufficiency. It is advisable in all cases to have the certificates and declarations prepared in duplicate by the clerks of the local municipalities; one copy to be mailed to the county clerk and the other to be handed to the reeves and deputy-reeves to be taken by them to the county clerk at the first meeting of the council. This precaution is necessary because, very often, papers mailed fail to reach their destination, and on the other hand members of the county councils sometimes forget to bring their certificates with them.

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The Kingsville waterworks system has been completed at a cost of about \$20,000. The work has been carefully carried out in all its details, under the supervision of W. Newman, C. E. of Windsor. Clerk W. A. Grenville will be pleased to answer all inquiries, or show visiting officials the works at any time.

Looking on the Bright Side.

Said the police judge to the prisoner, a defeated candidate just after the recent election:

"Your wife has left you, you have had your head broken, and your eyes blackened, and your front teeth knocked out, and you have spent the night in a cell."

"Well, your Honor, its a poor heart as never rejoices,"—[Texas Siftings.