

Board of Audit of Accounts and Expenses of Criminal Justice.

Every county council is required to appoint, at its first meeting in each year, two persons, not more than one of whom shall belong to the council, to be members of the board of audit. The judge or junior, or acting judge of the county court is *ex officio* a member of the board.

They are also to fix the salaries or per diem allowance to be received by the auditors for the performance of their duties.

The accounts and demands shall be taken into consideration by the board of audit between the first and fifteenth days of the months January, of April and October in each and every year, and disposed of as soon as practicable, and the board shall, at the completion of the audit so to be made in the month of October, make a report to the council of any irregularity in the accounts presented to them, or of any claim that may be made contrary to the law or any other matter which the auditors may consider ought to be brought under the notice of the council.

It is advisable to have experienced men to perform these duties, they have no authority to pass accounts which are not provided for by statute. Totten's Manual on Tariffs is a complete guide, and is especially intended for these auditors, as it is their duty to pass the accounts of the sheriff, clerk of the peace, the county attorney, constables, etc., etc., and any accounts passed that are not allowed by the tariff or other statute as belonging strictly to the administration of criminal justice should be reported to the council.

The action of the Michigan public health board in placing consumption on the list of infectious diseases, suggests the remark, that the day is not very distant, perhaps, when the ravages of consumption will have become a matter of only historical interest to the physician and statistician. Certain other dread diseases have been almost eradicated or greatly restricted through the dissemination of knowledge as to their origin and nature and the adoption of the necessary measures for prevention. For example, the disease known as glanders has been exterminated from communities through the destruction of glandered horses; and leprosy has been cast out from amongst Anglo-Saxon races through the segregation and isolation of lepers. A notable reduction in the death rate from consumption is seen in certain localities where restrictive measures are enforced and proper efforts made to enlighten the people on the subjects of sanitary science.

Municipalities paying for a \$10 audit generally get it. In most instances \$25 to \$100 would not pay for the work if performed properly. Independent audits can only be secured by paying competent officers a salary sufficient to warrant them in doing the work thoroughly.

Publications Received.

A Century of Municipal History, Vol. II., compiled by E. Cruikshank and published by the Welland County Council.

This is a pamphlet valuable for reference. It contains a complete list of those who composed the councils of the various municipalities since incorporation, together with an index of the more important by-laws passed by each. The two volumes, (the first of which was published last year), reflects great credit on the compiler, and the liberality of the county council in thus preserving the municipal archives. It is to be hoped that every county council will interest itself in publishing similar information.

A case has been on trial in the county court at Peoria, Ill., which has attracted the attention of wheelmen all over the United States. A man driving a horse had a collision with a bicyclist, each claiming the right of way. The bicycle was smashed and the wheelman brought suit to recover damages. The Illinois League of Wheelmen took hold of the case, and employed able counsel, with the result that the wheelman won the case, the judge deciding that bicyclists had the right of way. The decision is an interesting one, although of course it has no legal weight in Canada. It is not at all improbable that a Canadian court would decide similarly.

The appointment of an assessment commissioner under sec. 255 of the Municipal Act is a matter that the council of every city should consider. The extended duties of this official as laid down in the Voters' List Act passed last year renders such an official almost necessary. In every city and town there are many local conditions which influence the value of real estate. No one expects every applicant for the assessorship to be thoroughly familiar with land values in all sections of the municipality. It is desirable that all property should bear a fair share of the taxes. To bring about this desideratum the whole attention of an assessment commissioner is necessary.

In many towns, the absence of a board of trade, renders it necessary for councils to consider many matters that would otherwise receive the attention of that body.

Business men may be greatly benefited by securing special Saturday rates on railways coming into a town. In this and in other ways can a council improve the commercial interests.

The width of wagon tires should be regulated by law so that there shall be a width of one inch to every four hundred pounds on a single wheel and this proportionately to the maximum load.

The Lambton county council will memorialize the Legislature at its coming session as follows:

"That it is expedient to amend the law relating to damages alleged to result from the construction of drainage works or damages to land or crops by drainage works or damages or injury to persons or property by want of repair of any street, wall or bridge, to provide that 10 days before any suit in action be entered in any court of competent jurisdiction or before the referee appointed under the Drainage Trials Act, the person or persons complaining to his solicitor or counsel shall serve upon the head of the council, liable for such drain or highway, a notice stating the nature of his claim and the amount thereof and his willingness to submit his claim to the arbitrement and decision of the judge of the county court.

That if the council, whose head has been served as aforesaid, shall pass a resolution to have the said complaint or cause of action referred to said judge as aforesaid, the said judge shall have jurisdiction to try all the matters referred to him.

That he shall hold the court to try the said matters within the municipality or other convenient place near where the cause of action arose.

That the agreement of said council to agree as aforesaid, to refer the matter as aforesaid, shall not be taken to admit any liability.

The county judge shall be allowed the same rate per diem and no more for his services as for attending courts of appeal.

The fees of counsel to be those allowed in county court cases and of witnesses to be those allowed in division courts.

An appeal from the decision of said judge to be allowed to the High Court of Justice and without the printing of appeal books and the decision of such high court in road damages or to the drainage referee in drainage matters shall be final."

No council should assume to make an appointment to office or any arrangement for the discharge of the duties thereof by tender or to applicants at the lowest remuneration. This is forbidden by section 278 of the Municipal Act. It is a difficult matter for some councillors to avoid. They assume office with the avowed intention of reducing expenditure in every direction, and think that unless they appoint the applicant who will fill an office for the least money they have failed entirely. The proper means to adopt, is for the council, at their first meeting, to consider what the salaries should be, fix them by resolution, and then appoint the best man available.

The practice followed in many municipalities of purchasing municipal works to be distributed among members of the council and to be by them handed over to their successors in office is rather hard on the successors if they have to depend for information on the books which their predecessors in office generally forget to hand over.

Nearly all of the infectious or contagious diseases may be classed in the same category, as regards their relation to filth and insanitary surroundings, and remain a constant opprobrium to the localities or communities where they occur.

We took THE MUNICIPAL WORLD last year, and hope every municipality in this province will patronize you liberally.