

and if this material is placed upon a foundation that will not yield to the weight of loads or heave with the frost, a road good for all the year through is the result. This is not theory, for hundreds of miles of such roads have been built, and use has demonstrated their permanence.

#### Municipal Ownership in Great Britain.

The consular reports of the United States government frequently possess great interest because of valuable information they contain, and no one who can obtain access to them should neglect the opportunity of doing so.

Among the most interesting is one from Mr. James Boyle, at one time a Canadian journalist, now consul at Liverpool, on the subject of municipal ownership as they have it in England.

The consular report referred to states that as late as a quarter of a century ago the capital invested in municipal undertakings in England amounted to \$460,000,000. A year ago that amount had grown to \$1,500,000,000.

There are in Great Britain some 990, in plain figures 931, municipalities owning waterworks, 99 owning the street railroads, 240 owning the gas works and 181 supplying electricity. Most of these are in England. Municipalities were not allowed to work the tramways until 1896, but in the few years which have succeeded the cars have been taken over by some cities and more contemplate doing so. Glasgow has one-cent and two-cent fares on the city tram cars. On Liverpool's fine system of double-track electric cars the fares range from two cents for three miles or less, up to eight cents for something over eight miles. Sheffield also has taken over the tramways, but it does not seem to run on the cheap fare principal, for the city has been able to appropriate nearly \$100,000 for the erection of stores and other producing buildings. The wisdom of this course is open to serious question, as rents may be hazardous, while traffic in such a city as Sheffield is certain, and is not likely to decrease. Mr. Boyle asserts that fully half the gas works in England are the property of the citizens of the municipality in which they are located.

Liverpool appears to have led in the matter of housing the poor in a satisfactory manner, and with due regard to the principles of sanitation. Municipal tenements three or four stories high are built in blocks. The flats have single fixtures, including gas supplies on the "penny in the slot" plan. A single room can be had as low as 45 cents a week. The rent of two rooms ranges from 69 to 80 cents; that of three rooms from \$1 to \$1.10; that of four rooms (the largest suites provided) from \$1.25 to \$1.50. In a few dwellings hot water is supplied.

Mr. Boyle does not pass over the objections raised by so many to civic proprietorship of public utilities. He points to the example of the city in which he is consul as a proof that such owner-

ship does not promote public extravagance or discourage in any degree private enterprise. It appears rather from his sentiments that in Liverpool the efforts of the city have stirred up private enterprise and inaugurated a system of public relief which would probably never have been witnessed but for the public examples set.

In Canada we have not yet arrived at the stage of our existence necessitating certain phases of municipal ownership which are dealt with in Britain. But the matter is a debateable one, and as the readers of the public press know the acquisition of the chief items in the list of public utilities is openly advocated by a great many people. The issue may be within the range of practical discussion sooner than we may imagine, and whatever is published concerning it calculated to cast light on the workings of the system wherever it may be found in operation cannot but be instructive and valuable as a guide.—*Brantford Examiner*.

#### School Property Not an Asset of a Municipality.

Our attention has been drawn recently to an auditor's report in which the school houses and lands are included amongst the assets of the municipal corporation. A communication has also been sent to us, urging the soundness of the position taken by the auditors in this regard. A brief comment will be conducive to a correct understanding of the matter. Webster's dictionary defines the term "assets" as meaning "the entire property of all sorts BELONGING to a person, a corporation or an estate." Therefore, only such property as is actually owned by a municipal corporation can be included amongst its assets. A municipal corporation possesses none of the elements or accessories of ownership in school property. It does not purchase or pay for the same, has no voice in its management or control, cannot sell, dispose of, convey it, nor can it in any way, or under any circumstances be made available for the payment or satisfaction of the debts of the municipality. Subsection 12, of section 65, of the Public Schools' Act, 1901, provides that it shall be the duty of the trustees of all public schools, and they shall have power "to take possession of all property which has been acquired or given for public school purposes, and to HOLD the same according to the terms on which it was acquired or received; and to dispose, by sale or otherwise, of any school site or property not required in consequence of a change of site, or other cause; to CONVEY the same under their corporate seal, and to apply the proceeds thereof to their lawful purposes, or as directed by this Act." Nowhere in the Municipal Act, or elsewhere in the statutes are similar powers as to school property conferred on municipal corporations, and these, being the creatures of the statutes, can hold only such

property as the legislature empowers them to acquire and possess. Section 10, of the Public Schools' Act, 1901, provides that "the trustees of every school section shall be a corporation under the name of 'The Board of Public School Trustees for school section . . . , of the township of . . . , in the county of . . . , or as the case may be.'" Section 56 contains a similar provision applicable to urban municipalities. A board of public school trustees has an existence wholly separate from the municipal corporation, and its status as a business concern is distinct and independent. The municipal auditors have nothing to do with the accounts, etc., of a school corporation in their municipality, except in urban municipalities, to the extent authorized by sub-section 11, of section 65, of the Act. It is true that all moneys required by a school corporation for school purposes are raised and levied by council of the municipal corporation from and against the public school supporters of each school section, or of the municipality, as the case may be, at the request of the board of the public school trustees, or the public school board. This, however, is an executive duty imposed by the statutes upon the municipal council, and it has no property in, or control over, the money when raised, or voice in its application or expenditure. It is required to be paid over by the council to the trustees of the school corporation, which alone has the right to decide as to what lawful school purposes it shall be applied. In the course of his communication, our correspondent asserts that there is no incompatibility in the two positions. (1) That the schools are the property of the school section ratepayers (more properly speaking the board of public school trustees); and (2) that they are also an asset of the municipal corporation. The anomaly involved in this assertion is, after what we have said, so apparent on the face of it, that no effort need here be made to explain and demonstrate its inconsistency.

#### Good Roads.

It would be possible to abandon few miles of road in any county at this time, unless a more favorably located substitute were provided. The attempt would meet with such opposition that those who proposed it would be compelled to yield. Nor is it likely that our roads will be less frequently used. Travel may be diverted from one road to another, but its volume is bound to increase. People of this day own more and better vehicles than did our fathers. There is more of interest in the country to demand travel. Our light vehicles now in so constant use cannot stand the rough knocks that the heavy farm wagons of days gone by endured. Hence our roads must be made passable, for they are here to stay. The beginning of the twenty-first century will see fully as many miles of them as are here now. Will that century find them in the same condition?