

News of Municipal Finance

Edmonton's Finances Must Be Attended to in Order to Avoid Crisis, Says Local Citizen—Seventy-Four Per Cent. of Toronto's 1920 Taxes Collected—Windsor's Sinking Fund In Good Order—Calgary and Lethbridge Retiring Debentures Out of Sinking Fund—Gloucester Township Wishes to Undertake Municipal Banking Scheme

Township of Gloucester, Ont.—Providing there is nothing in the municipal act to the contrary, the township may undertake to operate a co-operative banking system. The idea is to have deposits made as in a regular bank and allow interest upon the amount on deposit. Expert advice is being secured to ascertain if the municipality has the authority to establish such a bank.

Hamilton, Ont.—Figures given out by Assessment Commissioner MacLeod, show the assessment to be \$127,642,060, an increase of \$31,449,240 over last year. This does not include Homeside, recently annexed, which has an assessment of \$2,509,980. The tax rate, it is expected, will be dropped next year to 30 mills, at which rate the revenue would be increased by \$550,000.

Fort William, Ont.—According to the latest statement issued by the city, the debenture debt is \$6,229,363.67, made up as follows: Street railway, \$1,317,000; waterworks, \$1,428,549.87; electric light, \$301,753.05; telephone, \$390,000; general, \$1,909,060.75; school, \$883,000. Of the above total there is no part of the principal or interest in arrears, and a sinking fund of \$2,443,440.60 has been provided.

Lauzon, Que.—According to the new assessment roll, the taxable value of property in the municipality is equal to \$1,654,625, and the total non-taxable property \$6,403,200. Under the non-taxable, the following properties are included: Federal government, \$4,244,000; provincial government, \$4,000; various companies, \$112,200; religious institutions, \$504,000; exempted from taxation, \$1,502,000; municipal properties, \$33,000.

Lethbridge, Alta.—The city has purchased back from a Toronto dealer \$50,000 4½ per cent. of its own debentures maturing June 1, 1921, at a price to yield 7 per cent. By this deal the city will profit to the extent of about \$900. The city had \$23,000 available in its sinking fund and \$10,000 on account of treasury bills C and D, and the balance of the money was obtained from unexpended debenture funds, after allowing for sufficient in unexpended debenture funds to take care of any work at present contemplated.

Calgary, Alta.—The city is following the example of Toronto and buying back its own bonds, with funds available from its sinking fund. Recently City Treasurer Mercer purchased 10,000 pounds sterling of Calgary bonds of 1930 and 1932 maturities, on a basis to yield 7¾ per cent. The city is also considering the purchase of another 4,000 pounds sterling of 1932 maturity on the same basis. After taking these two amounts into consideration there is still a considerable sum available in the sinking fund for reinvestment.

Windsor, Ont.—That the sinking fund of the city is correctly set forth is the statement made by the special auditors, after further investigation. These auditors recently made the statement that there was a shortage of about \$12,975 in the city's sinking fund, but following action by F. J. Holton, city auditor, have withdrawn that statement.

In explanation of its report the special auditors claim that they submitted a tentative finding based upon activities up to that time, but that upon finishing the work it was found that the sinking fund assets of the city as set forth in the books are correct.

Toronto, Ont.—Commenting on the city's financial standing, and the manner in which financial statements are submitted, the Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research in a recent bulletin said:—

"It is doubtful whether any other Canadian city has, in four years, made greater advances in financial administra-

tion than has Toronto. However, there still remains much to be done. For example, the departmental estimates are still unstandardized so that it is impossible to tell, from the city's budget, total proposed expenditures for each department and departmental function, analyzed according to objects of expenditure, or things bought, such as personal services (salaries and wages), contractual services, heat, light and power, supplies other than light, heat and power, upkeep of structures and equipment.

"Standardization would enable the ordinary, garden variety of citizen to make some very vital comparisons which are now impossible. For example, the bureau's analysis of the budget shows that while the assessment has increased 14 per cent. and the total expenditure 80 per cent. since 1915, the debt charges have increased 52 per cent. and salaries and wages 196 per cent. Are these not illuminating facts? These and many others will be readily available when a standard classification of accounts is adopted for the city."

Finance Commissioner Geo. H. Ross reports that to date, taxes have been collected to the amount of \$15,641,964, or 73.63 per cent., of the 1920 taxes, representing an increase over last year of \$1,009,083. The total amount of taxes due to the city this year is \$21,242,951, as compared with \$19,462,297 last year.

Edmonton, Alta.—At a recent meeting of citizens, Jos. Adair delivered an address on "The City and Its Problems." These he declared were moral, sanitary and financial. With regard to the first two he had very little to say, being of the opinion that Edmonton had very little to fear from that end.

"The great problem of Edmonton," he said, "of which all other problems were mere phases, was a problem of dollars and cents. It was the problem of how a community of 60,000 people could honorably discharge burdens created for a population of 150,000 or 200,000 people. To run Edmonton for 1920 required the vast sum of \$4,350,000—a sum greater by about \$700,000 to that ever demanded before. This increase had been made by school board and city council in spite of the fact that the greatest collection made for a current year's expense since the war was 68½ per cent. or less than 70 cents for every dollar required.

"Elections in Edmonton had been run on purely class and personal lines. Every diversion conceivable from the real issue had been raised. Sometimes it was whether a man was an international trades unionist or not; sometimes whether he belonged to the same lodge as the voter; whether he was a member of that organization or this. At no time had the real issue been given the proper prominence, and that issue was that Edmonton had a debt of a general, local improvement, utility, school board and temporary character that exceeded \$30,000,000, exclusive of sinking fund provided; that it was necessary to raise \$4,000,000 to pay all charges of the city as presently administered; that for 60,000 people to meet such charges involved a per capita rate of \$70; that Edmonton had too few direct taxpayers to bear such a rate; and that something must immediately be done to meet a coming financial crisis."

COBALT ORE SHIPMENTS

The following are the shipments of ore, in pounds, from Cobalt Station for the week ended September 17th:—

McKinley-Darragh, 84,874; Mining Corporation, 81,373; Nipissing Mine Co., 610,235. Total, 776,482. The total since January 1st is 18,809,763 pounds, or 9,404.8 tons.