

The Municipal World.

Published monthly in the interests of every department of our Municipal System—the best in the world.

\$1.00 PER ANNUM. SINGLE COPY 10c.

Six copies, \$5.00. Additional copies, 75 cents each. All subscriptions to be paid in advance. The paper will be discontinued at expiration of term paid for, of which subscribers will receive notice. Prices for advertising on application.

Communications and advertisements for next issue should reach the office of publication on or before the 20th of this month.

Contributions of value to the persons in whose interests this journal is published, are cordially invited. Subscribers are also requested to forward items of interest from their respective localities.

Address all communications to

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ST. THOMAS, APRIL 1, 1893.

The Ontario department of agriculture will distribute 50,000 copies of the *Bulletin* on roadmaking prepared by J. A. Bell, P. L. S., C. E. These, together with the many newspapers that have given this excellent article space in their columns, will be the means of bringing important information on this question prominently before municipal officers, who from general results are not entitled to be called roadmakers.

Councils generally have to borrow money from banks to carry on their affairs each year. Some business men do the same, but not if they are wise and can help it. We think it would not be difficult to accumulate money enough to keep ahead of obligations and always have funds to meet expenses. A certain sum is raised every year. If a municipality could get a little ahead it would save the bank interest, which is generally a big item.

Township councils have now the power to abolish entirely the statute labor system under which, everybody will admit, roadmaking has been a huge farce. It is to be hoped that some of our advanced rural municipalities will break the ice in abolishing this fossil statute labor system and raise the money for building and repairing roads by the usual method of taxing.

The question of abolition of statute labor will soon form a subject for discussion in many municipalities. That such a reform is highly necessary is admitted by those interested in good roads and the economical expenditure of the public money. Councillors should make known their views on this subject, especially those representing municipalities in which statute labor has been abolished.

Alterations in school section boundaries should be brought before the council with out delay. By-laws for this purpose must be passed on or before the first day of May. All parties whose property is affected by the proposed change must be notified before the by-law is passed, in such manner as the council directs.

The annual reports of the inspectors of houses of industry in the province should show details as to dietary, especially the number of pounds of meat used and the cost of same. This is one of the largest items of expenditure, and the cost for inmates per day, if shown, will, in some cases, be found to be excessive, and the cause of a high average rate. Bread and other supplies in general use should be treated in the same way.

The dominion government will not take any action on petitions sent in by a majority of the county councils in the province praying for an amendment to the Railway Act, making it compulsory for the railways to put in culverts on natural watercourses wherever required, the contention being that the Railway Act makes provision for matters of this kind, to be dealt with upon application to the railway committee of the privy council. This would appear to be a drawback to the ownership of property adjoining a railway under Dominion jurisdiction. If it required drainage, the railway committee of the privy council would have to decide disputes between the owners and the companies as to location of culverts. Applications of this kind cannot be made without expense and the services of a solicitor. The influence of railway corporations is very great and it is only by united action on the part of municipalities in Ontario, that this desired amendment will be considered.

Another petition presented to the Dominion government praying for an amendment to the Indian Act, so that the Indian agent or Indian council would be liable under the Ditches and Watercourses Act, to maintain their fair share of the ditches and drains, where the reserves adjoin the lands of white settlers, will not be granted. The reason given therefore being, that while it might sometimes be proper and in the interests of the Indians to agree to assume the liability with respect to ditches, etc., which the act referred to imposes. The department of Indian affairs should do nothing to impair the freedom which it now enjoys to deal with each case as it arises on its merits.

The keen contest that took place for the warden's chair in many counties, show that this honorable position is not losing its popularity. In Wentworth, the council did not succeed in filling the chair until the fourth day of the session.

The question of building a house of industry submitted to the ratepayers in the county of Huron, at the municipal elections, was carried, a large majority being in favor of building the institution. A similar vote taken in the county of Bruce resulted in the defeat of the proposition to adopt this progressive method of caring for the poor.

An eastern exchange, when stating that municipal taxes went to pay the following officers, appointed by the local government, the clerk of the peace, constable, coroner, county attorney, jailer, turn-keys, sheriff, etc., overlooked the fact that a large portion of the amounts paid in the first instance by the county to these officials is refused to the municipality by the government. The proportionate refund of the jail expenditure is determined by the number of prisoners committed for indictable offences, for the services of the sheriff, county attorney and clerk of the peace, the refund is determined by the tariff set forth in the revised statutes. Of the amount paid to constables, the government refund all the expenses for indictable offences.

Every member of a local board of health in a town in which the municipal officers fail to make the appointments as the law requires, should remember that his term of office terminates only with the appointment of his successor.

The county councillors of the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengary passed the following resolution at the recent meeting of the council. That the dominion voters' list should be prepared by the officials of the local municipalities and that the Dominion Franchise Act should be repealed. This resolution expresses the views of a large majority of the residents of this province, irrespective of political inclinations.

The system of voters' lists prepared by municipal authorities is easily understood and has given the greatest satisfaction.

With a few amendments to the present Voters' List Act, and a reconstruction of the Dominion Franchise Act, a Voters' List Act could be framed that would meet the approval of all and be much less expensive.

We would again draw the attention of members of the county council who have subscribed, as a council, to the fact that the remaining members of councils of the local municipalities in the county are entitled to receive the paper at the same rate—seventy-five cents each. A number of the townships and villages so situated have already taken advantage of this offer. The new and inexperienced members are not those generally elected to go to the county council. It has been found to assist their more experienced brethren in the discharge of the duties of their office and, considering the small price of the subscription, no council can afford to withhold this publication from any of its members or officers, when the benefits to be derived therefrom are considered.