

The Municipal World.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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

TERMS. \$1.00 per annum. Single copy, 10c.; Six copies, \$5.00, payable in advance.

EXPIRATION OF SUBSCRIPTION. The paper will be discontinued at expiration of term paid for, of which subscribers will receive notice.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS. Subscribers, who may change their address, should give prompt notice of same, and in doing so, give both old and new address.

COMMUNICATIONS. Contributions of value to the persons in whose interests this journal is published, are cordially invited. Those for next issue should reach the office of publication not later than the 20th of the month. Address all communications to

K. W. McKAY, EDITOR,

Box 1252, St. Thomas, Ont.

ST. THOMAS, NOVEMBER 1, 1894

A chapel has been erected at the Berlin House of Industry at a cost of about \$1,000. It will seat 200 persons, and is a credit to the county.

* * *

The York township solicitor has been instructed to bring an action against ex-members of the township council for the years 1891-3, to recover moneys received by them in excess of what the present council considers were properly payable.

* * *

In addition to the particulars published in the October issue, in reference to the Oxford county House of Industry, we desire to state that the farm cost \$6,000, and consists of 100 acres, all cleared. It is especially adapted for the requirements of an institution of this kind, having a clay and gravel subsoil, with one foot good loam top soil. The water supply is derived from a well, pumped by windmill, and the drainage from the institution is carried to a tank in the barn yard.

* * *

In the article on municipal lighting, to be found on page 170 of this issue, we wish to explain that the cost per light in the cities and towns owning and operating their own plants does not include interest on the investment and depreciation in value of the plant, which differs with the cost of machinery and the number of lights, etc., but is generally calculated at twelve per cent. for interest and depreciation in value. This, in the places mentioned, averages \$33.60 per light.

* * *

It is important that civics, or the science of municipal government, should be taught in our public schools. The work should be commenced in our normal schools that we may have properly prepared teachers. This instruction should then extend to the high schools, and other grades of our public schools. We can well afford to drop from our present courses of study in these schools, much of which is of little practical value, to make room for this new line of instruction, which is indispensable to the welfare of the people and the preservation of our municipal institutions.

We notice through the press that in one of the eastern counties the question of county grants to local municipalities for road improvements is being discussed, owing to refusal of the county clerk to sign order on the treasurer for amount granted by county council. Some time ago, we published an opinion in reference to this question, and showed that the ordinary powers of the county council are, so far as roads and bridges are concerned, to deal with only county roads and bridges. Under the present law, county councils cannot legally use county funds in preserving, improving and repairing roads and bridges, which the said councils have not assumed and do not pretend to assume, and which they cannot assume because the grant is not for any particular county road or roads, bridge or bridges, in which the county at large is sufficiently interested to justify the assistance.

* * *

It appears to us that the system adopted in some townships of paying collectors a lump sum, with a percentage on all taxes remaining uncollected after the first of February or some later date, is not a business-like arrangement or one calculated to encourage the prompt payment of taxes. Every ratepayer knows that taxes must be paid, and it is no hardship to any one to be compelled to pay them by a reasonable date to be fixed by the council, or suffer the consequences. The statute has fixed the fourteenth of December, and it is only just that all who are in arrears after that time should pay for their delay. The principle of allowing the collector a percentage on all taxes unpaid at a certain date will, in many instances, induce these officials to be careless in their work, and we would expect them to be more interested in seeing that a large proportion of the taxes are not paid prior to the time after which they would be entitled to the percentage.

* * *

One of the principal duties of members of township councils is dealing with ratepayers who want some favor in the way of drainage outlet. It is an easy matter for a man to imagine that the highway will be greatly benefited by a drain, when he finds it necessary to procure an outlet along or across a highway when draining his own property. It is always advisable to have written agreements when work is done jointly by the municipality and individual ratepayers. In order to make these agreements binding on present and future owners of property, it is advisable in all cases, no matter how small the drain, to serve the preliminary notices for a first meeting, as provided in the Ditches and Watercourses Act. This can be done without expense, and the agreement, when arrived at, can then be put in proper form, as laid down in the act, filed with the clerk, and enforced at any time when necessary by either the municipality or the individuals interested.

Membership in local, city and county councils has no connection whatever with questions of Provincial and Dominion politics, upon which the people are divided, yet many would-be candidates are already locking for nomination because they are the most active partisans of the successful party in their municipality. If our almost perfect system of municipal government is to continue, politics should be separated from municipal elections. Municipalities should be treated simply as business corporations, to be managed on an entirely non-partisan basis for the benefit of the people. In order to place their affairs on a business basis, a thorough system of municipal housecleaning is necessary in many communities. To accomplish this, we must interest those who have sufficient intelligence to understand civic duties, and who have the courage to vote for or against men and measures, regardless of the fact that they are supported or opposed by a particular party.

* * *

"The first duty of a government," remarked the lieutenant-governor in his address of welcome to the American Public Health Association, "is to assist in keeping public health as good as possible—and so long as I am lieutenant-governor of the province of Quebec, the first duty of the legislature will be in that direction."

Needed the Services of an Expert.

An aged citizen, in whose veins there mingled Caucasian and Ethiopian blood in about equal proportions, called at the collector's office in the court house the other day and hung about until he found a chance to speak to him.

"Is dis de collectah?" he inquired.

"Yes," replied the official. "What can I do for you, uncle?"

"Got a bill of fo' dollahs an' sixty cents ag'in' a man down on Jeff'son street," said the aged caller, handing him a soiled and pocket-worn scrap of paper. "Wisht you'd c'lect it, sah, I cain't.—*Chicago Tribune.*

The Bicycle System.

First Citizen—"It is not enough that bicycles carry bells; the law should enforce a regular system of signals that all can understand."

Second Citizen—"What would you suggest?"

First Citizen—"Well, I don't know, exactly, but it might be something like this: One ring, 'Stand still'; two rings, 'dodge to the right'; three rings, 'dive to the left'; four rings, 'jump straight up and I'll run under you'; five rings, 'turn a back handspring and land behind me,' and so on. You see, us folks who walk are always glad to be accommodating, but the trouble is to find out what the fellow behind wants us to do."—*New York Weekly.*