

The Municipal World

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In the interests of every department of the Municipal Institutions of Ontario.

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THE MUNICIPAL WORLD,

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ST. THOMAS MARCH 1 1899.

Mr. A. D. Williams, for twenty seven years town clerk of Uxbridge, is dead.

The county council of Frontenac have appointed a special committee to investigate the defalcation and settlement with the late treasurer. A motion requesting the Government to appoint a Royal Commission for the purpose was defeated.

A number of township councils have, by resolution, expressed the opinion that deputy reeves should be elected as formerly, by general vote. Ratepayers would then be enabled to classify the nominations, candidates would know their opponents, and voters would know how to distribute their votes.

The council of the township of Scott, by resolution, disapproved of the present system of electing county councillors, which, in their opinion, has not met the requirements, expectations or approval of those in whose interests it was passed. The election of one representative from each municipality and an additional representative for each 1,000 population, was suggested.

If all of the proposed municipal amendments introduced in the legislature became law, the portion of the revised statutes referring to elections will be of little use. Among the more important changes suggested are the abolition of the dual vote in county council elections, and the abolition of the ballot in councils electing warden or appointing officers, and the election of all councillors by a general vote for a term of two years.

A large number of counties have co-operated with the county council of

Huron in petitioning the Legislature to make municipal clerks the legal custodians of Voters' Lists. The action of the Dominion authorities in refusing to accept copies of the Voters' Lists from the clerks of municipalities has prompted this. If the Local Government does not take action in the matter the question should be referred to the House of Commons for their consideration.

The county council of Essex, has petitioned the legislature, asking that townships and villages be put on the same footing as towns and that they be allowed to sell all lands in arrears of taxes instead of having the sale take place at the county treasurer's. That the warden and clerk sign the petition and attach the corporate seal, and request Messrs Auld, and McKee, the county members, to support the same with the government.

The Barrie council at their first session refused to pass a by-law to abolish ward elections, which had been voted on and carried by the electors. An agreement made with the village of Allandale when it was brought into the town corporation entitled the village ward to elect three members of the council. The Municipal Act of 1898, providing for the abolition of ward elections, was not passed, subject to the provisions of this agreement, and the council proposed to ignore the provisions of the act, requiring them to pass the by-law, on that account. The town solicitors were consulted and at a recent session the by-law was passed.

W. E. Anderson writes,—“We have had a good deal of trouble about arrears of taxes in this township, and it has occurred to me if the Municipal Act was amended so that the county treasurer had to publish in the county papers the arrears received from the township treasurers every year in April or May, many of these arrears would be paid. Do you think this would be a desirable change? A tax sale is expensive.”

[The publication of the list of arrears of taxes would be more expensive than a tax sale. The officers of other municipalities in which a large number of lots are in arrears may be able to suggest a desirable plan to improve the present method of dealing with arrears. Ed.]

Town Clerk Alberty, of Meaford, writes in reference to form used in his municipality for passing accounts and orders on the treasurer, which he suggested some years ago and which has been found quite satisfactory. After filling in the form at the council meeting, he copies it in a large letter book with the copying press, and then hands it to the treasurer, who proceeds to make the payments therein mentioned.

Hawkers' and Pedlars' License Fees.

An Alvinston solicitor has recently addressed the following letter to county and town clerks:

“I have been requested to write you by Thomas Hungerford, of Toronto, who is intending to visit your county shortly and would like your by law which calls for a fee of \$20 amended, if it has not already been done in conformity with R. S. O., 1897; Chap. 223; S. 583; S. S. 16; which limits the amount to one dollar. I have already obtained rebates from several councils in this matter so kindly advise Mr. Hungerford that your by-law has been amended.”

If any county councils have granted rebates under the clause referred to they have needlessly done so. At the last session of the Legislature, an act to correct certain clerical and typographical errors in the revised Statutes of 1899 was passed. One of the amendments alters clause 16 to read: “for fixing to be paid for licenses required, but, in cities having a population of 100,000 or over, the license fee shall not be more than \$50 for a two horse wagon, \$30 for a one horse wagon, \$15 for a push cart and \$1 for one carrying a basket.”

Since the clause referred to by the Alvinston lawyer applies to cities only, towns and counties are not bound by it, and the schedule of fees as established by by-law still remain in force. Full particulars of the above amendments and corrections were published in THE MUNICIPAL WORLD for October, 1898, but did not appear in *The Ontario Gazette* until last month.

Prompt Action Necessary.

A committee composed of the Mayors of Ontario cities has been formed for the purpose of promoting an amendment to the Assessment Act to meet the decision of the Court of Appeal which held that the property of gas, telephone, telegraph, street railways and other companies possessing valuable public franchises is only assessable as “scrap” material, quite apart from the cost of construction and from its utility as part of a going concern. Circulars have been addressed to every municipal council explaining the proposed legislation with a request that each council bring the matter to the attention of their local representative in the Legislature and appoint deputations to attend at the Legislative Buildings when the proposed amendment is being considered by the House.

Every municipality is interested in the question to the extent of an equitable assessment of telegraph and telephone lines, electric railways, gas mains, etc., within their limits, and prompt action should be taken to secure the amendment of the law so that this property may be taxed during the present year.