

The Municipal World

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

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Children's Aid Societies.

The organization of a society under the act for the prevention of cruelty to, and better protection of children in Ontario, has been completed in almost all the counties of the Province. Many of the societies have already been placed on a sound financial footing by grants from municipal councils interested, and rightly so, for the cost of saving a child is less than five per cent. of the cost of arresting and punishing a criminal, and what a destitute child needs more than anything else, is a home not an institution. In other words, the key note of the society is *prevention*. By removing a child from the atmosphere of vice and drunkenness, many who would otherwise be brought up to beg and steal, and end their lives in prison are brought up as useful citizens. When the Provincial organization for children's aid work is completed there will be little necessity for reformatories and industrial schools and a decrease in the population of our Central Prison and penitentiaries will also follow. It has been a problem for some time to know what should be done to prevent the rapid increase in the number of inmates in these institutions, and we believe that in passing the act above mentioned the Government have at last solved the problem. Children's aid societies under the act have almost unlimited power to do all that may be necessary for the protection of children from neglect and cruelty, and the placing of homeless and dependent children in foster homes. A central organization at the county town in each county is necessary, being more convenient to the courts, and for meetings of the Executive and other committees of the society. In addition to this and to

complete a county organization an advisory committee should be appointed in each municipality and in these committees, as in the society, the various denominations should be represented as far as possible, but the work throughout must be unsectarian in its character. In order to do effective work under the act three things are necessary. First—That the officers of the society should be men of warm sympathies, and of pronounced views on the question of child protection. Second—That an efficient agent of the Society should be appointed. Third—That a shelter in which children who are being cruelly treated, or are without homes can be provided for until suitable foster homes are obtained. The item of expense is one that Municipal Councils generally consider. First—In connection with the society there should be no expense other than that required for stationery and postage. Second—The amount to be paid to a special agent will depend on the individual and the time required to attend to the work of the society in his district. Third—It is essential to successful work that each society should have a temporary refuge or shelter in which children may be cared for, while awaiting disposal or pending the finding of suitable foster homes. This may be by arrangement with some reliable party interested in the work and having the necessary accommodation, or where the extent of the work warrants it, a refuge established for this special purpose. In no case should a child be temporarily placed in a House of Refuge where adult dependents are kept. Municipalities are liable for the maintenance of children, pending investigation, or for the care of a child committed to the guardianship of the society by the court until it is provided with a foster home. The Municipality in which the child last resided one year may be charged a reasonable sum per week, and this demand is compulsory upon the Municipality by the Judges order, unless a compromise is affected between the Society and the Municipal authorities by the latter giving an annual grant. One of the objects of the Society is to avoid institutionalizing of children.

Appeals to Court of Revision.

All persons dissatisfied with the decision of the Court of Revision in reference to their appeal can have the matter referred to the county judge by giving proper notice to the clerk of the municipality or assessment commissioner within five days of the first day of July, of their intention to appeal. If the notice substantially gives this information, no matter what the form may be, it will be sufficient. Immediately after the time limited for filing the appeals the clerk is required to forward the list to the judge, who will fix the day for hearing at some place within the municipality or at the nearest place there to where Division Court is held. The clerk is required to notify all parties at

least six days before the sitting of the court. In municipalities where by-laws have been passed for taking the assessment between the first of July and 30th September, the time for closing the Court of Revision is the 15th November, and the last day for entering appeal five days thereafter. The decision of the judge is final and conclusive, and the clerk is required to amend the roll accordingly.

In districts, the day for the return of the roll is required to be fixed by by-law of the council. Any person may appeal against the assessment within one month after the date so fixed by giving a written notice to the clerk, and the council is required within two months after the time fixed for returning the roll, to appoint a time and place for hearing such complaints as a Court of Revision. Appeals from the decision of the Court of Revision are to the stipendary magistrate in the same manner as to the county judge in other municipalities.

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One of the principal duties of the Provincial Instructor in road-making will be to give assistance to road-masters, overseers of highways, and members and officials of municipal councils. He will be available to visit localities requiring his services, as arrangements may be possible, and those desiring his instruction and advice should communicate with him at once. Such service will be free of expense to municipalities. It is especially desired that municipal representatives and officials will take advantage of this opportunity of using the Instructor's services.

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The equalization of assessment of union school section should be attended to every three years as required by the Public Schools Act.

Whenever this is required to be done the assessor of the municipality in which the school house is situated should call a meeting of the assessors of the municipalities interested. If they cannot agree, the public school inspector is required to name an arbitrator who, with the assessors, shall determine the matter. When the union school section is composed of portions of two adjoining counties, then on disagreement, the inspector of the county in which the school house of the union section is situated is required to name the arbitrator. The assessors, at the request of the inspector or five rate-payers may reconsider their award within one month after finding the same. The assessors are required forthwith, after they arrive at a decision, to notify the secretary-treasurer of the union school section, and the award must be filed with the clerk of the municipality.

The assessors, when sending copy of award to the union section, should inclose their account for services in making the award, which a recent letter from the Education Department states, should be paid from the funds of the union section.