

## MUNICIPAL WORK IN PRAIRIE PROVINCES

## Interesting Contrast in Methods—Ways of Taxation

Saskatchewan is well advanced in having uniform methods of bookkeeping for municipalities, and it is only a matter of time when such modifications will take place as will bring the record used in accord with the ideas of practical accountants, while still retaining their uniformity. This opinion was expressed by Mr. O. J. Godfrey, of the Saskatchewan Institute of Chartered Accountants at the annual meeting of the Dominion Association of Chartered Accountants, held at Winnipeg. Mr. Godfrey discussed municipal accounting in the prairie provinces. Municipal work there, he said, offers an interesting contrast in methods, in many ways. In Saskatchewan and Alberta there is a minister of municipal affairs, who holds a place in the cabinet, but in Manitoba, the head of the municipal department is a commissioner, without a place in the cabinet, directly responsible to the government. In each province great power is vested in the head of the municipal department, and possibly the commissioner in Manitoba is the most powerful of the three.

## Legislation of Provinces.

Contrasting the legislation, in Manitoba the various classes of municipalities are brought under one act, called the municipal act. In Saskatchewan there are six acts—viz., the city act, the town act, the village act, the rural municipal act, the local improvement district act, and the municipal ordinance of 1898. This latter is the original municipal act, which would have passed into entire disuse but for two rural municipalities which claimed rights acquired thereunder when the municipal acts of the province were remodelled in 1908, and which were exempted from the provisions of the new rural municipal act. One of these two municipalities has since voluntarily surrendered its rights in this respect and fallen into line with the general scheme of the government. The Alberta legislation is similar to that of Saskatchewan, but of more recent date.

To come to the work of the municipal departments as it affects the chartered accountant, and taking Manitoba first, said Mr. Godfrey, under the municipal audit act the commissioner appoints salaried municipal auditors, who are entrusted with the work of audit throughout all classes of municipalities in the province with the exception of the cities. Their duties are plainly set out in the act, and their powers appear to me to be fairly wide.

## Call in Chartered Accountants.

In some cases the municipal commissioner has called in chartered accountants to make special audits in municipalities where everything was not apparently as it should have been. The system adopted for audit in Manitoba has much to recommend it, and vice versa. The cost of audit in Manitoba is levied annually proportionately on all municipalities by the municipal department.

The system of bookkeeping prescribed in Manitoba is largely synoptic—apart from the tax-roll—and the skeleton systems issued by the department are easily understood by anyone having even the most elementary knowledge of bookkeeping.

A feature of the financing of municipalities in Manitoba as set out in section 436 of the municipal act, greatly appeals to me. The Saskatchewan act requires all borrowings on current account to be repaid during the current year, irrespective of the amount of unpaid taxes. The Manitoba act, in allowing renewals for borrowings against unpaid taxes, is preferable in this respect, inasmuch as it is not logical to expect 100 per cent. of the taxes to be collected during each year, as apparently the Saskatchewan act does—or to expect a council to break municipal tradition by levying more than is required for the current year.

## Taxation in the Provinces.

Manitoba differs from her sister provinces respecting taxation in many ways—e.g., personal property is assessed in Manitoba, but not in Alberta or Saskatchewan. A discount is allowed for prepayment of taxes in Manitoba and not in the other provinces.

Tax sales are still in force in Manitoba and Alberta, but in future will not be legal in Saskatchewan, where lands are to be forfeited to the municipality when the tax enforcement return has been confirmed by a judge.

A fixed or flat rate of assessment may be made in rural municipalities in Manitoba on the council obtaining the consent of the ratepayers. For four years this method of taxation has been obligatory in Saskatchewan, but has been found not to be suitable, or popular and legislation has recently been enacted reverting to the old system of taxation on valuation.

"I see nothing in the Manitoba act," said Mr. Godfrey, "with a trend towards single tax, similar to the legislation of Alberta and Saskatchewan which rather encourage this form of taxation."

## MONTREAL WILL FLOAT LOAN

## If Market Conditions Improve—Western Canadian School Issues

The treasury officials of Montreal have instructed the city's financial agents in London to float the city's loan of \$11,400,000 at a favorable moment. The money is required to meet expenditures on permanent works of the present year. The loan may be floated at a price between 95 and 98, and the city will have to pay 4½ to 4¾ per cent., perhaps more.

The city of Montreal's flotations in London since January, 1905, have been as follows:—

Year.	Amount issued, £	Rate of interest, %	Issue price.
1908, April 27 .....	1,000	4	99
1909, January 1 ..	400,000	4	103
1910, February 16 .	123,200	4½	109
1910, October 1 ...	1,000,000	4	101½
1913, March 3 ....	1,438,300	4½	100
1913, May 17 ....	1,430,600	4½	100

In addition, Westmount in September, 1909, issued £435,000 4 per cents.; Maisonneuve, in March, 1910, £143,800, 4½ per cents., at 106; Westmount, January, 1911, \$500,000, 4 per cents., at 101¼; Maisonneuve, in February, 1911, £87,900, 4½ per cents., at 102½; and Maisonneuve, in April, 1913, £187,600, 5 per cents., at 100.

## Regina School Bonds.

The Regina School Board has for sale \$500,000 worth of public school debentures. A Toledo firm had accepted this issue but could not dispose of more than \$100,000. An option was given Messrs. A. E. Ames and Company, of Toronto, on the \$400,000, until September 9th. This option was subsequently extended until to-day. The Bank of Montreal has advanced a temporary loan of \$100,000 to the school board.

## Calgary's School Bonds.

The question of having school bonds sold through the city was discussed at a meeting of Calgary's city council. It was felt that the recent sale of school bonds at a low price was injurious to the city's interests and that it would be advisable to have the city handle both securities. Accordingly a motion was passed to invite the finance committee of the school board to meet the finance committee of the council to discuss the advisability of formulating a plan whereby the city handle all sales.

## DEBENTURES AWARDED

- Brighton, Ont.**—\$60,000.  
**Brandon, Man.**—\$5,000 40-year, to Hadley Estate, Brandon.  
**Windsor, Ont.**—\$76,000 to Messrs. W. A. Mackenzie and Company, Toronto.  
**Sarnia, Ont.**—\$270,000, to Messrs. W. A. Mackenzie and Company, Toronto.  
**Haileybury, Ont.**—\$8,968, 5 20-instalment, to Messrs. Stimson and Company, Toronto.  
**Rosetown, Sask.**—\$13,500 7 per cent. 20 years, to Messrs. W. L. McKinnon and Company, Toronto.  
**Brampton, Ont.**—\$42,523 5½ per cent. 20 years, to Messrs. C. H. Burgess and Company, Toronto.  
**Berlin, Ont.**—\$154,347 5½ and 6 per cent. 10, 20 and 30 years, to Messrs. C. H. Burgess and Company, Toronto.  
**County of Lambton, Ont.**—\$20,000 5 per cent. ten instalments, to Messrs. W. A. Mackenzie and Company, Toronto.

## COMPANIES REGISTERED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The following companies have been registered to do business in British Columbia:—The General Fire Extinguisher Company, Providence, Rhode Id., U.S.A., provincial office, Vancouver, capital, \$5,000,000; Eaton, Crane and Pike Company, Portland, Maine, U.S.A., provincial office, Vancouver, capital, \$500,000; American Encaustic Tiling Company (Limited), New York, U.S.A., provincial office, Victoria, capital, \$1,800,000; Seattle Cap Manufacturing Company, Inc., Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., provincial office, Vancouver, capital, \$25,000.

The following companies have been registered to do business in Alberta:—The National Improvement and Investment Company, Limited, Winnipeg, capital, \$500,000; Allan, Killam and McKay, Winnipeg, \$30,000; Northern Improvement and Investment Company, Limited, Winnipeg, \$500,000; Standard Land and Security Corporation, Limited, Toronto, \$40,000; Maison Canadienne de Finances et D'Immeubles, Limitee, Quebec, \$100,000; Pace Harrison and Millar, Winnipeg, \$50,000.