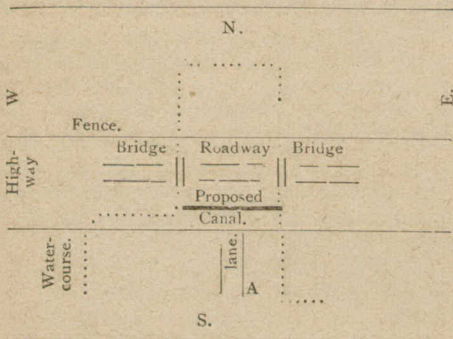


other (that is other than a county council) council shall be held at such places, either within or without the municipality, as the council from time to time appoints by by-law or resolution on adjourning, and every such resolution shall be entered upon the minutes."

Can Water be Taken Out of Its Natural Course?

386.—J. H.—Is it legal to change a natural watercourse in case no damages are incurred to any individual?

You will see by the diagram that the watercourse crosses the road twice in a short distance, and the council proposes to do away with both bridges and dig a canal on road allowance but at side of roadway. The difficulty is, A lives on south side of road and objects to having the canal dug, even if the council will build a bridge across the canal to give him a crossing over the same. The watercourse is not a creek running the whole year round, only in spring and fall of the year. The most easterly bridge is at the foot of a quicksand hill and has proved itself to be very difficult to keep in proper repair.



It is a principle of law that a natural watercourse cannot be diverted, but whether this is a natural watercourse or not we cannot say. If it is a course having well-defined banks on either side it is a natural watercourse in law, even though it may be frequently dry. If it is a natural watercourse the council have no right to divert it. On the other hand, if it is not a natural watercourse the council may do what is proposed to be done without incurring any liability beyond entitling A to damages for any injury which he may show he has sustained by reason of the work.

Cattle Wrongfully on Highway.

387.—H. E. M.—A cow, permitted to be at large upon a highway within half a mile of a railway crossing, no person being in charge, fell through a bridge partly constructed by the corporation on the highway within the half-mile, and was killed. Under a town by-law, cows are allowed to run at large.

I wish to know if section 103 of chapter 207, R. S. O., being the Railway Act applies, or whether said section has only a limited application to accidents taking place at crossings?

The provisions of your town by-law permitting cattle to run at large, are subject to those of section 103 of the Railway Act, prohibiting cattle from running at large within half a mile of the railway. Sec. 103 applies to this case, provided the railway is one that is subject to the legislative authority of the Legislature of the Province of Ontario. (See section 45 of the Act.)

Municipal Reform in the United States.

A history of the surprising number of municipal reform organizations that have been inaugurated in the United States, together with the excellent work effected by them, has recently been published in book form in the United States. The volume contains much that will be of the greatest interest to those who are striving so hard to plant municipal reform on a lasting basis in Canadian cities.

Clinton Woodruff, an authority on municipal politics, writing in the publication referred to, says: "When we review the official recognition and protection of vice and immorality in many of our large cities, utilization of public power and office to serve private ends, the prevalence of office blackmail, the prostitution of public offices and contracts to serve mean and selfish ends, the sinister influence of corrupt corporations present a picture at once dark and forbidding, and constitute a problem of serious import and difficulty. The situation, though, is far indeed from being hopeless; for every year now brings new forces into the field to combat the forces of municipal evil. Every year witnesses a development of public sentiment in the direction of higher municipal standards, and advance along definite lines. Widespread municipal corruption cannot long prevail in the face of widespread investigation and efforts to improve."

It is shown that municipal leagues, which were started in 1894, have been steadily growing in strength, while every year since has seen a large number of clubs inaugurated. In three states, civic reform has occupied a prominent place during the past two years. These states were California, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The results in San Francisco have been such as to encourage other cities and states to take active measures to secure civic reform. St. Paul and Duluth have also passed new charters, on reform lines, that promise great things for the future. In Iowa a recent legislative act authorizes the appointment of a municipal commission. In Wilmington, Del., the Board of Trade has continued without abatement determined efforts for a reform charter. The aldermen of Pennsylvania are at work on a new act to improve the civic system now in vogue. During the past year the application of a reform charter in Baltimore was attended by a considerable reduction in taxation and a thorough reorganization of all branches of civic government. The improvements in the police, fire and other departments were especially marked. Equally marked improvements have followed the adoption of reform principles in other cities.

It is stated that in many cities the immediate results of reform movements have been the establishment of public baths, ice plants, municipal lodging houses, additional parks, playgrounds, public squares, and very many similar improvements. The Women's Improvement

Associations are praised for the valuable aid they are giving the civic fathers in bettering the condition of the masses, and improving the civic service.

The aid given by boards of trade and commercial bodies in the work of civic reform, is counted on as one of the most powerful influences of the movement. Their influence is shown to reach an important class which is inaccessible to all other agencies. The efforts of such bodies as the Merchants' Association of New York, the Commercial Club of Indianapolis, the Merchants' Association of San Francisco, the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce, the Scranton Board of Trade, etc., when they threw their weight into agitations for civic reform, were demonstrated to have effected the most astonishing results. In conclusion it is declared that in any community long continued and conscientious efforts for municipal reform will certainly result in a purer system of municipal administration.

The publication of such information about the success of the reform movement will no doubt lend new zeal to cities already engaged in the work of civic reform, and encourage other cities long saddled with the boodling octopus, to be up and doing to secure an honest expenditure of all civic moneys.

The *Stouffville Tribune*, referring to the recently-appointed assessment commission, says: This is a move in the right direction. There are many anomalies in our present assessment law. It is now a law of shreds and patches, difficult to interpret and is not equitable in its application. Every member of the house seems to think the Assessment Act is a fair subject to experiment upon, and in the absence of anything else to do, starts in to put another patch on the Assessment Act. The changing conditions in a new country, of course, call for changes in our laws to meet them, but hastily considered amendments to such an important law should be avoided. It is to be hoped that this commission will be able to construct an Act that will be equitable, effectual and easily understood and applied.

A Sure Thing.

Silas—Hiram says he really expects ter git elected ter de office of constable this time, fer sure.

Joshu—He does? Why, what's his politics? He hain't fer expansion ner free silver.

Silas—Oh! they say he's got a scheme ter make the foreigner pay all the ernal revenue tax. He sprung it down ter the store the other evenin', an' it took like hot pancakes.—*Puck*.

"I never sold a vote in my life," said the old colored campaigner, "but I hez foun' lots er five-dollar bills a-layin' in de road clost by whar de 'leckshun wuz gwine on!"—*Atlantic Constitution*.