

The Municipal World

Published Monthly in the Interests of Every Department
of the Municipal Institutions of Ontario

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

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HOW TO REMIT.—Cash should be sent by registered letter. Draft, express or money orders may be sent at our risk.

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ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO, JANUARY 1, 1907.

With this issue THE MUNICIPAL WORLD begins its seventeenth year of publication. In looking back, we are gratified by its development and the support tendered us by the municipal authorities of the province. The personal interest taken by THE WORLD staff in all matters municipal may account for this, as it has made the work one of greatest pleasure.

For the future, we propose to continue as in the past, to give subscribers the most complete service possible through the paper and otherwise. For the information of those who may be elected for the first time, we are sending out sample copies to be laid before the councils at their first meeting in January. The majority of subscription orders are for all of the members of a council and its officers, at the expense of the corporation. This is as it should be. Everything that will assist a representative or official in the discharge of his duties should be placed at his disposal.

The Ontario Municipal Association is sending out for the consideration of every council, forms of petition to the Legislature praying for the amendment of section 606 of the Municipal Act so that Ontario Municipalities will not be civilly responsible for damages caused by accidents on highways. No such liability has been imposed by Statute in any other of the Provinces of Canada or in England, and in the absence of such a Statute, municipalities are only liable for damages to persons injured through the misfeasance of the corporation arising either from its having exceeded its statutory powers, or having executed them so negligently as to cause nuisance or unnecessary damage. In other words, if the amendment is secured a municipality would not be responsible to the individual for damages caused by accidents due to defects in the highway, unless the defects were caused by the council or its officers. Under the present law, a municipality practically insures everyone travelling on the highways, the enormous amounts paid out yearly by municipalities in Ontario for damages and costs of litigation should be utilized in improvements of our highways. Every council should co-operate in the petition and urge their representative to bring the matter to the attention of the legislature and keep it there until the necessary legislation is obtained.

COUNTY COUNCILS

The County Councils for 1907 will include a larger percentage of new members than in former years. Most of these will have had experience in the local councils that will assist them in becoming acquainted with county council organization. The first business is the election of a warden. This may be conducted as the by-law for regulating the proceedings of the council determines but shall not be by ballot. A majority of the council must be present and the person elected must receive a majority of the votes cast.

In case of an equality of votes the reeve, or in his absence, the deputy reeve, of the municipality having the greatest equalized assessment shall have a second or casting vote, if there is an equality in this respect the casting vote is to be given by the reeve or deputy reeve of the municipality having the greatest number of municipal voters on its last revised voters' list. Following the election of warden, the organization of the council is completed by the selection of the standing committees for the year.

The members of a committee should be careful in the selection of a chairman as the conduct of the business throughout will depend largely on his ability both in committee and council. It is the practice in many counties for the council to adjourn as soon as the warden is elected to enable him to prepare his address to the council. This should be as comprehensive as possible and include references to county, municipal and other public matters which he may desire to bring to the attention of his council or the public generally.

Municipal councillors accustomed to the consideration of all matters in the interest of their own municipality should consider the interest of the county as a whole in disposing of the various questions brought before them.

The benefits of a two year term for members of councils was noticeable in the constitution of the old county councils, this is now optional with the ratepayers of a municipality. County councillors could not do better than arrange for the submission of the question by the council of each local municipality.

The House of Refuge for the united counties of Northumberland and Durham will be formally opened on the 10th of this month.

PAUL STEIN, clerk, Township of Denbigh.—“I would not do without THE MUNICIPAL WORLD as long as I have anything whatever to do with municipal affairs, and consider that your legal advice to one or two questions alone is worth to any municipality the amount of the subscription price for every member of the council.”

The position of the advocate of municipal trading is this—the municipality has to do the work of its citizens in the most economical and efficient way. It must either do it itself and thus share the profits among all the ratepayers or it must give the work out to private individuals, who pocket all the profit which would otherwise go into the ratepayer's pocket, or, in other words, reduce his rates. Where lies the equity of the case?

JAS. H. RINTOUL, clerk, Township of Darling.—“The members of the council appreciate your paper very much, as it has always answered questions fully if properly stated. I would advise every council to have it.”

R. BANNERMAN, clerk of village of Eganville.—“Our council after a fair trial would not be without THE MUNICIPAL WORLD. We consider it a good authority on all municipal matters.”