

### Warden's Term of Office—One or Two Years.

In the January issue, we expressed an opinion that under the County Council Act, 1896, wardens would hold office for two years. The following letters in reference to the subject, taken from the *Globe* shows the interest taken in the subject and the opinion of the honorable gentleman who introduced the act in the legislature:

To the Editor of the *Globe*:

SIR,—There seems to be considerable difference of opinion upon the question of electing the warden under the new County Councils Act, some holding that the term of office is one year, some two years, and some again that it is optional with the council whether it is one or two years.

The County Council Act was introduced for the avowed object of reducing the number of county councillors, and in doing this it changed the composition of the council, providing for district representatives by a direct vote of the ratepayers. The act defines who shall be eligible, and directs how and when the election shall take place, fixing the qualification of both voters and councillors.

The council so elected is then the county council in lieu of the council as before constituted, and has all the authority, right and power given by, and is subject to the Consolidated Municipal Act.

The County Councils Act does not mention the day of meeting, nor does it state that the warden or any other officer is to be elected for two years. It simply provides that the Municipal Act is only superseded when repugnant or inconsistent, and so the county council will hold its first meeting in each year, on the fourth Tuesday in January (yearly elections in section 225, of the Municipal Act can only have one meaning), and its first duty will be to elect a warden, and then to proceed with its regular work under the Municipal Act.

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD maintains that the election is to be for two years, the life of the county council, but the Attorney-General takes the view that the warden will be, as formerly, elected for only one year, and this view is also held by the solicitor of this county, the retiring warden being of course eligible for re-election.

I think it is a matter of considerable importance that county councils should act alike in this matter, and I would suggest that you might interview the Hon. Attorney-General upon the subject of annual meetings and election of warden, the publication of which would secure uniformity of action.

JAMES WHITE, County Clerk.

Woodstock, January 9th.

NOTE.—In the County Council Act, it is provided in section 41, that "the act shall be read with and as part of the Consolidated Municipal Act, of 1892." It is also provided in section 18, that parts of the Consolidated Municipal Act repugnant to or inconsistent with the new act be repealed and that "all other parts of the said Municipal Act applicable to county councils shall apply to the county councils elected hereunder." The new law makes no change in the warden's term of office, so the old term of one year will continue. The warden will be of course eligible for re-election.—*Ed. Globe.*

#### THE COUNTY COUNCILS ACT.

To the Editor of the *Globe*:

SIR,—I am in receipt of a number of letters from municipal officers and others asking whether the new County Councils act contemplated that the Warden to be elected at the first meeting of the council, is to be so elected for a period of two years, or, as under the old act, for one year only. Your note in reply to a correspondent a few days since quite covered the ground. It pointed out that the act is to be read with, and as part of the municipal Act, and that under the Municipal Act the Warden's term is expressly fixed at one year. Nothing in the new act repeals this section. It therefore stands and governs the election

under the new act. The latter makes no specific provision as to the warden's term of office, for the very good reason that the Municipal Act, of which the new County Council's Act is made a part, contains a specific provision limiting it to one year. An election of a Warden for two years, I have no doubt, would be null and void as to the second year. The Warden is therefore now to be elected for the municipal year 1897, only.

A. S. HARDY.

Toronto, January 20.

### The Ward System.

The mayor of Ingersoll, at the first meeting of the council for 1897, referred to the ward system as follows: "And in connection with this let us seriously consider whether the time is not ripe for doing away with the pernicious ward system. In my experience in the council I have seen so much that is wrong in our present system, that a change for the better is very desirable. Let us rise above the petty idea of reaching out for the benefit of our own ward, by considering more of what is the best for the interest of the town at large, and if we grasp that and spend our money wherever it is most needed, irrespective of ward or street, I think we shall serve the interests of the ratepayers better than we are doing at present."

### Municipal Insurance.

The question of municipal insurance has been revived by its originator in Toronto, Controller Lamb. He has enlisted the sympathy of Mayor Fleming and other members of the council, and a request has been made to Premier Hardy to name a day for an appointment between the Provincial Cabinet and the city's representatives, to discuss the subject, the object being to either get a committee of the legislature to take it up at the forthcoming session or a commission to thoroughly go into the matter. Last year a committee was appointed, but too late to take any definite action. A number of Ontario cities will likely co-operate with Toronto in an effort to get the bill through the local house. Controller Lamb has received a marked paper from Brighton, Eng., in which it is stated that the town is endeavoring to get a similar bill through parliament. The authorities at Brighton got their information from Toronto several years ago.

The story to the effect that from the commencement of the present year the citizens of Glasgow would be free from taxes in consequence of the profits derived from "municipal monopolies" is not, it seems, true after all. The Lord Provost, of Glasgow has destroyed the delightful air castle by an official denial. He asserts that while the municipal undertakings above mentioned have been eminently successful, there is no probability of the city being exempt from taxation. Time alone will tell just how much money Glasgow will save by control of her municipal privileges.

### Sheriffs and Registrars.

The plan of electing sheriffs and registrars by popular vote, or even by vote in the municipal councils, is objectionable. Mr. S. Hogarth, in a letter to the *Seaforth Expositor*, discusses the subject. He says:

"In your late issue you referred to the question of handing over the power of appointing registrars, sheriffs, etc., to the county councils, stating that if such a change were made, it would be productive of abuses entirely unknown under the present system, and that if a change is to be made, the appointing or electing power should be given to the people directly. I think any one at all acquainted with the present scheming, wire pulling and unnecessary expense in connection with the appointments or elections made by the county council, must agree with you. For instance, the election of warden is often made a political squabble, and which, in some places, has been continued for days. Not very long since, in the county of Huron, a vacancy occurred by the death of the late esteemed and efficient county clerk, Mr. Peter Adamson. For some months previous to, and after his death, the duties of county clerk had been satisfactorily performed by the county treasurer, Mr. Holmes, who was, we are told, willing to continue the management of both offices permanently. But, politics rise up and say, "We are a majority this year, and may be in the minority on January next." So a special meeting of the county council was called by the end of October, 1891, the party machinery being kept in full motion until the great work of making a clerk was accomplished. I will not at this time attempt to describe the performance at that meeting, but it would have been amusing to an onlooker, if the actors themselves had to pay their own expenses; but, no, that was not practical politics, so it cost the ratepayers over \$600 for a play that would have been none the worse for keeping until the January meeting. Some time previous to that event a majority of the county council voted to adjourn to attend an election, and, of course, the ratepayers paid the extra mileage and the days going and returning. Then, the people have not forgotten the political feeling over the appointment of a treasurer, on the acceptance by Mr. A. M. Ross of the office of Provincial Treasurer. Much more might be said in connection with this and other matters, but I think it must be evident to all that the change proposed would not lift those appointments out of the range of politics nor be conducive of greater economy in its management. I think it is much better for the country at large, for the Dominion and Ontario Governments to continue to make the appointments, unless something better is proposed, and if some of the officials are overpaid for the work they perform (which is possibly the case), that could be easily corrected."