

and the general advance in the various undertakings of Eastern Canada, investors are still willing to take their chances on certain lines of investments which are not likely to prove overly satisfactory in the end. In fact many of the investments made during the last few years have turned out anything but according to expectations. This certainly is checking the movement of capital money and we trust the same will sooner or later be available for more conservative purposes. Then, again, with the very much better interest return now available on municipal debentures, will in itself become an attraction to large investors in mortgages, as the rates are getting closer together, and preference is given to a considerable extent to municipal debenture investments, rather than to the ordinary run of mortgages. Undoubtedly a higher interest return has been established in connection with the municipal debenture investments, and municipalities we believe would be wise to recognize it, and hereafter it would be much better to issue their bonds at higher rates of interest than what has prevailed for some years past. We also wish to emphasize the fact that investors generally are paying very much more attention to the financial statement and the rate of taxation in the various municipalities. Wholesale bonusing or embarking in undertakings, which are not in keeping with the general conditions of a municipality, are looked upon most unfavorably. It is one thing to develop power for the use of the municipality but it is entirely another thing to develop power to any extent based largely upon expectancy of users. The commercial side of municipal ownership has not been satisfactorily established and expenditures under such conditions are not viewed with favor. The continued gradual increase under ordinary and local improvement taxation in the various towns is likely to have a certain effect upon their population, and while the convenience and comforts of the larger places is obtained these advantages are sometimes available only at a cost out of proportion to their advantages. It is just a question whether or not the course of the average municipality has been a wise one, where they have established electric light plants at a considerable cost. There is ample and sufficiently good reasons for the establishment of a water-works system. A number of prominent municipal officers in connection with the average sized towns have expressed opinion to us that had the municipality established a gas works in place of an electric plant, it would have been much more satisfactory, both to the citizens and the municipal treasury. The convenience of light for a limited time, they say, is not to be compared with the convenience of light plus the advantages of gas as a cooking and lighting agency. With the general scarcity of wood and the consequent high prices in the smaller places, this latter feature is particularly prominent. It is generally conceded that wood for fuel purposes will be before long a thing of the past in the principal centres, especially of Ontario.

There is a feature in connection with the issue of debentures which we think should engage the attention of all municipalities, and something should be done in the way of legislation to regulate the form and style of debentures in general. The present method of issuing is certainly most unsatisfactory, and with a view to encouraging the demand for this particular class of investments, this feature should certainly not be overlooked. As mentioned earlier in this article, we advise municipalities to issue their bonds at a higher rate of interest and keep in view a reasonable amount of taxation.

The experiment of paving county roads with bricks is to be tried in Orange county, Fla. The county commissioners have ordered 100,000 paving brick made by a new process.

#### MUNICIPAL HISTORY.

The history of our municipalities is important because it is only through this history that one can gain a clear idea of the course which future progress is likely to take. There must be progress and there must be reform, especially in the larger cities. At the present time the municipal bodies are asked to perform more than is reasonably possible. The legislative function must be separated from the administrative, and the latter vested in permanent officials. This seems the most feasible solution of present difficulties. At present too much is demanded of the mayor and aldermen. Their ability and their time are limited; their work is practically unlimited. Citizens with reputations and businesses which make them impregnable to the assault of franchise-seekers and other kinds of "grafters," are loth to allow themselves to be chosen for offices which demand so much time and attention, and which would make them feel the pressure of strong corporations whose interests are not identical with the civic interests. A reform of some kind is necessary in order that good government shall be maintained in large cities.—*Canadian Magazine.*

An interesting point was recently raised in connection with the appeal of a stock broker, doing business in Toronto. He appealed against an assessment of \$3,499 on income—\$2,000 on income from the brokerage business and \$1,499 received in dividends on Toronto Street Railway stock held for clients. The broker pointed out that the aforesaid stock, being hypothecated, as usual in stock market transactions, he had never even handled the dividends, and consequently it was unjust to compel him to pay taxes on dividends from stock held temporarily in his name. He had no means of knowing who finally received the dividends. But, on the other hand, the assessor pointed out that the city had no recourse but to collect the taxes on dividends from the nominal recipient. He, in turn, must look to his clients or to the holders of the scrip for re-payment. The court upheld this view of the case, the chairman adding that the law ought to be tinkered up a little in this respect. In view of the disastrous results to stock speculators during the past year, the broker's assessment of \$2,000 on income was struck off.

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Maryland has joined the list of states working under the state aid plan. The legislature has appropriated \$200,000 to aid the counties of the state in improving their roads. The distribution among the counties is to be made on the basis of road mileage.

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The freehold electors of Cornwall recently endorsed two by-laws, one to loan J. B. Atchison \$17,500, without interest for 20 years, to help re-build his sawmill and sash and door factory, which was destroyed by fire; the other is to exempt from municipal taxes for 10 years the woollen mill property recently purchased by the Canadian Colored Cotton Mills Company from the Cornwall Manufacturing Company.

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Charles H. Gill, of the village of Dixie, clerk of the Township of Toronto, has been appointed a Commissioner for taking affidavits in H. J. C., etc., within the county of Peel.

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Moulins-sur-Orne, France, has the distinction of having had one mayor for half a century in the person of M. Germain-Lacour. Moulins-sur-Orne is in the arrondissement of Argentan, and the people have just celebrated this unique event by holding a fete in honor of their mayor. Argentan has been represented in Parliament by the same deputy for forty years.