

The Municipal World

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

In the interests of every department of the Municipal Institutions of Ontario.

K. W. MCKAY, EDITOR,

A. W. CAMPBELL, C. E. } Associate
J. M. GLENN, LL.B. } Editors

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OFFICES—28 Elgin Street, St. Thomas. Telephone 101

Address all communications to

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD,
Box 1252, St. Thomas, Ont.

ST. THOMAS, APRIL 1, 1896.

The Essex County Council, at special session, have, at last, finally decided on the improvement of the County buildings at Sandwich. Windsor and Walkerville made a strong fight with a view to securing the erection of the buildings within their limits.

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The town council of Pembroke, looking to the consideration of the municipal insurance question, authorized their assessor to ascertain the amount of fire insurance and premiums paid thereon in the town; and for this purpose provided him with a special book, in which to make the entries, and increased his salary accordingly.

* * *

We are pleased to notice that a bill has been introduced to consolidate the laws relating to the registration of births, deaths and marriages. This bill embodies most of the recommendations of Provincial Inspector Hamilton referred to in our last issue. The amount of the fee to be paid to the division registrars was left blank in the bill, but will, no doubt, be increased if the bill is passed as additional duties are imposed in the way of keeping a permanent register.

* * *

We are in receipt of a printed statement of receipts and expenditures of the town of Fort William for the year ending 31st December, 1895, of which Mr. E. S. Rutledge is treasurer.

Few municipalities present its ratepayers with a more comprehensive financial statement than this appears to be. A complete classification of the various accounts is an important feature most satisfactory to inquiring ratepayers. We agree with the

Fort William Journal when it states "the report is certainly a good one, and one that reflects credit on the council and on the treasurer who evidently has exercised great care and labor in its compilation.

* * *

The question drawer this month is larger than that of any former issue of the WORLD. We do not know what space may be required for this department in the future, but would suggest that if our correspondents would make themselves more familiar with the statutes, many questions would not be asked, and we would have more space to devote to extended answers, and for other interesting matter.

A number of questions have been received for answer by mail, but when no stamped envelope is enclosed we will be heard from only through the paper.

* * *

The present session of the legislature will be noted for the many radical changes proposed to be made in our municipal laws.

Commencing with the next issue of the WORLD we will publish particulars of the new legislation and comment thereon. It is most important that councils should become thoroughly conversant with new laws, and for this purpose they cannot do better than order the MUNICIPAL WORLD to be sent to each member and official. The yearly rate is small, but the benefits to be derived from the WORLD by the most experienced official will amply repay all municipalities for the expenditure.

* * *

The agitation for municipal fire insurance has found its way into the Ontario legislature, and on motion of Mr. Conmee, of Algoma, a committee will enquire and report as to the number of fire insurance companies, the amount of stock paid up by stockholders; the total amount of insurance in stock companies, in cash mutual and straight mutual companies; the percentage invested in (1) mercantile, (2) manufacturing, (3) all other risks; the total amount of cash premiums actually collected; the average rate of premium per \$1,000; the total amount of losses paid in fifteen years; the percentage of amount actually paid to the insured in cases of total loss, or to what extent has over insurance prevailed; the total amount paid for commissions and brokerage, other expenses and bonuses; a comparison of the relative cost to be insured in each class; the desirability and feasibility of establishing bureaus and municipal fire insurance.

A member of the Government stated "that if the insurance companies are not more fair and moderate in their charges there will be a thorough investigation into their doings." The complaints of exorbitant insurance rates charged by the companies who form the Association of under-

writers, have been heard throughout the land for some time. When the report of the committee is received we will be in a position to say whether the complaints are reasonable or not.

County Councils.

Since our last issue the County Council Bill therein referred to has been withdrawn and a new bill providing for the direct election of councillors has been submitted. This provides for the division of counties into districts, each of which, at the annual municipal elections, will elect two members of the county council by direct vote. The former proposition was that members of the county council should be elected by the Reeves and deputy-Reeves. The bill also provides that county councillors are to be elected for two years, and that the division of the counties into districts shall be determined by two commissions, one for the eastern, and one for the western counties of the province.

The bill as reprinted for committee of the whole determines the size of councils as follows:

- a. If the population of the county is 25,000 or less, of not less than eight members.
- b. If the population is more than 25,000, but less than 40,000, of not less than ten members nor more than twelve members.
- c. If the population is 40,000 or more, but less than 60,000, of not less than twelve members nor more than fourteen members.
- d. If the population is 60,000 or more, of not less than sixteen members or more than eighteen members.

There are a great many provisions of the bill with which we do not entirely agree, but as it has been hastily drafted, it will, no doubt, be carefully discussed in committee, and be finally passed, so as to provide for the reduction of the number of members of the county council in an equitable manner.

Some doubt has been expressed as to the advisability of passing the bill this session, or before the various county councils have had an opportunity of passing an opinion on it, but as most of our readers will remember, a proposed county council bill was submitted to all the councils a few years ago, and at that time numerous suggestions were received, and in framing the present bill, these have been considered. In addition to this the various representatives are in constant correspondence with their constituents, and the information received in this way and added to their own experience will, no doubt, result in the passage of a satisfactory bill.

"Neglect" is the one thing that makes most roads bad.

Adam was the first man, but Macadam stands first as a road-maker.

Farmer (reading ad.) — "Ninety-six calendars for five cents! I wonder if they couldn't make it a hundred!"