

The Municipal World

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ST. THOMAS, OCTOBER 1, 1897.

The Revised Statutes of Ontario will be ready for delivery during the latter part of the month of December. They will contain a large number of amendments to the municipal acts, which go into force on the 1st of January. We will refer to these in the November and December issues.

The Provincial Municipal Auditor has prepared forms for special cash-books for municipal treasurers, which have received the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. The forms have been copyrighted, and arrangements made by tender for supplying the books at a most reasonable price. The use of the cash-books will be compulsory in every municipality on the 1st January, 1898.

In a recent address to the City Council, Mayor Smyth, of Chatham, said that the gross receipts of the city agency of the Bell Telephone Company were not less than \$6,000 annually. That the agreement with the company for use of streets, etc., expired on 1st March, 1898, and that notice should be given that a new agreement will not be entered into unless the company pay the city \$1,000 annually for the franchise.

The Oxford County Council have made provision by-by-law for the payment of mileage and per diem for an annual meeting of the municipal clerks of the county. This places the Oxford Association on a permanent basis, and will do much to secure uniformity of procedure and a better knowledge of the municipal laws. Under the present system of electing councils for one year only it is necessary that the clerk should have sufficient information to advise the new councillors as to the business brought before them. In no way can the councils do more to assist the clerks than by encouraging the formation of county associations.

The selectors of jurors will this year meet on Monday, the 11th day of October. The method of selecting is set forth in chapter 52, of the Revised Statutes of Ontario. The selectors should make their report in duplicate and file one copy with the Clerk of the Peace on or before the 25th of October. The other report should be kept on file in the clerk's office.

A company has been formed in England to insure municipal corporations against liabilities which may arise through any action of their servants or from other causes. Ontario municipalities could afford to offer liberal inducements to the company to do business in this Province if they would relieve them from actions for damages caused by defective highways, etc.

The audit of the books of the County Treasurer of Frontenac shows that the deficit is over \$27,000. It is doubtful if the sureties of years ago can now be held responsible for the shortages at that time, and as the present sureties have been responsible for some four years only, the county will no doubt lose sufficient to remind them that a competent auditor of the accounts at a fair salary is an economical necessity.

The settlement by municipal corporations of actions for damages caused by non-repair or dangerous condition of the highways is to be commended. Very few cases are brought on for trial in which the evidence does not show the corporation to have been negligent to some extent. In the majority of instances the plaintiff is unable to pay any costs, if defeated. Prompt action on the part of the council will generally result in a settlement at a reasonable amount. The Township Council of Darlington recently settled a \$10,000 suit for \$550.

The delegates to the recent Tax Exemption Convention were at a loss for special information and statistics relating to the important question they were supposed to consider. It is hardly to be expected that members of municipal councils whose term of office is indefinite will devote the time necessary for an exhaustive investigation of the dry question of tax exemptions. A representative of the Single Tax Association, who was prepared to address the meeting, was not allowed to do so for the reason that he was not a delegate from a municipal corporation. No one else who had made a study of the subject was present, and the delegates passed a few prefatory resolutions and adjourned. Before another similar convention is held we would suggest that some one competent to discuss the subject in an impartial manner be invited to address the members and supply all legal, theoretical and statistical information available.

The Town Council of Galt will publish 300 copies of the assessment for the present year.

The City of Toronto Health Department is claiming \$1,200 from Belleville for expenses connected with the small-pox patient whom the authorities of the latter place allowed to escape per steamer Passport. The township of Logan recently, after extended litigation, collected a somewhat similar claim from the town of Mitchell, and it would appear that the failure of the health authorities of a municipality to comply with section 84 of the Public Health Act when a case of contagious disease is in their midst makes them liable to the municipality that has to assume their responsibility.

A public meeting was held in the town hall, Ridgeway, on the 14th September to discuss the Ontario Municipal Assessment Act, when the following resolution was passed:

That all property in the Province of Ontario (in Canada) be assessed for its full value, for purposes of municipal taxation; and that any property concealed from an assessor when an assessment is made be confiscated and turned over to the municipality as owner; and any property purported to be of no value, (to escape taxation) the owner of such property must pay tax or give over the deed to the municipality in which such property is situated; and the only exemptions to the Assessment Act will be municipal, provincial and government property; and all salaries and incomes to be assessed so that the tax arising therefrom shall bear the same burden as an average income arising out of the value of ordinary farm lands; and that income and salary shall in no case be (for purposes of taxation) classed along with ordinary farm or real estate values.

—Tribune.

Dr. Chamberlain, Provincial Inspector of Prisons and Asylums, recently addressed the Welland county council in reference to the care of an inmate of the House of Industry, who had been sent to the Gaol. The doctor is an old councillor, having served fifteen years at the council board. His remarks were timely and moderate, full of pity for the afflicted, and very impressive. He said many erroneous ideas prevailed as to the management of Industrial homes. In the first place inmates should not be compelled to work; they were not dray horses, and what work they did should be voluntarily done. These homes were for the care of afflicted, the maimed, the demented, and in dealing with these people we should act as we would have them act if our positions were reversed. He would strongly advise committing the man back to the home, and, if necessary, provide extra help to look after him there. From what he could learn there was none too much help at the home with its population of forty or fifty old people. Don't try to squeeze the cost of running your home too close. Don't fear a little expense when the comfort of a fellow creature is at stake.