

The Municipal World.

Published monthly in the interests of every department of our Municipal System—the best in the world.

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Contributions of value to the persons in whose interests this journal is published, are cordially invited. Subscribers are also requested to forward items of interest from their respective localities.

Address all communications to

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With the current number commences the third volume of THE MUNICIPAL WORLD. During the past year the paper has been improved and enlarged, which fact we think is a matter of congratulation to others as well as ourselves. We need not remind our patrons that a periodical devoted exclusively to special interests always labors under disadvantages arising from the limited field for its circulation, thus, a journal published in the interests of municipal institutions, must, of course, find its subscribers almost exclusively among the few thousand municipal councillors and officers, while the general paper has the whole population for its constituency. This effects not only the subscription list, but the advertising patronage which may be an advantage to the subscribers, as it naturally secures them a select quality and style of advertisements, and saves them from the promiscuous advertising which, now-a-days, mars the columns of the general newspapers. Advertisers will, no doubt, in time appreciate the value of having a select body of readers to address. We mention these facts in order that our friends will not suppose that THE MUNICIPAL WORLD is likely to make millionaires of its publishers. We are still obliged, as in the past, to rely upon the aid and co-operation of our subscribers, this has been heartily given by many, and to these our success is very largely due. For the future it will be our endeavor to steadily improve the WORLD to make it one of the most useful and reliable papers published, and absolutely indispensable to every municipal councillor and officer in the province. Many of our subscribers assure us it is to them already indispensable. Two or three new departures are being considered, the main object will be to make the departments of the paper more practical. There are some municipalities in which we had but few subscribers last year, and we, this year, look forward to having every member and councillor on our list. We would suggest that the easiest way of accomplishing this, would be for county councils to order one copy of the paper for each officer and member of the councils of the local municipalities.

In the appointment of all officers of municipalities, no municipal council shall assume to make any appointment to office or any arrangement for the discharge of the duties thereof by tender, or to applicants at the lowest remuneration, Municipal Act, sec. 278. Experience teaches that the lowest tender is not always the most satisfactory,

and in the management of municipal affairs, councillors should first make themselves acquainted with the duties of the offices to be filled. Fix the salary at an amount sufficient to remunerate the official for the time required to carefully perform his work, and appoint the best man obtainable to the position. Good pay to good servants is true economy—the result of poor pay and poor service can always be noticed in the business, and what would otherwise have been unnecessary expenditures during the year.

The manner in which the financial business of a municipality is conducted should be subjected to close scrutiny by members of councils during this month. An account should be kept with some reliable chartered bank in the name of the municipality. It should be separated from the treasurer's private account. The system of keeping the treasurer's books, should be such that any competent business man can understand them without the assistance of the treasurer. The best system is the simplest and plainest. On no consideration should the question of the sufficiency of the treasurer's sureties be overlooked. The auditors are this year required to report thereon, and before adopting these reports, members of the councils should know that they are correct.

Members of councils who have secured election owing to political preference or who have made promises during the campaign, are apt to be influenced thereby in the selection of competent officers. This should have no effect in appointing the assessor. On the correctness of his work depends the number of appeals to the court of revision of the rolls and voters' list, the expense of which has to be paid by the municipality, and often amounts to more than the assessor received. The statistics referring to population should be correctly taken, as the legislative grants to public schools are based thereon. A careless assessor can easily lose to his municipality more than they would have had to pay to secure a first-class man for the position. The best applicant should be appointed.

No councillor should aspire to the chairmanship of a standing committee, unless he has had experience, and can devote the time necessary looking after the business. The successful management of a municipality depends very largely on these appointments. Many clerks know from experience, that a large amount of work in connection with committees, the preparation of reports, etc., is left to them. This is not as it should be, and we venture to say, that very often important matters are overlooked, or neglected where the clerk is required to perform not only his own duties, but those that properly belong to the chairman of the various committees of the council. Councillors who depend on the clerk for information, are never as well informed as those who investigate matters for themselves, and know where of they are speaking when presenting a report.

One of the arguments against the reduction of the number of county councillors, is the great advantage derived under our present system, in the training of men as legislators, or to fill other important public offices, through the medium of our county councils. It has been suggested that a good way to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the best plan of effecting the reduction, would be for each county council to appoint delegates, meet in convention and discuss the matter. This is a good idea, a convention of wardens would be representative, and discuss the question intelligently. Some years ago a successful convention of wardens was held to consider a Dominion drainage scheme, and so emphatic were the opinions expressed at that meeting, that the scheme has never been heard of since.

Our circulation is rapidly increasing throughout the Dominion. Subscriptions from Halifax, N. S. and New Westminster, B. C., were received on

the same day. The intermediate territory is our constituency and before the current year has expired we hope to be on familiar terms with municipal officers in every part of the dominion.

The immense interests involved in the administration of municipal law, require the utmost circumspection on the part of municipal councillors, their officers, and all concerned. Hence there is a growing thirst for a knowledge of municipal law, and for that kind of information as to which, at times, it is neither convenient nor expedient to consult counsel. Owing sometimes to the blunders of municipal councillors—sometimes to the ambiguity of statute law—sometimes to the blind and wilful violation of law—the courts of law are from time to time called upon to pronounce decisions, every word of which ought to be known throughout the length and breadth of the land. To meet this, the legal department in charge of a competent solicitor, will be found of great value. The series of legal decisions will embrace not only all such decisions as are now reported, but all that may be hereafter reported. In fact everything decided, necessary or useful, for the purpose of all persons engaged in the administration of municipal law. Every man is supposed to know the law, but how few are entitled to the benefit of the supposition! No councillor who does an act under an illegal by-law can plead that he intended no harm, and knew no better. It is his duty to know better; and law costs are the fruits of his ignorance, and the punishment of his neglect. THE MUNICIPAL WORLD will convey to each municipal councillor and officer that which they are required to know, at a price so moderate that many years subscription will scarcely equal the expense of one mistake.

The question of grants to high schools, is one that county councils generally consider at the January session. Under the authority of the High Schools Act, grants for this purpose can only be made equivalent to the legislative grant. Section 495, sub-sec 6, Consolidated Municipal Act, 1892, provides that county councils may pass by-laws for making provision for such high schools as may be deemed expedient. The county council of Elgin, in 1892, passed by-laws granting over \$9,000, distributed among four schools. In November last the county was served with an injunction restraining them from paying over these grants. The case will be argued before the courts in Toronto this month. The high school boards were put to some inconvenience owing to non-receipt of grants which they were depending on for payment of teachers, etc. The decision of the courts will be interesting to many in other counties where grants to high schools are considered excessive.

The autocratic power invested in members of boards of health under the Public Health Act, and more especially when an epidemic is raging in a municipality, demands that the best men should be selected for that body. The effect of an epidemic on the commercial prosperity of the country would be serious. Trade would be seriously interfered with in various and unexpected ways. It can hardly be repeated too often, that expenditure to maintain health is the truest economy. This expenditure should be controlled not as municipal funds often are, but wholly for the purpose of protecting the community from the possible ravages of infectious diseases.

The twenty-fifth annual report of inspector of the Waterloo countyhouse of industry, shows that the average number of inmates during this year was 82. The total expenditure including produce, provisions, clothing, etc., on hand, was \$8,162.01; deducting permanent improvements, produce, etc. on hand, \$2,343.56, leaves the net amount expended, \$5,368.55, making an average expense per annum for each inmate, with keeper and all other assistants added, \$59.54. The earnings of the farm for year were \$658.60, and paying inmates contributed \$95.—*Ex.*