

The Municipal World

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

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ST. THOMAS, MARCH 1, 1902.

Mr. F. R. Powell, barrister, of Parry Sound, has been appointed clerk and solicitor of that town, in the place of Mr. W. L. Haight, who recently resigned these offices.

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Mr. S. C. Londry has been appointed clerk of the township of Prince, in the district of Algoma, in the place of Mr. Robt. Liddle.

A Municipal Government Board.

In the debate on the budget, Mr. Pattullo, M. L. A., for North Oxford, referred to the large amount of municipal legislation before the House and endorsed THE WORLD'S suggestion for the formation of a local government board, in the following words:

"As a practical suggestion, I should like to see a municipal committee something after the model of the local government of Great Britain, a committee in which we might have the services of some of the permanent officials of the House, for instance, the secretary of the board of health, the secretary of the bureau of industries, the good roads commissioner, and one or two others of the officials—whose names will suggest themselves to members of the government. To a committee of that kind, with the attorney-general as chairman, we might refer all municipal bills coming before the House, and in addition to proposed amendments, all projects and proposals regarding municipalities. For instance the government has before it now a suggestion in reference to sanitation, the disposal of sewage in a number of towns and cities, a question of the utmost importance. A matter of that sort could be referred to a committee composed as I have suggested. The findings of such a committee would be of very great assistance in perfecting legislation, and to members of the House in considering the same."

Report of Assessment Commission.

The final report of the Commission, appointed in 1900 to inquire into and report upon questions of municipal assessment and taxation, in the province of Ontario, was presented to the legislature on the 19th of February. The report occupies thirty-four pages and includes, in addition, an appendix, containing special information and the draft of a new Assessment Act, which is recommended for adoption.

The principal recommendations are:

1. ASSESSMENT OF LAND.

That real property be assessed at its actual value, including mineral lands and the real property of all corporations.

That the right of use by any person of highways or other public places, in addition to the structures thereon, be assessed, at actual value.

2. PERSONAL PROPERTY.

That the assessment and taxation of personal property *other than income* be abolished in all municipalities, and that in lieu of this, the following method of taxation be adopted in cities, towns, villages and police villages:

(A) BUSINESS TAX.

(In lieu of tax on personal property and income derived from business.)

Where a person is engaged in a trade, manufacture, financial or commercial business, tax the person by reference to the rental value of the premises occupied for the purpose of his business.

(B) CALLING TAX.

(In lieu of personal property and income derived from callings up to \$4,000.)

In the case of persons having or practicing or carrying on any office or profession, tax the person by reference to the rental value of the premises occupied for the purpose of his business or occupation.

Where the income of such person is more than \$4,000, tax him first, by reference to the rental value of the premises occupied, and tax him directly upon any income in excess of \$4,000 derived from his profession or calling.

(C) HOUSE TAX.

A supplementary tax is imposed on all owners and occupiers of houses (meaning by that term, buildings used as dwelling-places) by assessing them for the rental value of the house, subject to exemptions, graded according to the population of the municipality. The following are the exemptions to be allowed in fixing the house-tax:

Where the population is 4,000 or less,

the assessed value of all houses up to \$1,000.

Where the population is more than 4,000, but not more than 10,000, the assessed value of all houses up to \$1,500.

Where the population is more than 10,000, but not more than 20,000, the assessed value of all houses up to \$2,000.

Where the population is more than 20,000, but not more than 75,000, the assessed value of all houses up to \$2,500.

Where the population is more than 75,000, the assessed value of all houses up to \$3,500.

3. INCOME TAX.

In the case of persons paying the business or calling tax and having income derived from other sources, tax them directly upon such income, without exemption. In the case of all other persons, tax them directly upon income, subject to an exemption of \$1,000.

4. ANNUAL VALUE AND RATE OF TAXATION.

For the purposes of these special taxes, the annual value is to be a sum equal to 7% of assessed value of the land occupied or used and the rate payable for the business and calling tax, is to be 7½ per cent. thereon. This rate may be increased to 10% by by-law of the municipality.

The rate for house tax is to be 5% on the annual value, which may be increased to a rate not exceeding 7½%, by by-law of the municipality.

The rate for income tax is fixed at five mills and this may be increased to seven mills by by-law of the municipality.

The special taxes referred to, including income tax, are not to be a lien upon land.

5. EXEMPTION OF MACHINERY.

One outcome of the abolition of the tax on personal property is a recommendation to exempt machinery used in any trade or manufacture. This was necessary to preserve equality as between merchants and manufacturers.

6. PROVINCIAL BOARD.

That a Provincial Board be appointed for the assessment of the lands of railway companies, income of express companies and the special franchises (which is the term applied to the right of use of highways or other public places) of other persons, together with the land used in connection with the special franchises, the tax on the amounts assessed to be paid to the provincial treasurer and to be distributed, after deducting the expenses of the board, amongst the various municipalities concerned.