

## The Ontario Municipal Association.

The first annual meeting of this association was held in the city hall, London, on the 11th and 12th days of September last. In view of the importance of the objects of the association and of the subjects to be discussed at the meeting, the attendance was not as large as might have been expected. The following cities and towns in the province sent representatives: Toronto, Hamilton, London, St. Catharines, Brockville, Guelph, Cornwall, Port Hope, Ottawa, Niagara Falls, Chatham and Paris. The president, Mayor J. V. Teetzel, Hamilton, occupied the chair, and Mr. S. H. Kent, assistant city clerk of the same place was the secretary. The following resolutions were presented to, discussed and adopted by the members of the Association:

1. That a separate ballot be provided for mayors, where the aldermen are elected by general vote. The idea is to prevent an undue number of spoiled ballots.

2. In cities and towns not adopting the local improvement system under section 682 of the Assessment Act, that notwithstanding any petition against the laying down of any sidewalk as local improvement, the council should have power to proceed with the work, if, in the opinion of the city engineer and two-thirds of the whole council such work is desirable or necessary in the public interest, and to provide for the cost thereof by special assessment on the property benefited.

3. That the provision relating to the assessment on farm lands in cities be repealed.

4. That, as a principle, real and personal property be assessed at its fair value.

5. That Assessment Act be so amended as to distribute the burden of taxation more equally, and with this end in view, the assessment of personal property should be made without regard to the debts owing on account of it.

6. That provision be made in Assessment Act that real property belonging to or in the possession of any person or incorporated company, and extending over more than one ward in any city or town, may be assessed together in any one of such wards at the option of the assessor, or that the assessment of the property may be apportioned among two or more of such wards in such manner as he may deem convenient, and that in either case the property shall be valued as a whole or as an integral part of the whole.

7. That the personal property of incorporated companies, other than chartered banks, should be liable to assessment to the same extent as that of any private individual or partnership, and that subsection 2 of section 39 of the Assessment Act should be amended accordingly.

8. That no sale of land for taxes in any city or town should be invalid by reason of there having been goods or chattels

within the county belonging to or in the possession of the person assessed for the lands or goods or chattels upon such lands, liable to seizure for the taxes, and of no levy of distress having been made upon any such goods or chattels for the payment of taxes due in respect of the lands.

9. That the board of registrars should define the polling subdivisions for elections to the Legislative Assembly, and all the voters should register with the board of registrars under the Manhood Suffrage Registration Act.

10. That the Industrial Schools Act be amended so as to compel parents or guardians to pay for the keep of children committed.

11. That councils be given power to demand the capacity of all baskets and boxes in which fruit or vegetables are sold otherwise than by weight shall be plainly marked thereon.

12. That the Act requiring candidates for alderman to file a statutory declaration of qualification be extended to all cities, towns and villages.

13. That councils have power to fix the salary of police magistrates where the municipality pays the said salary.

14. That all expenses in connection with an election of members to the Legislative Assembly be borne by the province.

15. That council be empowered, in the case of the property of any indigent person applying for sustenance and receiving aid, to allow the taxes to stand as a lien against the property.

16. That the legislature be asked to define and limit the meaning of the words "non repair of highways."

17. That the Free Library Act be amended by eliminating the rate of a half-mill, the present statutory limitation and giving discretionary power to the council to increase the grant to an amount not exceeding the present limit.

The election of officers resulted as follows: Mayor Keating, St. Catharines, President; Mayor Nelson, Guelph, First Vice-President; Mayor Payment, Ottawa, Second Vice-President; S. H. Kent, Hamilton, Secretary; J. T. Hall, Hamilton, Assistant Secretary. Executive Committee—E. G. Reynolds, Brockville; Thomas Caswell, Toronto; Mayor Slater, Niagara Falls; C. A. Kingston, London.

Mayors and ex-mayors attending the sessions were elected honorary members.

St. Catharines was chosen as the meeting place for next year's convention, to take place during the second week of September.

The council of the township of McKellar recently passed a resolution instructing their clerk to demand of the person to whom it has been paid, \$15 for repairs to a cemetery fence, threatening suit for recovery if not paid by the 17th September last. If the dispute results in a lawsuit, the decision will be awaited with considerable interest.

As to the advisability of placing and keeping the views of the Ontario Municipal Association before the recently-appointed Assessment Commission, Permanent Auditor W. H. Cluff, of Ottawa, in the course of an exhaustive account of the proceeding of the last meeting of the association, in the *Ottawa Journal*, writes as follows:

Among the many subjects discussed, the question of the most effective way of placing the views of the association on the subject of the proposed amendments to the Assessment Act, before the Commission appointed by the Ontario government, was considered of very great importance. It was felt that in regard to what is generally known as the "scrap-iron" assessment, there was no doubt but that the different electrical and other companies would combine and be continuously represented by the best legal and expert talent to be obtained in Ontario, and that if the commission follows the usual course of such bodies and holds meetings in different cities, it was very important that some one or more legal gentlemen should in the interest of the rest of the ratepayers, keep constantly in touch with the proceedings by attending all the sessions of the commission and thus be able to materially assist and advise with the local city solicitor wherever the session may be held.

By thus keeping tabs as to the rulings, scope of evidence, cross-examination, necessary for rebuttal evidence, etc., etc., the work would be more effectively performed than if each city was left to its own resources for means of presenting its case and the meeting formulated a scheme by which it is to be hoped that the proceedings will be carefully followed and every effort made to see that such amendments as may be recommended will as far as possible guard the interests of the municipalities.

The doctrine that a city does not owe to a bicycle rider any greater or other duty in respect to the condition of its sidewalks than it owes to pedestrians has been reasserted by Presiding Justice Adams, of the Appellate Division of the Fourth Department, in the recently reported case of Minnie Morrison against the city of Syracuse. It seems that the right to ride a wheel on the sidewalks of some streets in Syracuse may be acquired by the payment of a small registration fee. The plaintiff, while in the enjoyment of this right, was thrown from her wheel and her arm was broken. The accident was caused by a depression of four inches in the middle of a plank sidewalk four feet wide. There was a verdict of \$500 against the city, which the Appellate Division has set aside, because it is "firmly of the opinion that the plaintiff, in the circumstances of the case, would have escaped injury if she had been on foot."