

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, DECEMBER 1, 1896.

The first meetings of the municipal councils for 1897, will be held on the second Monday in January, and not the third Monday as formerly. County councils will meet on the fourth Tuesday in January as usual.

In answering part three of question 301, in the November issue we overlooked section five of the County Councils Act. Members of the new county councils are required to be residents of the division for which they are elected.

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD revised catalogue and price list of municipal supplies has been forwarded in souvenir form, to the clerk of every municipality in the Province. We will be pleased to hear from any clerk who may not have received his catalogue.

One of the objects of the County Council Act is to do away with *log-rolling* and narrow sectional feeling. As representatives of districts for two years, county councillors will be independent, and a better administration of county affairs should result.

The Municipal Amendment Act, 1896, requires deputy-returning officers in cities and towns to deliver the ballot-box and packets to the returning officer immediately after having completed their duties at the polling place, and under no circumstances is a deputy-returning officer to take the ballot-box or packets, or allow the same to be taken to his home, or house, or office, or place of business, or to any house or place whatsoever other than the office of the clerk of the municipality, who is required to remain at his office on the evening of polling-day, until the said boxes have been returned to him. Officers violating the provisions of this act are liable to a penalty of \$400.

Throughout all the good roads agitation which has taken place during the past year no important legislation on the subject has been suggested the prevailing opinion, being that it is only necessary to arouse public sentiment, with a view to expending the money we already have in an intelligent manner.

During the past year we have, through the Question Drawer, answered 580 questions submitted by 339 correspondents. The index published with this issue is the best evidence of the value of THE MUNICIPAL WORLD. We will be pleased to hear from any subscriber who is not sufficiently satisfied, to renew his subscription, or recommend the WORLD to his successor in office.

The council of the town of North Toronto recently amalgamated the offices of clerk and treasurer and appointed one man to both. It would be interesting to know if the declaration of office required under section 271 of the Municipal Act, to be made before assuming each office has been changed to suit the views of the council. Under ordinary circumstances the offices cannot be held by the same person.

A by-law passed by the city of Ottawa, regulating the width of tires to be used on vehicles, is now being enforced. The council of the city of Toronto and County of York have recently passed similar by-laws. In view of the good that would result from the use of wide tires, we think the government should consider further legislation with a view to securing uniformity in all by-laws passed for this purpose. Manufacturers could then arrange to supply wagons with standard tires, and in a few years the present objection of compelling all to go to the expense of new wheels for their vehicles would be removed, and compulsory legislation could be considered.

Clerks should be particular at the coming municipal elections and provide proper poll-books and directions to voters where county council elections are to be held. The County Councils Act does not specify the forms required to be supplied by county clerks with the ballots. For the purpose of securing uniformity and correctness, we prepared a full set of County Council Act forms. These will be supplied by the thirty county clerks from whom we have already received orders, and include a packet for each nominating officer, municipal clerk, and deputy-returning officer. When county orders were filled, we notified the clerks of the local municipalities, and in these counties clerks will require only the usual election supplies, with poll-books and directions to voters, amended in accordance with the County Councils Act.

The County Councils Act not only reduces the number of members of the councils and the expenses connected therewith, but provides for a more equitable representation of the taxpayers. Under the old Act the reeve of a village paying a very small county rate had a vote in the council, while some of the larger townships, represented by a reeve and deputies, with at most five votes, paid in county rates more than 100 villages. To overcome this inequality the division of the counties into districts was necessary.

The attention of all councils is directed to the following amendment to section 284 of the Municipal Act passed at last session by adding at the end thereof the following words: "But no council of any local municipality shall, after the 31st day of December in the year for which the members were elected, pass any by-law or resolution for the payment of money, or which involves, directly or indirectly, the payment of money; nor shall they enter into any contract or obligation on the part of the municipality; nor appoint to or dismiss from office any officer under the control of the council, or do any other corporate act after said date, except in case of extreme urgency. But the council may do any necessary business before the 31st day of December, which may, having regard to the circumstances, be done at such time, and which, by this act, they are now authorized to do at their last meeting."

A. W. Campbell, Provincial Road Commissioner, has, during the past summer, at the request of municipal councils, examined the roads and streets in about fifty municipalities, principally townships. His plan is to go with the councils over the roads, and discuss the points of road-making on the ground, examine the gravel and the stone pits, and discuss the quality of the material, how it should be utilized, and any other points in connection with roads which the council are interested in. Mr. Campbell reports that a great interest is being taken in the question of road improvement, and progressive councils are anxious to get all possible information on the subject in order that their expenditure will be more profitable. Generally the council arranges for a public meeting at a central point in the township, so that the pathmasters and ratepayers have an opportunity of hearing the question discussed. These meetings are well attended, and made more interesting by being open for discussion. A reform of this kind is too frequently met with vigorous criticism, but Mr. Campbell states that the people evidently come, not to oppose, but for information, and frequently some splendid points are raised by councillors and pathmasters who have taken an interest in practical roadmaking. People are becoming aroused to the necessity of good roads, and their economic construction and wish to bring them about as quickly as possible with the means at hand.