

Municipal Officers of Ontario.

Clerk Township of Colchester South.

Mr. Drummond was born in Crieff, Perthshire, Scotland, in 1827. In his infancy he moved with his family to Dunkeld, in the schools of which he received his education. On leaving school he spent six years in the office of an attorney or land agent, where he obtained a sound knowledge of business. He was goods clerk on the Scottish Central Railway for one year, and then emigrated to New York. After remaining nine months in the United States he came to Windsor and thence to the vicinity of Amherstburg, where he engaged in farming. Through the kindly influence of a gentleman, whose attention Mr. Drummond had attracted, and who appreciated his abilities, the subject of this sketch was enabled to qualify as a school teacher. This profession he followed for 38 years with marked success. He was appointed Clerk of Colchester in 1866 and remained in office until the division of the township in 1880. He was reappointed in 1888 and has held the office ever since. Mr. Drummond is also a Justice of the Peace, and enjoys in an eminent degree the confidence and respect of the community. We are indebted to the Amherstburg "Echo" for the facts enabling us to compile the above brief biographical sketch and for the privilege of publishing therewith Mr. Drummond's portrait.

Oxford Clerks' and Treasurers' Annual Meeting.

The eleventh annual meeting of the municipal clerks and treasurers in the County of Oxford, was held in the court house at Woodstock on Tuesday, Oct. 21. There were nineteen clerks and treasurers present, only three being absent. The meeting was one of the most interesting and useful that has been held by the association. The president in his opening address remarked that there had not been any changes in the membership of the association during the past year, and he was under the impression that generally the appointment to the office of clerk or treasurer was coming to be regarded as something of a permanent character and municipalities were getting better service from these officers because of that being the case.

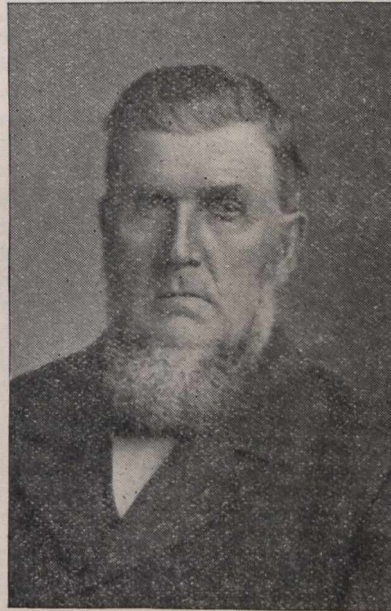
Mr. F. G. Jackson read a paper on the subject of communications received by clerks, in which he referred to the work and time clerks are asked to give to getting information and answering letters for every sort of loan company, commercial agency and others, in most cases without fee or reward. He suggested that such

communications be consigned to the waste basket.

In the discussion which followed the reading of this paper some amusing incidents in the experience of the various clerks were related on the lines suggested by the paper.

The question of whether it is necessary that municipal officers who are reappointed to office should again take the declaration of office was brought up, and the conclusion reached was that in every such case the reappointed officer should again take the declaration.

In view of the frequent outbreaks of small-pox throughout the province those clerks who had experience in such matters



MR. JOSEPH DRUMMOND.

were asked to explain their methods of dealing with such cases in their capacity of secretary of the board of health. And such other information as might be of use to local boards of health in dealing with epidemics of contagious disease. In this connection the carelessness of medical men in failing to report cases of contagious disease was a general complaint, and also their omission to report births.

Mr. W. G. Francis of West Oxford read a very interesting paper upon the duties of a municipal clerk to the council and the ratepayers of his municipality. It was ordered that a copy of this paper be sent to the provincial secretary and also to the MUNICIPAL WORLD for publication.

Mr. Jas. Anderson of East Zorra, who has had a large experience in the operation of the Ditches and Watercourses Act and has made a close study of its provisions,

gave a very helpful and interesting address upon that subject.

The election of officers resulted in Mr. E. Cody of Embro being chosen president and Wm. Fairley of Norwich was re-elected secretary.

A Board of County Judges composed of Judges Bell, of Chatham, McWatt, of Sarnia, and Horne, of Windsor, met in the latter's chamber on a recent date and handed down their decision in the appeals of the United Gas & Oil Co., against their assessment in various townships in the County of Essex. In each case there was a considerable reduction the three judges being unanimous that the new law should be applied in this situation. It is the first time in Canadian legal history that such an issue has arisen. The judges took into consideration the fact that there had been a great falling off in the revenue of the company, and the evidence of the appellants showed that there was practically no profit in the business. The gas pipes were therefore not worth more than their actual cash value. It was upon this basis that the judges made the reductions in the assessments.

The question of good roads is evidently a live one in Nicaragua, Central America. The President of that Republic has created a fund for the construction and repair of public roads. A direct personal tax on all male citizens over the age of eighteen and on foreigners living in the country, with the exception of those of the military service, students and men over sixty years of age, will supply the funds. The tax is graduated, however, into five classes. Day laborers are not to pay in money, but will give two day's labor each year. Clerks and artisans working in establishments not their own will be taxed forty cents. If they own their establishments the tax will be double the other amount. Travelling agents and persons owning property in the city must pay \$2.01 annually, and farmers and planters owning their land, \$4.03. This proposed fund and the purpose for which it has been instituted, have given great satisfaction, for the public highways have always been in bad condition.

A great many live to themselves, and take no part in municipal reform movements, because it is too much trouble. Until every man who has a vote takes an interest in civic government and recognizes his responsibility, there will not be much chance of advancement. The desire for a pure government must be general, and until this is the case, and every man and woman is enough in earnest in his or her desire for a proper administration of affairs to come out and work and vote, the problem of good city or state government will remain unsolved.