

The Municipal World

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THE WORLD form catalogue for 1908 will be distributed this month.

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In ordering election supplies do not wait until after the date fixed for resignation of candidates. A delay in the mails, a mistake on the part of an express agent, a railway accident, have all been the cause of many anxious hours on the part of some clerks who made no allowance for the delays that are occurring every day.

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It is probably unnecessary to say that in anticipation of more elections than usual, we have put up a large stock of election supplies, all of which is in accordance with the present law. This is now ready for immediate delivery.

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The information bureau will, during December, be available at all times to answer questions by mail, telegraph or telephone. No question is too small, no question is too large for our staff, provided it pertains to municipal matters.

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The Halton county council will petition for an increase of Legislative grants for the construction of county roads under The Highways Improvement Act. Other county councils are requested to co-operate in having the Government grant raised from one third to one half.

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Ratepayers should be as free in their praise of competent officials as they are to condemn those who by their actions show that they are unfit to be trusted in the administration of municipal affairs.

Owing to the many important questions connected with the industrial development of Ontario municipalities, we believe there will be more competition for municipal office than formerly in the cities, towns and villages at the coming elections. The office of mayor, or reeve, is a position of importance, dignity and usefulness, and is one to which any public spirited citizen may honorably aspire.

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In a great many towns and cities the question of Niagara power distribution is being considered. In a nutshell, the price to the consumer must be lower than, or as low, as power required can be produced by any other means. It must compensate the municipality for the amount contracted for, the charges for distribution plant, and share of cost of government transmission line. The municipalities will, in most cases, be the largest users for street lighting, waterworks pumping, etc. A great deal is said about the peak load. What is wanted is a fixed price for the power used. This should be regulated by meter with a liberal discount to large users. The fixed price should be determined wholly by present conditions. A municipality should not load itself with a contract for power that it cannot use or sell. The fixed price to consumers would then be loaded with additional taxation. The proper time to have a definite understanding is before rather than after burdens have been assumed.

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The Elgin county council at its last session in considering a notice from the Hamilton Radial Electric Railway Company of proposed application for charter through the county decided to request their representatives in the House of Commons to oppose the granting of a charter that interferes in any way with the full control of highways by municipal corporations, or that does not provide for the application of the Provincial Drainage Laws when the drainage of lands through or along the right of way of the said company is required. This action of the council is in the right direction and should be followed by all councils if they desire to safeguard their interests against encroachments by electric railway corporations applying for charters under the Dominion laws.

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A most necessary reform in our municipal law is one requiring a municipality owning and operating a public utility to charge sufficient to pay running expenses and cost of installation. This is the law in Illinois. When rates are too low they should be raised, and when too high they should be lowered. The users of water, light and power in many a municipality do not pay a rate equal to the cost. The result is that annual deficits increase the general taxes. With a law of this kind it would be necessary to keep public utility accounts and management separate. The great success of municipal undertakings and their lauded surpluses is owing wholly to two causes—the users are paying too much, or the accounts are not properly kept.