

Annual meeting of the British W.M.F.
W.M.F. ADDRESS.
of the Municipal Council of
Montreal, January 26, 1848.

Tuesday, Feb. 1, 1848.

At this Session much of the principal business of the District will come under your consideration, all affecting and marking the District Rates and School Rates for the present year.

The great amount of the District Rates for the past year, at one penny, settling in the County, shown upon the Books of the Auditor General, is intended to be paid by the amount of a penny in the pound for the benefit of the Lunatic Asylum, from which has been taken the sum of Assessors and Collectors, and losses by Abeyances, &c., in the several Townships, £280, being one-sixth or about sixteen and half per cent, on the total sum, leaving the money actually paid into the Treasurer's hands, £2874, of which take one-eighth of a penny in the pound, paid for the support of the Lunatic Asylum, £197, and leaving the use of the District Rates. One-half of said sum will be required for defraying the current expenses of the Administration of Justice, but as the whole of the money so advanced, will in this year be returned by the Government into the District Treasury, the sum shown, £1777, will still remain for District purposes, to be expended in the necessary repair of the Public Buildings, payment of the District Officers, and repairing Roads and Bridges.

There will also, as shown by the Treasurer's Accounts, be a sum in the 21st December, £1314 less £1. Wild Land Taxes, to be expended on the Roads in the Township, where the Wild Lands are situated.

Last year the sum of £970 was voted by the

Council, out of the surplus District Rates,

for the repairs of Roads in the several Townships.

This sum being placed at the disposal of the District Councillors in the different Townships,

has no doubt been laid out to the best possible advantage of the public; but as the granting the money by the Council, and its expenditure by the Councillors, is not based upon any fixed principle, the mode of expending the money cannot be expected to continue long to give general satisfaction.

This subject, the value of the Statute Labor, and the present method of performing the same strongly demand, the early attention of the Council in framing and passing a By-Law applicable to the magnitude of the object.

The Statute Labor of this District amounts to between twenty and thirty thousand days work.

Without going into further particulars, we will estimate it at 24,000 days at £1 per day, or £24,000. Do we actually get 24,000 days work?

Is every settled Township, and indeed in parts of all, the levying of Statute Labor must continue as at present, with some more general method of insuring its being duly performed in the several Road Divisions? In this, the responsibility and popular part of others, a more certain system should be immediately adopted, and where communication is not desired by the people, the ditching, the road, and bridge work, and the dredging, &c., the case may be, estimated at one per rod, and the days' work reckoned according to such valuation, under the superintendence of a Township Surveyor or some other authorized person, to insure that the owners of Highways have given proper attention to their duty.

It is evident that a great desire is springing up amongst the inhabitants throughout the District, that the Roads shall undergo immediate improvement, and that the sum money going to the District Rates, or a like Road Tax, and the like, that can be spared, be appropriated, the difficulty will arise in devising a plan for expending money on the Roads to the greatest advantage and satisfaction of the public.

Trustees of Highways, in each Township, should have the sole management and control of the Roads and Bridges. One or more for each Concession or Public Road, to be chosen at the Township Meeting, heretofore been strongly recommended, and is supposed would be the best mode of carrying out the application of the Road Work and Road Management, presenting the impossibility of comprehend from any quarter, the Board of Trustees, to make an Annual Report on the State of the Roads and Bridges, in their respective Townships, and an estimate of Road Money absolutely required, in addition to the Statute Labor, for keeping the same in repair—the said Reports to be handed to the Councillors of the Township, and to be referred to the next meeting of the District Council for approval. Of course this plan cannot be adopted without the authority of the Legislature, but an application to Parliament, would no doubt, get it introduced into any Act about to be made for regulating local affairs.

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Last Session the Council had a discussion relating to accounts from Township officers being audited by the District Auditors, in conformity with the Statute; and that the Overseers of Highways shall render their accounts to the District Clerks, agreeably to the Act 1st Vic. Cap. 21. Upon the authority of that discussion, the Warden addressed a Circular to the several Township Clerks in the month of December, which Circular will be read to the Council, for the purpose of again calling their attention to the necessity of a full audit, and the examination and guidance of all Township officers.

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J. B. MARKS,
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