

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

To-day, throughout the Ovens and Murray Districts, the ratepayers are called upon to elect representatives at the various local council boards, in the place of those whose term of office has expired by effluxion of time, and it is somewhat surprising to note that, in the majority of instances, there will be no contest. This must be accounted for in one or two ways, either that the electors are thoroughly satisfied with the men they have got, or that they do not take any interest in local government. To speak straightforwardly, we believe the latter reason to be the true one. Time was when the municipal elections caused almost as great interest and excitement as did those for Parliament—when men readily coveted the honor of obtaining a seat, and when the ratepayers were canvassed right and left, and looked forward with a feverish eagerness to the polling day—when to secure a seat a candidate had to spare neither time nor trouble, and when the people personally interested themselves in the contest. Times seem to have died out, and the apathy displayed by the majority, in borough and shire elections, is certainly curious, if nothing more. Instead of, as of yore, having plenty of men wherefrom to choose, the great difficulty, now-a-days, is to induce capable and efficient men to come forward. There is a strange, unaccountable shrinking on the part of men, who, by position, intelligence and experience, are fitted for the position, to enter public life. Some dread defeat, whilst others are too much wrapped up in their own affairs to devote any of their time to the public. At any rate, be the reason what it may, candidates for municipal honors are at a

candidates for municipal honors are at a discount, and the present elections have been about the duldest we ever knew. In the North-eastern district there are ten municipal corporations—two boroughs, and ten shires; and this month there are 35 vacancies, owing partly to retirements by effluxion of time, and partly to extraordinary vacancies. In by far the majority of instances, either the retiring councillors have been re-elected, or some fresh candidate for municipal honors has enjoyed the luxury (as it is popularly called) of a walk over. We doubt if this is a good augury and rather think that the want of candidates is an unhealthy sign of the times. Competition, it is said, is the soul of trade, and when competition is slack, it is an almost certain sign that business and public spirit are languishing, and that enterprise lives only in name. To glance at the different municipalities: in the shires of Chiltern, Bright, Yackandandah, North Ovens, Oxley, and Rutherglen, and the Borough of Rutherglen; the 22 vacant seats have been filled without any contest taking place, and whilst in the main we have but little fault to find with those who have filled up the breaches, and regard most of them as men well fitted to fill the positions they occupy, we cannot but feel some regret that they have been allowed to get in unopposed. Like the traditional Irishman, ratepayers in Victoria dearly love a fight, and pity is that this year, when there is so much to be done by our local corporations, who will have withdrawn from them, the greater part of the Government subsidy—so few men of position and capacity are to be found, willing to devote some little of their energies to the advancement of the district. In the municipalities above enumerated, there are but

municipalities above enumerated, there are but few changes; Chiltern, Yackandandah, and Oxley shires, and Rutherglen borough still adhering to their old loves, and, it must be confessed, that in these particular instances, the men re-elected are eminently fitted for the work they have undertaken, and our local councils can ill-afford to lose the services of such men as ROBERT WOOD, JNO. BRYSON, and W. GRAY, of Oxley; N. CHENHALL, of Chiltern; J. BURROWS, of Yackandandah; and some few others who for years past have proved themselves men of honest purpose, strict integrity and undoubted intelligence. In the other shires, where whilst changes have been made there has been no contest, generally speaking the boards will be the gainers. In Rutherglen Shire Mr JAMES SCOTT, one of the oldest identities in the district, and a gentleman who has for a long time occupied positions of trust and responsibility, has again returned to public life in the place of Mr F. W. BROWNE, a young councillor who gracefully retired. Bright Shire has returned the veteran Mr HOOPER once more; whilst the other two vacant seats have been filled by the election of Messrs PASCOE and A. D. WESTON. Of the former we know but little; whilst, judging from his published writings, his noted fondness for agitation, and the temper

shown in his electoral address, it is extremely doubtful if the latter will be anything of an acquisition. The North Ovens Shire has seen three changes, two of them decidedly for the better. In only five municipalities are there any contests — viz, Beechworth, Towong, Wodonga, and Benalla Shires, and Wangaratta Borough, and in each of these the tide of battle is extremely uncertain. In the Borough Riding of Beechworth

In the Borough Riding of Beechworth three candidates have been nominated for the three vacant seats — Messrs F. BROWN, R. STRUGNELL, and D. DUNLOP. The first named has now served the ratepayers, with but few intermissions, for the last twenty years, and without doubt, has sometimes devoted a very large portion of his time and talents to the interests of his fellow townsmen, and the advancement of the district. We are far from regarding Mr BROWN as a model public man, as of late years he has by no means fulfilled the expectations raised of his legislative ability some time past, but, at the same time, the ratepayers will be doing a graceful act of courtesy, and at the same time, be consulting their own interests, if they re-elect him. It is only his intention to sit for another twelve-months, and we know of no man in the town more fitted to receive the distinguished guests who will visit Tadmor on the occasion of the opening of the Beechworth Branch Railway. Of the other candidate — Mr STRUGNELL has, for three years, sat as a member of the Shire Riding, and though not remarkable for any particular brilliance, is a man of sound common sense — a rare commodity, by the way, nowadays — and, we believe, has always acted conscientiously and for the best. The third aspirant to municipal honors, Mr DAVID DUNLOP, is one of the oldest residents on Spring Creek, and a well known and long standing. He is shrewd, business like and intelligent, though what his qualifications are for the office in which we know not. The fight is likely to be a very keen one, as there is a section of the community, who feel aggrieved at what they are pleased to call Mr STRUGNELL's desertion of his old constituency. Still we believe Messrs

continuity. Still we believe Messrs BROWN and STROGNELL will be elected. In the South Riding, Mr JOHN MATHIESON, of Stanley, will be chosen without a doubt, and will also be a decided acquisition to the Council; and as far as our opinion goes, we cannot see why the ratepayers should reject Mr JOHN WILSON of Wodonga, who in the past has done his duty well. He is a ^{man} rather of actions than of words, and has by no means proved himself deficient in senatorial ability. The other candidate, Mr WILLIAM FISHER, is a farmer hailing from Bowman's Forest. His published address appears in another column, and as he is yet untried, and but little is known as to his fitness or otherwise, we would commend its perusal to our readers as the best test of his claims to a seat at the council table. In Wodonga, we trust the electors will show their emphatic disapprobation of the factious opposition which has been got up purely for party purposes, by leaving Mr HUMPHREYS out in the cold, and re-electing Messrs MAHER and STREET, who have only sat three months, and are entitled to a fair trial. Of the Towong candidates we know little. In Renalla, where local politics always run high, as usual there is a contest in each riding, and without staying to consider the merits of the rival candidates, we would recommend the ratepayers, if they wish the best men to represent them, to support Messrs W. BAGNALL for the North Riding, SAMUEL CLARKE for the South West Riding, and FRANCIS McDONNELL for the South East Riding. Wangaratta, as usual, has no lack of candidates—there being six aspirants for the three vacant seats, four of whom are entirely new to public life; the old councillors being Messrs A. TONE, and JOHN JOHNSTON, about whose merits

and JOHN JOHNSTON, about whose merits we have already expressed a decided opinion. The former, if the ratepayers act justly, should head the poll, as for many years he has faithfully worked for the town and done much to forward its advancement, whilst the latter for many years has served himself, and his services can be dispensed with without loss.

Four new men have come forward—Messrs JOHN MOORE, a very old inhabitant on the banks of the Ovens, but one who has hitherto held aloof from politics, local or otherwise; MICHAEL MALONY, brewer, a pushing man of business; ANDREW JONES, bluff, honest and outspoken; and MARK P. WHITTY, a sensible, intelligent young man, who, we believe, would worthily fill the position; in fact, we expect to see Messrs TONE, WHITTY, and MOORE elected; the first because of his past services and undoubted worth; the second as a vigorous, energetic, and withal a business-like representative of the coming race, and the third on account of his long connection with the town. It is a pity more interest generally is not being taken in these elections, and we can only hope that in the future more men of position, honesty of purpose, education and intelligence, the four great *desiderata* for public life will be induced to come forward and give their valuable services to advance the interests of the districts they have made their homes.

WANGARATTA HOSPITAL.—The committee of this institution met yesterday, there being a full attendance. Drs Hutchinson and Miller accepted the positions of honorary medical officers to the institution, and the tender of Mr R. Warren, for printing and advertising the report, subscribers' lists and balance sheet, was accepted. The House Committee's report stated that Mr W. Nicholls, from the Dunnolly Hospital, had taken possession as

Dunnolly Hospital, had taken possession as head wardman. The sum of £32 6s 7d was passed for payment.