

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

At the time of confederation the municipal system had been very slightly developed. But in 1877 an act providing for compulsory municipal incorporation was put in force, and, with its amendments, is substantially in force at the present time. It provides that county councils be constituted as bodies corporate, having two councillors elected yearly from each parish in the county. The councils elect from among their members a presiding officer who is styled the warden and who holds office until the next election of councillors. Councils may themselves, however, provide by by-law for their election biennially, a provision which does not apply to the municipality of the city and county of St. John. The city of St. John, which in 1785 was known as "Parr Town", received a charter in that year through Lieutenant-Governor Carleton, a brother of the famous soldier, Sir Guy Carleton (afterwards Lord Dorchester). The qualifications of voters for the councils are very liberal. Every male, or female person, being a widow or unmarried, of the age of 21 years or over, being a British subject, a ratepayer of the parish having an income or personal property or both combined to the amount of one hundred dollars, is entitled to vote. A resident of the parish having real property of any value, or, if not a resident, having real property to the value of one hundred dollars, is also entitled to vote. The dates and time of meeting of the councils are fixed by statute and differ in different municipalities. In addition to a warden each elects a secretary, a treasurer (the two offices may be combined in one person) and an auditor, who may not be a councillor nor hold any office under the council. The councils also appoint overseers of the poor, constables, commissioners of highways, collectors of rates and other parish and county officials as may be necessary. Councillors under some circumstances also act as revisers of voters' lists. The warden is required to publish each year a full and detailed financial statement of the affairs of the municipality which shall be signed by the auditor and himself.

The financial condition of the county municipalities of the province is excellent. From the latest available returns it is found that ten counties out of fifteen (not including the city and county of St. John, the richest in the province) have an assessable valuation of real and personal property of over thirty million dollars, with insignificant liabilities. The other municipalities would probably represent as favourable a condition if returns were available. The city of St. John, the commercial capital of the province, with a population of about 58,000, was the first Canadian city to adopt government by commission. Its valuation for assessment purposes in 1915 was \$36,187,000 and its liabilities were less than \$5,000,000. The city of Fredericton, the capital of the province, with a population of 8,000, has a valuation of real and personal property for assessment of \$5,000,000 with an outstanding indebtedness of \$486,000.