

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

Growth of Municipal Institutions. Manitoba.—The stages in the growth of municipal institutions for the province of Manitoba are marked by the legislation of the years 1871, 1873, 1882 and 1902. In 1871 the County Assessment Act and the Parish Assessment Act made provision for dealing with local finance. The former concerned the tax roll of the province; the latter, purely local improvements and assessments for the parishes within each of the five counties. An Act of 1873 provided for the erection of a local municipality in districts containing not less than 30 freeholders. In 1883 the province was divided into 26 counties and three judicial districts. This Act copied closely the Ontario Act of 1849. In the working out of the Act it was found to be in many particulars unsuited to prairie conditions. By the General Municipal Act of 1902 every city, town, village and rural municipality became a body corporate. Over all is the general supervision of a Department of Municipal Affairs.

Northwest Territories (Saskatchewan and Alberta).—As early as 1884 we find among the Ordinances of the Northwest Territories one "respecting Municipalities." This contained provisions for the establishment of certain rural municipalities and the municipalities of the town of Regina, the town of Moosejaw, etc. Only a limited number of rural municipalities found practical existence under this Ordinance, which was planned on principles similar to those of the older provinces. In 1896 legislation was passed deorganizing certain of the rural municipalities where the system proved unpopular. In 1897 the Legislature of the Territories passed a Statute Labour Ordinance. The year following produced the Local Improvement Ordinance which, with its amendments, was the law observed until 1904. The average area of each local improvement district was one township. In 1903 a new Local Improvement Bill deorganized all one-township local improvement districts and abolished the provision for statute labour. The new Bill provided for local improvement districts with an area of four townships, each of which was a division electing a council annually. The four thus secured formed a Council Board. In 1904 the Legislature made financial provision for inquiry into municipal organizations in general in order to provide a safe, economical system of rural municipalities and to improve the ordinance under which cities, towns and villages were administered. The breaking up of the Territories in 1905 into the present provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan caused delays; but municipal commissions with urban and rural sections were appointed. As a result of the experience gathered during territorial days and later, and of the findings of these Commissions, Local Improvement Acts were amended, Rural Municipality, Town and Village Acts were passed in both provinces, and a City Act was passed in the province of Saskatchewan.