

The purpose of these sections was to preserve to a religious minority in any province the same privileges and rights in regard to education which it had at the date of Confederation, but the provincial legislatures were not debarred from legislating on the subject of separate schools provided they did not thereby prejudicially affect privileges enjoyed before Confederation by such schools in the province.

These powers, given to the four original provinces in Confederation, have, with some slight changes, been retained ever since and the more recently admitted provinces have assumed the same rights and responsibilities on their inclusion as units in the federation as were previously enjoyed by the older members.

I.—NOVA SCOTIA.¹

The province of Nova Scotia has made no important changes in its constitution since it became one of the original members of Confederation in 1867. In that year the Legislative Council consisted of 36 members and the Legislative Assembly of 55 members. The number of members of the Council is now 21 and of the Assembly 43. Legislative councillors are appointed for life, and the members of the Assembly are elected for four years, the maximum duration of its existence. The constitutional relations of the Ministry to the Assembly are based on the principles of responsible government by which it retains office only so long as it is supported by a majority in the Legislative Assembly. The local Ministry or Cabinet, styled the Executive Council, consists of the Prime Minister and President of the Council, the Provincial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Minister of Works and Mines and the Minister of Highways. These are salaried officials; six other members have office without salaries. Agriculture, immigration and education are under the control and management of the government through certain boards and councils, each with its secretary and staff of officials.

Municipal Institutions.—Previous to Confederation, the local government of counties and townships was confided to the magistracy, which was an appointed body, holding commissions for life and not responsible in any way to the electorate. In the early years of its history this body did much useful and important public service, yet abuses here and there existed on account of the irresponsible nature of their tenure of office, which rendered reform and public accountability very difficult to obtain. Public opinion, however, and the controlling influence of the legislatures operating steadily upon even irresponsible bodies of life-appointed magistrates made the institution as it existed fairly acceptable to the people generally. In 1875, the incorporation of the counties and certain townships, hitherto an optional action, was made compulsory, twenty-four municipalities being then established. In 1895, the Towns Incorporation Act was passed, making the incorporation of towns throughout the province optional. In 1921 there were 41 incorporated towns.

The county councils consist of councillors elected by the ratepayers every three years. The warden or presiding officer is chosen by the council and holds office until the next election of councillors. The mayors of towns are elected by the ratepayers and hold office for one year. Halifax, the capital of the province, has a special charter, the mayor being elected annually and the eighteen aldermen for three years, six retiring each year but being eligible for re-election.

¹This article, as well as those on the government of the other Maritime Provinces, is adapted from the article by the late Thomas Barnard Flint, D.C.L., Clerk of the House of Commons, in the *Canada Year Book*, 1915.