

scheme they exercise, in addition to their judicial function, a general supervision over government activities in their district* and are a channel of communication between the government and the inhabitants.

The Court of Labrador is in practice obsolete.

Since 1832 the law administered in Newfoundland has included the United Kingdom statute law up to 1832, together with subsequent local statutes and United Kingdom statutes extending to Newfoundland.† The common law was that of the United Kingdom. The general criminal law of the United Kingdom was adopted by statute subject to any variations made by local enactments.

The system of 1916 with the new magistracy comprised the system of administration of justice with which Newfoundland entered into Confederation.

Municipal and Local Government.—Municipal and local government has been slow to develop in Newfoundland. The communities are small and scattered. Cash incomes have until recently been low. The people have been unaccustomed and indeed opposed to direct taxation. Few municipalities impose property taxes. In the past the provision and control of local services has, over wide areas, fallen to the central government, which derived its chief revenues from indirect taxes.

Up to 1942, St. John's was the only incorporated municipality among the urban areas. Its city council was constituted in 1888. Municipal elections are held every four years.

In 1933 the Local Government Act was enacted. It was not until 1942 that the first two municipalities outside St. John's came into being. By July, 1949, there were 21 incorporated municipalities, apart from St. John's, having populations between 1,000 and 2,000. The total population possessing municipal government in 1948 was about 78,500; of these 43,000 were in St. John's. Corner Brook and Grand Falls are administered by the pulp and paper companies situated there, and Buchans by the mining company.

Newfoundland has had no organized units of local government comparable to townships or counties such as exist in the other Eastern Provinces for the administration of welfare, health, road and education services, judicial administration, enforcement of law and registrations. In Newfoundland local school boards have no authority to impose taxes; they are simply appointed administrative boards. Nevertheless there exists a system of elective road boards for the encouragement of local initiative in road building and maintenance. The administrative function of the stipendiary magistrates has already been mentioned.

It is to be expected that municipal and local government institutions will gradually increase. The main limiting factors will probably be the small size of most of the settlements and their wide distribution along about 6,000 miles of sea-coast, together with the low real-property values characteristic of fishing and non-industrial communities.

* Compare the functions assigned to justices of the peace by the Naval Governors.

† Newfoundland did not adopt the provisions of the Statute of Westminster that would have enabled its legislature to repeal such statutes, or to have them extended in future only by its request and consent.