

Manitoba

Inquiry into livestock marketing in Manitoba, Dr. A.W. Wood, October 9, 1974

Commission to review the ward boundaries and community boundaries of the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Peter Taraska, January 18, 1974.

British Columbia

To examine the organization and operation of Jericho Hill School and, if appropriate, to suggest alternate systems of management, June 18, 1974.

3.5 Local government

Local government in Canada comprises all government entities created by the provinces and territories to provide services that can be more effectively discharged through control at the local level. Broadly speaking, local government services are identified in terms of nine main functions: protection, transportation, environmental health, public health, welfare, environmental development, recreation, community services and education. In addition local government, through the medium of government enterprises, may operate such facilities as public transit and the supply of electricity and gas. Education is normally administered separately from the other local functions.

Many local government organizations antedate Confederation but under the British North America Act local government was made a responsibility of the provincial legislatures, a responsibility subsequently extended to the territories when their governments were constituted in the present forms. The unit of local government, apart from the school board, is usually the municipality which is incorporated as a city, town, village, township or other designation depending on the province. The powers and responsibilities of municipalities are those delegated to them by statutes passed by their respective provincial or territorial legislatures. Some of these statutes apply to all municipalities within a province, some to a certain type or group, and many to one municipality only.

Rapid and continuing urbanization during the past two decades and the demand for services in rural areas comparable to those available in urban areas have placed great strains on local government. These strains have been aggravated by the inelasticity of the major local revenue source — the taxation of real property. At the same time the small populations of most municipalities have hindered attempts to provide services that require economies of scale for efficient operation.

The provinces have taken a number of steps to assist local governments to meet these challenges. An increasing number of special agencies or joint boards and commissions have been created to provide certain services for groupings of municipalities. Local government revenue has been supplemented by grants from the provinces, either made unconditionally or for specific purposes. Certain functions traditionally assigned to local government have been assumed in whole or in part by the provinces. Besides encouraging the amalgamation of small units, the provinces have also established new levels of local government to provide services which can be better discharged at a regional level. "Second-tier" local governments now cover the whole of British Columbia and are planned for all of Ontario, where several now exist, and for Quebec, where three have been established. What may become a pattern for the next stage in municipal development was established in Manitoba on January 1, 1972 when the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg and its constituent municipalities were amalgamated into a single city.

The major local revenue source available to local government is the taxation of real property, supplemented in varying degrees by taxation of personal property, businesses and amusements. Revenue is also derived from licences, permits, rents, concessions, franchises, fines and surplus funds from municipal enterprises.

Since a description of all forms of local government would be too complex for easy comprehension, the following paragraphs describe only municipal organization in each province and in the territories as at January 1, 1974. Table 3.6 gives the total number of each type of municipality in each province and territory.

Newfoundland. At January 1, 1974, Newfoundland had 277 incorporated areas including two cities, 102 towns, 10 rural districts, 42 local improvement districts, 120 local government communities and one metropolitan area. The towns, rural districts and local improvement districts operate under the Local Government Act; towns and rural districts have elected