

## QUEBEC.

laws and the enactment of new ones. The Assembly alone has the power of dismissing a ministry which has ceased to represent the views of the majority of the people and also alone has the right to introduce bills as to the raising or employment of the public revenues. The Assembly is presided over by one of its members called the Speaker, who retains office until dissolution of the House that elected him. He does not vote, except by a casting vote in cases where the votes on both sides are equal in number.

**Municipal Organization.**—Under the French régime the municipal system was almost unknown. It was the same under the English régime until 1840 when at the union of the provinces municipal authorities were first established in Lower Canada. Before this date the province of Quebec had nothing which could be called an organization of local authorities. The maintenance of the roads was regulated by an old statute of 1796, which was administered in the name of the Governor by a Chief Road Inspector (Grand Voyer). This arrangement, imperfect as it was, sufficed until the increase of the population and the progress of commerce and industry made it obsolete.

It was Lord Sydenham's Special Council of 1840 that endowed Lower Canada with its first municipal organization. This measure, however, was only partially applied, because the French-Canadians, disturbed by the troubles of 1837-38, suspected a trap on the part of England. To reassure the French-Canadians and to make them understand the necessity for good municipal organization a fellow countryman was needed who spoke their language and held their faith. This man was A. N. Morin, father of the Municipalities Act of 1845. Amended in 1847 and in 1855, this Act was finally replaced by that of 1860. Since 1867 the municipal law has been promulgated by the provincial legislatures, and in 1870 the Quebec Legislature enacted the "Municipal Code of the Province of Quebec."

At present the province of Quebec possesses an excellent municipal organization; it is subdivided into several hundred county, township, parish, village, town and city municipalities. According to M. Lareau: "These are so many small governments which assure independence to the people, initiate them into the duties of public administration and train them better to understand the more complicated mechanism of a general administration." Under municipal organization, the citizens themselves choose and appoint those who shall watch over their special interests.

**Municipalities.**—A municipality is a territory circumscribed by law, whose inhabitants constitute a corporation, that is to say, a body politic or legal person, charged with the duty of administering the affairs of common interest to the inhabitants of a municipality. There are two kinds of municipalities: local and county. Local municipalities<sup>1</sup> consist either of a parish, a part of a parish, a township, a part of a township, a village, a town or a city. The county municipality consists

<sup>1</sup> Local municipalities in Quebec correspond to the communes in France.