

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

Submission of By-laws to the Electors.—Another characteristic feature of municipal government in Ontario is the arrangements for direct reference to the electors of important questions and of certain descriptions of by-laws. The regulations governing the procedure for ascertaining the opinion or obtaining the assent of the municipal electorate are prescribed by the Municipal Act. Certain classes of these by-laws involving financial appropriations are only referred to specific classes of the electors such as property owners. The results of the voting on the questions submitted in this way are, however, only for the guidance of the governing body of the municipality and do not bind it to any course of action, except in the case of money by-laws, where the decision of the electorate must be followed. All the municipalities are empowered to pass by-laws to provide for the granting of bonuses in aid of manufactures and railways, and these bonuses may take the form of money grants, guarantees, total or partial exemptions from municipal taxation or the granting of certain other facilities to secure the object desired.

Judicial System.—The supreme court of Ontario consists of (a) the appellate division and (b) the high court division. The appellate division is composed of not less than two divisional courts, each consisting of five judges, who try appeals from the high court and other courts of the province. Appeals from this court to the supreme court of Canada may be made in certain cases. Sittings of the high court division are held by single judges, with or without juries, at least twice a year in each county. The court has jurisdiction in virtually every kind of case. In each county or district there is a court presided over by a judge, who sits at least twice a year, with or without a jury, to try minor civil actions. Each county judge also presides at least twice yearly over a court of general session, with a limited jurisdiction in criminal matters. Criminals may also, with their own consent, be tried by the county judge without a jury. Each judicial district is divided into court divisions in each of which a division court is held by the county judge, or his deputy, at least once in every two months. These courts are for the recovery of small debts and damages. The county judges hold revision courts for the revision of assessment rolls and of voters' lists; they are also judges of the surrogate courts, which deal with the estates of deceased persons.

MANITOBA, SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH.

Establishment of Provinces.—On the prairies there have been two distinct trends of historical and political development—that of the Red River and that of the Territories. The whole region was originally under the sway of the Honourable Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay. In the case of the Red River, responsible self-rule came with the transfer to Canada. The Territories possessed absolutely no form of government prior to their incorporation in the Dominion.