

its total is 111. It is elected for four years on an adult suffrage basis and holds annual sessions so that 12 months shall not intervene between the last sitting in one session and the first sitting in the next.

The Executive Council consists (1923) of thirteen members, nine of them holding portfolios as follows: Prime Minister and Minister of Education; Attorney-General; Secretary and Registrar; Treasurer; Lands and Forests; Agriculture; Public Works and Highways; Labour; Mines.

Besides the regular departments, certain commissions have been created for specific purposes. They include the Niagara Falls Park Commission, the Railway and Municipal Board, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission and the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway Commission.

Municipal Government.—Under the system established by the Constitutional Act of 1791, municipal administration was carried on in the main by the courts of quarter sessions, whose members were appointed by and responsible to the governor in council. As urban communities began to grow, there commenced an agitation for local self-government, which after many rebuffs, resulted in 1832 in the grant to Brockville of a limited measure of control of the local police. In 1833 Hamilton and in 1834 Belleville, Cornwall, Port Hope and Prescott received similar powers, while in the latter year York became a self-governing city with a mayor, aldermen and councillors under the name of Toronto, Kingston receiving in 1838 a similar constitution, though being denied the name of city.

Upon the introduction of responsible government, the District Councils Act of 1841 was passed, giving a considerable measure of local self-government with a large measure of control by the central authorities and a few years later, a more comprehensive measure, the Municipal Act of 1849 came into force.

This Act has been called the Magna Charta of municipal institutions, not only for Ontario, but for the newer provinces which largely copied Ontario institutions. Its main features are still clearly visible in the municipal system of to-day.

Under this system there existed in 1868, when the first legislature of Ontario assembled, 539 local self-governing units, including 36 counties, 399 townships, and 104 cities, towns and villages. In 1921, there were in the province 911 local self-governing units, including 38 county municipalities, 557 townships, 149 villages, 143 towns and 24 cities. There was thus in that year a local self-governing body for every 3,200 of the population of the province, and the general effect has been to initiate the masses of the people in the problems of self-government, so that Ontario has been described by eminent students of democratic governments as one of the most perfect democracies in existence.

Townships and Villages.—Township municipalities may be organized in hitherto unorganized territory when the population of the geographical township of six miles square is not less than 100, and where the inhabitants of an area not surveyed into townships exceed 100 on not more than 20,000 acres. The township is governed by a chief executive officer styled reeve, and four others who may be deputy reeves or councillors, depending on the number of municipal electors. These provisions apply also to villages, which may be created out of districts or parts of townships where a population of 750 exists on an area not exceeding 500 acres. Police villages with certain limited rights of self-government may be formed by county councils where a population of not less than 150 exists upon an area of not less than 500 acres and where the majority of freeholders and resident tenants of the locality petition therefor. Police villages are administered by three trustees who may be created a body corporate where the population exceeds 500.