

## PARLIAMENTARY MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN.

W. E. JOPP, B.A.

By four short sections of the Cities Act of the Province of Saskatchewan, a form of municipal government is provided that should ultimately, if not immediately, result in better administration for the cities that adopt it, for it is founded on certain principles that are essential to the success of any government, and have been salient features of that of all parliamentary government countries. One of the main branches of a government in a country so governed is the executive and the other is the legislature. The executive is in close touch with the difficulties of administration and knows from experience in enforcing other and similar legislation what are likely to be the difficulties in the application of a proposed new law. The legislature not being burdened with intense application to details, has greater opportunities of knowing the law as it appears to and affects the citizens. The executive works at the details of government day in and day out, whereas the legislature have to attend thereat but a few weeks or months of each year.

When these two bodies meet in conference each has an important contribution to make toward arriving at the measures which should be most satisfying to the needs of the nation, and most practical in their application to difficulties that confront the state.

The essential feature then of parliamentary government is reciprocal instruction between those who know the details of administering the law and those who know the effects of the law. Since there is reciprocal instruction the result is that the initiation of new policies may originate with either branch. Though the initiative generally lies with the executive since they have been chosen largely on account of their capabilities in this line they are not in reality sovereign in this respect, for though they may get the credit for originating practically all policies the ideas may have come from the legislature, but the intelligence of the executive and the manifest suitability of the remedy compels the adoption of the policy no matter which branch suggests it.

Anyone who sits in the gallery of the legislature and draws his conclusions as to the abilities of the legislators solely from what he sees them do therein would be either pleased with the wonderful astuteness of the government in bringing down measures so suitable that they evoke the spontaneous and unanimous support of the government supporters, or pained with the docility of those members in accepting anything that is proposed without hesitation or objection. But those who have been behind the scenes of a political caucus of a majority party in the legislature could testify that it is in those meetings that plain speaking takes place between the government and their followers, and both often defer to opposition and measures are modified to meet objections raised in caucus. The virtue of parliamentary government is dependent therefore as much on the co-operative thinking between the executive and the legislature as it is upon the intelligence of the individual members of both branches.

The same opportunity for intensive application to respective duties and co-operative deliberation exists as between the commissioner executive and municipal councils in the so-called commissioner form of municipal government, where it has been adopted in the Province of Saskatchewan. The council is elected as heretofore, but is largely relieved of the details of committee work. They are still open to hear the complaints and suggestions of citizens, and it is to them that the electors directly look to see that proper bylaws are enacted and the administration properly conducted. Though the council does not administer they are held responsible by the people for the acts of the commissioners, because they have sovereign authority over them. The commissioners consist of the Mayor, who is elected by the direct vote of the people, and one or more others appointed by the council. The appointed commissioners can be dismissed on three months' notice, pursuant to a resolution of the council with all members present. As a council which dismisses a commissioner is faced with the possibility of having to pay both the dismissed official and his successor, salary for three months, this provision insures that councils will not dismiss except for reasons that they can amply justify to the electors.

The relationship as to sovereign authority and the opportunity for reciprocal advice between the two branches results in public affairs being discussed in the daylight

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