

What I have called "the freedom and elasticity of politics and legislation" has been evinced a hundred times in the experience of the Canadian provinces. Could I to-night review the history of constitutional reforms, of educational, ecclesiastical, or social measures in the maritime provinces and in Quebec with their Catholic population, in Ontario with its many elements of fiery political disturbance, it would, with all its untoward incidents, be an astonishing, and to us who live in England an almost incredible, tale of mutual forbearance for the general interest.

Take an instance in which religious or merely class passions are little, if at all, involved—the reform of local Government. In England this has been a task Herculean, at which man of power after man of power has tried his strength and either wholly failed or produced but puny remedies. Boundaries of municipalities, bounds of constituencies, bounds of counties, of parishes, and unions, and then of local Government districts, and boards of health, there they lie, each of them defended by a garrison; and who dare try to readjust them? But here before me is a masterly-drawn Act of 515 sections, passed in one session of the Ontario Legislature, and intitled, "The Municipal Institutions Act," which collects, codifies, and amends the laws regulating the municipal Government in all its branches for that province. It is preceded, with unique judgment, by a synopsis and analytical index in thirty-two closely-printed pages. In the Act is set forth the law regulating the model municipal constitution of Ontario, with its grades of counties or united counties, townships, cities, towns, and villages. Representative councils in each case manage the affairs of their special jurisdiction. In the counties the council consists of the reeves or deputy reeves of those townships and villages within the county which have not withdrawn from county jurisdiction, as they may by certain formalities. Cities have mayors and aldermen, towns mayors and councillors, with a reeve and deputy reeve in certain cases. A village or township council consists of a reeve and four councillors, with additions in certain cases.