

no reduction in the per diem payment for the work. So that no considerable saving can be looked for in this direction.

Another anticipated advantage is that the county councillors will be brought more directly face to face with the electorate, and that their actions in the county council will be more closely scanned than they were under the old system. As it is now, there is no doubt a danger that a man's conduct in the township council will be the principal factor in determining his re-election, while his conduct at the county council is carelessly passed over by the average voter.

The disadvantages which suggest themselves are more numerous and, perhaps, more formidable, though possibly not so popular. With our too wide franchise the prospect of an immediate saving of a few dollars, especially if it is to be cut from the income of some man who is looked upon as a leader in his neighborhood, is too powerful just at present to redound to the best interests of the country.

An objection which occurs to one's mind at once, is that under this new system a new division of territory is brought about. This is undesirable. The political strength of democracy is anchored in the mutual confidence of the aggregation of voters that are obliged to work together. Every time a new contingent of electors is introduced into the old body which has been wont for years to work together and to know its various members and their respective powers, as well as the amount of confidence each has earned, a strong element of distrust is introduced, and the power of democratic action is weakened. The splitting up of the old territory into smaller districts is not so harmful, but that new grouping is always dangerous is agreed by all modern and thoughtful writers on the subject.

There is no doubt that a smaller number of men could transact the business of the county council as quickly and possibly as safely and well as the present number, provided that they had the necessary knowledge at hand. It must not be forgotten, however, that a large part of the duty of each member of the county council is to bring to the council chamber his quota of local knowledge of the needs of the roads, bridges and other matters within the cognizance of the council, as well as of the feeling and desires of the people in his locality. It is agreed by all persons of experience in county councils that the actual business is, even at present, directed in each county by a few of the leading members. It is equally well agreed that if they were not informed by the less prominent members of all the facts and opinions necessary to be considered before determining any course of action, that they would of necessity be obliged to go to the various localities and acquaint themselves with these facts on the ground. It is doubtful if anything could be saved in the matter of time, certainly nothing in matter of expense, if this course were pur-

sued; and pursued it must be unless the more dangerous course of proceeding without information should be adopted. The difficulty is that a considerable part of the work of the county council is work requiring an immense amount of local information, and this cannot usually be had by a few men without each of them makes a special effort to get it, while men in the immediate locality gather the information without effort. It is a part of their every-day life. This point is not of as great importance as it was in the time of the district councils because the territory proposed to be under the county council now is smaller than that which was under the old district council. The importance is still further lessened because township councils take charge of a large amount of the necessarily localized municipal work.

Again, it occurs to one that the new course will tend to bring into municipal life, both in township and county councils, a weaker and possibly a bad class of men. There is a danger of bringing into the county council the professional politician. Hitherto men have been elected by a constituency each voter of which knew personally the man for whom he voted. With enlarged constituencies, men will perforce assume the roll of "candidate." The legitimate rewards for his trouble will be inadequate, and there will be a temptation towards reimbursement by questionable methods. Moreover, there was an advantage in having a man who has sat in the county council come in immediate contact with every voter. Even under the present system, there is not too strong a desire on the part of desirable men to enter township councils. If what is at present the principal inducement, namely, the opportunity of sooner or later sitting in the county council, is taken away, it is feared by many that the result would be very disastrous in lowering the class of representatives in both township and county councils. From expressions of opinion gathered from many county councillors, it is difficult to say whether any desirable men will be willing to contest an election for a seat in the county council if it is cut off from the township council. He will be obliged to put himself in contact with a much larger constituency than he has at present to do, and his expenses will be necessarily increased while his remuneration will be confined to county council indemnity only. Is there not a danger of it becoming necessary to pay the smaller number almost as large a sum in the aggregate as was formerly paid the larger number?

Following this line many things occur to one and it is very difficult to say what results all the ramifications may produce. Another matter which strikes one as being of very great importance is the educative value of county councils. Their powers in this direction are felt in several ways. The men engaged in carrying out the work of the township councils in each of the

townships in a county, meet at county council under the present system, and discuss not only in the council chamber, but casually, the various methods of performing township services employed by the respective members in their several townships. The result is that the joint experience of all the townships in a county is brought to bear on the problem of improving township administration and is kept constantly bearing upon that problem. Under the proposed system this will undoubtedly be lost. Besides this the more accurate and enlightened methods of doing business which prevail in the county councils as compared with those employed in some of the townships is now carried home and gradually improves the conduct of business in the several township councils. This advantage will also be lost.

We pay, and we think we are justified in paying, large sums of money every year for the education of our citizens in various schools and academies. The only principle by which this is justified is that safety to the state in democratic countries rests upon the enlightenment of the citizens of that state. Knowledge is power. Their political education is of first importance. It is the opinion of many persons well qualified to judge that the money spent in paying county councillors for attending county council for a week three times a year is well spent money, merely for the education it disseminates. One might venture the opinion that if for the sake of argument it was admitted that the business of the county council could be as well and safely done by one man as it is by the whole body of the county council, yet, even then, good value would be received for the money paid the county councillors because of the training and improvement in their political education which is obtained through the discussion of the council chamber and the association of the members during the session. There is no doubt that during this time a good many schemes are hatched and propagated relative to Dominion and Provincial politics. This is perhaps rather desirable than otherwise.

Neither our Dominion nor our Provincial Parliament will be any the worse for the somewhat organized watching bestowed upon them by the leading spirits from the townships of each county. The fashion has recently grown up with our county councils of passing resolutions calling upon Parliament to effect certain pieces of legislation. And more recently still an effort has been made to unite the various county councils in urging desired legislation upon Parliament. It may possibly be a little irksome at times, but chastening is never joyous for the present but rather grievous. All political action under our system of government must be born of organization. County councils in Ontario are powerful assistants to organization. Lack of wise and well-directed organization is what makes sin so comfortable and profitable a thing with our Parliaments.