

It is said that the best governed city on this continent is Washington, the capital of the United States of America. This city is under the control of three commissioners who are not appointed by popular vote and not directly responsible to the people, but rather to the powers that appoint them. They are free from all political and sectional influences; controlled by no clique. They are chosen as men of first-rate business ability with special qualifications for the position which they occupy. They are amply paid, and the position is one not merely of emolument but of high honour. They devote their whole time to the affairs of the city, and, not being elected from year to year, have time to thoroughly understand and deal with the various important matters which come before them, and they have the assistance of the highest class of experts and deputy heads which money can secure.

The management of civic affairs in the cities of the Dominion under our municipal system is said to exhibit the maximum of petty graft and the minimum of intelligent efficiency.

As might be expected from the nature of the subject and the multitudinous phases of it and the details of the practical working of the system and the judicial interpretation of various sections from time to time, a treatise on the subject soon became a necessity, and it is to the last of these we would now draw special attention.

Whilst there were some small manuals relating to various subjects which are now grouped under the general title of municipal law, there was nothing of a complete character until that most industrious worker and writer, Robert A. Harrison, afterwards Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, undertook the task of annotating the various Acts in the historic volume known as Harrison's Municipal Manual, published in December, 1858. The editor, in his preface to the first edition, said that "The municipal laws of Upper Canada are in importance second to none of the laws of the Province, and that every municipal corporation is a small Parliament, possessed of extensive but yet limited powers." It was then pointed out that to ascertain in every case the existence or non-existence of a power—the nature of it—its precise limit