

members by direct vote of the municipal electors, (embodying the idea of representation of minorities) and a two years term, besides greatly reducing the number of members.

The main reasons for the change, an agitation for which had been carried on many years, were the large and cumbersome number of members, and consequently large expense, and the inequality in the amount of assessment represented by each member.

It is a fact that the legislation was a surprise to the province. The changes were so great and every detail was so fully provided for, that the most experienced municipal councillors and officers had cause to wonder how such a measure could have been framed and introduced to the House with so little prior discussion. The strength and definiteness manifested in placing the proposal before the House, and the inclusive finality of the Act when passed, ensured ready submission to its terms and loyal efforts on the part of the people to carry out its provisions. The Act has stood the test of the working out of its provisions so admirably, and has proved so advantageous to the interests it was intended to serve, that the legislation must be pronounced a statesmanlike and successful solution of an acknowledged defect in the municipal government of the province.

A comparison of the conditions which existed under the system, the conditions under the present system, and the conditions it is proposed to call into existence by the provisions of section 68a of The Consolidated Municipal Act, 1903, shows in an incontrovertible manner that if the legislation of 1896 was wise and progressive, the legislation of 1903, notwithstanding the saving clauses, is retrogressive in a marked degree.

The facts as they affect the County of Victoria are presented as a concrete example.

In the year 1896, the last year under the old system, there were sixteen municipalities in the County of Victoria, represented by twenty-six reeves and deputy-reeves. The average equalized value per member was \$398,000.00, the highest value per member being \$867,582.00, and the lowest \$52,000.00, showing the relation of the highest to the lowest to be seventeen to one. The average population per member was 1,145, the highest population per member being 2,300, and the lowest 554. Four to one.

Under the present constitution there are twelve members. The average value per member is \$971,350, the highest value per member \$1,391,720, and the lowest \$618,270, the relation of the highest to the lowest being about as two to one. The average population per member is 2,435, the highest population per member being 3,975, and the lowest 2,285. One and three-quarters to one.

Under the constitution as proposed there would be seventeen members, a new municipality having been formed by a special Act of the legislature since the county was formed into county council divisions. The new municipality is the summer resort, Sturgeon Point, valued at \$14,325, and the reeve would have a seat in the county council, but its value is not used in the basis of comparison. There would be seventeen members. The average value per member would be \$685,660, the highest value per member being \$2,783,444, and the lowest (apart from the village of Sturgeon Point), \$62,375, the relation of the highest to the lowest being about forty-four to one. The average population per member would be 1,720, the highest population per member would 7,000, and the lowest 508. Fourteen to one.

This added proof of retrogression may be instanced. Under the old system, the township of Mariposa, then reasonably supposed to be under-represented in relation

to its value, had three members out of twenty-six; under the present system it has two members out of twelve, under the proposed new system it would have one member out of seventeen.

With regard to the permissive provisions of the section in question:

The powers granted to local councils by sub-section (1) are subversive of the principle of representation. One of the main purposes of The County Councils Act, 1896, was to give the larger and more highly valued municipalities a fair and equitable standing, but the effect of this sub-section is to place it in the power of a majority of the local municipalities, without reference to value, to force the larger municipalities into a worse position relatively than they held prior to the passing of the Act under which county councils are now constituted. This contention is illustrated by the fact that in the county of Victoria nine local councils, with an aggregate of one-eleventh of the value of the county, have it in their power to override the will of the other eight municipalities whose aggregate is ten-elevenths of the total value, and change the constitution of the county council.

Sub-section 8 is as follows: "In every question arising in a county council constituted under this section which involves the expenditure of money to an excess of \$1,000 for any purpose other than the current annual expenses of the municipality, the result shall be determined by adding together the equalized assessments of the municipalities whose representatives vote for such expenditure and against such expenditure respectively, instead of by a majority vote of the members as in other cases." This sub-section is intended to be the panacea. An examination of it shows it to be worthy only of being described as the palliative. The instance in which its provisions could be or would be enforced would likely be limited in number, because nearly all expenditures come properly enough within the term "current annual expenses." The practical result would be that the township municipalities in the first range and the Town of Lindsay, which is situated within the range, although the aggregate value is \$7,554,969.00, would have on almost all questions a voting power of four, whilst the remainder of the county, with a value of \$4,101,246.00, would have a voting power of thirteen. The regulative provision is there, however, and it could be applied. It is contrary to the genius of free representative institutions. Take the case of two members holding opposite views voting on a question. One might have the power of forty-four votes to the one vote of the other. To place members in such a relation to each other is to dishonor and demean them. What is needed is the maintenance of the present status, which is true and unassailable, the basis of representation first being right and members being equal in voting power on all questions.

The members of the county council, as at present constituted, being elected to perform specific duties, and being directly responsible to the people, the management of the affairs of the county receives undivided and thorough attention. Under the present system the views of the county council are undoubtedly broader than they were under the superseded system or would be in a county council constituted as proposed by the recent legislation. There is a county view-point from which county affairs should be seen and dealt with. Were the county council composed of the heads of the local municipalities a narrower view would prevail with corresponding results.

On all grounds that are worthy of consideration, one conclusion only seems possible of being reached, that it is the duty of the Legislature to repeal section 68a of The Consolidated Municipal Act, 1903.