

District Municipal Council from 1843 to 1847," a number of appendices which disclose much of interest to those interested in the early settlement of this Province.

District Councils throughout the Province were established in 1842. The Home District Council for that year was composed, in part, of representatives from the County of Simcoe, which at that time formed part of that district. In the following year (1843), the County of Simcoe was set apart as a district, and thenceforth had its own municipal council at Barrie.

The wardens were from 1842 to 1846 appointed by the Crown, and the first warden for the Simcoe district was Captain Jacob Æmilius Irving, formerly of the 13th Light Dragoons, and father of the present Treasurer of the Law Society. The first judge of the District Court was James Robert Gowan (now Senator Gowan), who had been practising law in Toronto in partnership with Hon. James Small, afterwards district judge at London.

Previous to the year 1842 the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions and of the Board of Magistrates for the district either personally, or in conjunction with the rest of the justices of the peace as a board, performed many of the functions subsequently delegated to the District Judge and the District Council. To this position, in 1831, was appointed a retired army officer, Colonel O'Brien, whose eldest son, under the same title, still lives in the old homestead built at Shanty Bay, which, by the way, was laid out as a village before Barrie, the present county town, was thought of.

In those days justice was necessarily of a rough-and-ready sort, but not unsuited to the circumstances of those primitive times, and not without their amusing incidents. For example, in the midst of a solemn trial of a prisoner for some criminal offence at the Chairman's house, it was rumoured that one of his hounds had treed a bear. The court adjourned, loaded its rifle, and, assisted by prosecutor, prisoner, and witnesses, shot and skinned the bear, and then resumed the trial. We cannot record the verdict, but it may be imagined that, if found guilty, the prisoner was let off more easily than was bruin.

The volume before us in its "Preliminary" gives an item of intelligence which is also illustrative of the times, showing an impecuniosity which some of our present municipalities will arrive at if councils are not a little less reckless. The then treasurer, Samuel Richardson, in concluding a letter to Mr. Billings, treasurer for the Home District, written on December 16, 1842, uses these words: "Want of public and private funds prevents me paying the postage at present." But it must be remembered that the postage at that time, on an ordinary letter, between Toronto and Barrie, was 4½d., and 11d. to Kingston.