

The Ontario Municipal Association, organized at Hamilton in 1899, has since been most active in considering the needs of municipalities generally, and has been the means of bringing about much progressive legislation. The University of Toronto studies in political science, published from time to time, have been most valuable in directing attention to municipal affairs. All these, combined with the critical but progressive attitude of the Provincial press, have done much to improve municipal conditions.

The newer provinces, recognizing the lack of co-operation on the part of the various Provincial authorities in Ontario, having to do with municipal affairs, included in their organization a sub-department of municipal affairs, in charge of an efficient deputy minister. The result has been most beneficial in directing municipal development along right lines. There would appear to be the greatest necessity for the establishment of a similar department in Ontario if local government problems are to receive the attention necessary to keep the municipalities abreast of the rapid progress that is being made elsewhere.

One of the tendencies of present-day legislation is to surround both the legislative and administrative powers of municipal councils with a wise measure of central control.

The supervising authorities have been shown to be: the Bureau of Industries, the Provincial inspection of county houses of industry, etc., the Provincial Board of Health, the Provincial Highway Commissioner, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, the Railway and Municipal Board, the Provincial Auditor, and the Education Department, which regulates grants and reserves the right to approve of the dismissal of public school inspectors after they have been appointed by the councils.

In the matter of returns relating to statistics, the same information may be demanded by several authorities, and the control of systems of book-keeping would appear to require consideration. The Railway and Municipal Board under their Act and The Public Utilities Act, have authority over books and accounts of public utilities. The Power Commission have a similar authority to which the Municipal Board cannot object. The Provincial Municipal Auditor, however, has a general authority to determine the system of book-keeping to be adopted in all municipalities.

The continual investigation of municipal progress elsewhere, the adaptation of the best ideas to Ontario conditions, and the necessity for co-ordination throughout, all combine in favor of the idea that a Department of Municipal Affairs will greatly encourage future development and progressive legislation.