

Authorize Sunday Cars.

Authorize Mortgage loan in lieu of bonus.

To Incorporate Summer Resort Village with special provision as to elections, officers, etc.

Fix rate of assessment and taxation of farm property in towns or villages.

Special Legislation in the interests of large cities may also be found in the general Acts, being framed so as to apply in future to other corporations, which may by the growth of population come within their application.

In the Legislature all municipal Bills are referred to a Committee, appointed at the beginning of each Session. This is always very large and at last Session consisted of seventy-three members, practically the Whole House, with the Hon. E. J. Davis, Commissioner of Crown Lands as Chairman. This Committee is assisted by a Clerk who is always a Lawyer. Members urge the passing of the Bills they have introduced and municipalities interested are usually represented by some members or officers of the Council.

A Bill may be dealt with very quickly or it may be opposed and discussed for days. It is not surprising that some Acts appear to have been passed without the careful consideration that should attend Legislative control. Members of the Legislature are not municipal experts nor have they time for the consideration of the details of all Legislation proposed.

#### CENTRAL CONTROL.

It is necessary that there should be some control of municipal corporations although opinions differ as to how it should be exercised. The Legislature recognizing the necessity for a change has been gradually introducing a better system of supervision and control over some branches of local government, which has proved most beneficial.

The *Provincial Board of Health*, established in 1881, is a central administrative authority, composed of experts having power:

1. To supervise the health boards of the Province.
2. To appoint health officers.
3. To issue regulations, subject to approval of the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council, for the prevention of disease, which, after publication in the Gazette have the same effect as if enacted by the Legislature.
4. To institute proceedings for the abatement of a nuisance when the local board refuses or neglects to act.
5. To approve of all plans for the establishment of water supply or sewage systems before they can be lawfully adopted by the councils of cities, towns or villages.

The *Provincial Municipal Auditor* is an administrative officer, having the general supervision of books and accounts of the municipal and school corporations of the Province, with power to frame rules respecting the manner in which the accounts of municipalities shall be kept

and audited, and the number and form of books of account to be used. After publication in the Ontario Gazette, these rules have the same force as law.

The *Railway Committee of the Executive Council of Ontario*, composed of three members, with the Commissioner of Public Works as Chairman, has jurisdiction over Electric Railways and street railways, and authority to approve of municipal by-laws relating thereto. Any one may appeal to the committee against the provisions of an Electric Railway By-Law prejudicially affecting his property.

The report of the Provincial Assessment Commission includes a recommendation for the appointment of a Provincial Board of Assessment Commissioners to assess the lands of railway companies and companies using the highways and to report annually in reference to the manner in which the assessment laws are enforced. The suggestion recalls the State Boards of Equalization of the United States. The Commission also refers to the necessity for a Local Government Board as follows:

"Municipalities would seem to be already too inclined to undertake without adequate technical knowledge, local works and enterprises in the name of permanent improvements in the over-sanguine hope that increasing prosperity may cause the debts incurred for such enterprise to bear lightly on the taxpayer. Immediate liquidation of debts for matters not in the nature of permanent improvements should, at all events, be a rule in municipal administration, but it may be doubted whether that is a rule at all generally followed. On the contrary, it is to be feared, that the debt of many municipalities, if examined, would be found to include sums which should not have been carried over to swell the tax of future years.

Some governmental supervision of contemplated permanent improvements might with public advantage be provided, (as under the Local Governments Acts in England) so as to require, as a condition precedent to the undertaking of such enterprises, the previous approval of a properly constituted Governmental Board."

All proposed municipal Legislation should be considered and reported by a Board of Experts, before it is finally enacted.

The system of central control should be further extended so as to safeguard the interests of the Province as a whole and preserve freedom of municipal action. The English method through the Local Government Board involves, notwithstanding the central administrative control, a larger measure of home rule than Ontario municipalities now enjoy. The result has been to reduce special Legislation to a minimum and increase enormously the efficiency of local government.

#### A MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

To meet conditions existing in Ontario, we are in favor of the appointment of a Special Board composed of a representative from the Provincial Board of Health, The Provincial Municipal Auditor, The Provincial Instructor in Road Making, The Secretary of the Bureau of Industries and such other experts as may be necessary, with the Attorney General as Chair-

man. The administrative power of the Board to be defined by the Legislature, and such direction given as will make it largely educational and supervisory, with authority for inspection, advice and report in reference to false methods, frauds and maladministration of the general laws, and when officials are found to be incompetent or dishonest, to inform the removing authority. Additional powers might be conferred:

1. To regulate the borrowing powers of municipalities.
2. To approve of the plans for public works, street improvement, the location of street railways, etc.
3. To consider and report on all municipal bills, public and private, introduced in the Legislature.
4. To assist in determining municipal issues in accordance with municipal, not political considerations.

A local government board would tend:

1. To secure the efficient enforcement of municipal laws.
2. To furnish the public information regarding the performance of local functions in such comparative form that it would be of great service to local officials.
3. To stimulate local action and independence by giving experience of others, and enabling citizens to criticize local officials.
4. To guide by accurate and full information, public opinion on the various questions arising in connection with every branch of municipal government.

#### The Evil of Municipal Ownership.

The self respecting, self-dependent spirit should animate American workmen. This is the spirit which has made the American workman the best workman in the world, and has made American industry the most productive. Our national progress and our national prosperity have been built up on the principle of encouraging and giving free scope to individual effort, and minimizing the scope of government interference with individual effort or with the operation of natural economic laws. To increase the scope of government provision is to undermine our ancestral habit of self-reliance.

It is hard enough to maintain this spirit in our own native population. It is still harder to maintain it with the great influx of Continental and Eastern migrants, who are accustomed to a different point of view and to look to government as the "Good God" from whom all bounties should be received and expected. We must teach these foreigners, who come to us from a weaker civilization, to rely on their own strong arms as did the builders of this nation.—From an article by Robert W. DeForest, in current issue of *Municipal Affairs*.

An acetylene gas plant is under construction at North Bay.