

THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

INTERESTING HISTORICAL REFERENCE TO TORONTO'S DEVELOPMENT IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT—A REVIEW OF THE EVER-WIDENING RESPONSIBILITIES WITH WHICH CIVIC AUTHORITIES DEAL.

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THE subject which I have chosen for a brief paper is "The Increasing Complexity of Municipal Government."* It will be admitted, I think, by all who have anything to do, at the present day, with the government of our large cities that the contrast between the present and former days is a very striking one with respect to the range and importance of the matters which are dealt with in our municipal administration. In earlier days the administration was simple; in the present day it is complex, and is increasing in its complexity.

The Toronto *Globe*, in its issue of June 11th, 1913, contained the following paragraph:—

"When the late Dr. Goldwin Smith, a keen critic of public affairs, was asked why he did not take an active part as a municipal representative, he said he had to confess his lack of ability. He went on to point out that while honesty and common sense were sufficient in a small municipality, the great city's management called for special knowledge in a multitude of problems in such matters as finance, engineering, sanitation, hydraulics, transportation, and traffic management."

In these words the difference which exists at the present time between the government of a small municipality and that of a large one is very succinctly stated; and also, I think, the difference between the government of a large city in earlier days and that of the present day.

By way of illustration, let us consider the City of Toronto, which I have the honor to represent. The earliest printed financial statement of Toronto which I am able to find is that for the year 1858. The ordinary expenditure for that year may be set down under the following principal headings:—

Public hall, public markets, weigh houses; street watering, lighting, and repairing; fire protection, by a volunteer brigade; education—common schools and grammar school; police protection, and administration of justice; health protection—in a small way, including, it may be remarked, care of "cholera shed"; care of insane; public walks and gardens; care of poor, principally by the House of Industry; construction of sewers.

The financial statement for 1880 does not differ much in its scope from that of 1858. The principal changes are the substitution of a permanent fire brigade for that of a volunteer force, a larger proportionate expenditure for street watering and repairing, and in the interval the transfer of the care of insane persons to the provincial government. Parks in 1880 were given more attention, street cleaning formed a more important item, and there

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was some expenditure for a smallpox hospital and for vaccinations.

An examination of the estimated expenditure for the year 1913 reveals a vast difference in character and scope as well as in the magnitude of the figures. Under the headings "Works" and "Health" the change is a striking one. In former days the expenditure for protection of health was insignificant; to-day it is large. The Health Department, with a skilled and leading member of the medical profession at its head, is one with a large staff, combatting diseases of a contagious and infectious character, maintaining an isolation hospital and a smallpox hospital, and vaccinating people free. It tests milk and regulates its sale to see that the business is carried on under clean conditions. It sends its inspectors out to the country to examine the dairy farms and enforces compliance with sanitary regulations. It fights the white plague by sending out nurses to the houses of the poor to direct the care of those suffering from tuberculosis and to prevent others from being infected. It has a dental clinic which does a large work principally in treating the teeth of school children. It has a laboratory for contagious diseases, for testing milk, and for making a daily and continuous analysis of our city water. Plumbing construction and appliances are regulated and inspected, and house drains are supervised and regulated. In addition, a vast system of inspection is carried on to suppress insanitary conditions in houses and premises, and to prevent the growth of slum conditions. Food offered for public sale is also inspected, and the conditions surrounding its display, its handling, and its delivery are regulated. Perhaps in no department of civic government is the change so marked as in that of the care of the public health. It would be nearer the truth to say that this branch of our municipal government is altogether new. It has arisen out of the great advance made of late years in sanitary science and preventive medicine, and I think that in its detection of contagious diseases, in its limitation of them, and in its prevention of epidemics with attendant enormous loss of life and trade, the board of health is a paying insurance.

The people demand free libraries, and one was established in Toronto in 1883. The maintenance of our public library board takes one-quarter of a mill in the dollar of our annual taxation. Not only is there a large central library, but the residents of the outlying sections demand branches which are provided and maintained. Skilled and trained officials are in charge.

Children's aid societies, industrial schools for boys and girls, and a juvenile court for the discriminating and sympathetic treatment of boys and girls who commit offences which bring them into the hands of the police are among the new institutions of recent years with which we have to deal. The system of dealing with juvenile de-