

## Aids to Municipal Development

The investigation of municipal problems with a view to the betterment of conditions has at all times been of the greatest importance. The Province of Ontario has not been behind in this respect, and, following the custom of other governments, has usually placed this responsibility on commissions appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The reports of these special bodies have been valuable, and while their recommendations may not always have been accepted, they contained a great deal of information of the greatest interest to members of the Legislature and others.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture recommended, in 1881, among other things, the formation of the Bureau of Industries, which was afterwards entrusted with the collection of municipal statistics. The Municipal Commission of 1888 placed an outline of the municipal systems of various countries in convenient form, and compared the more important features with those of Ontario. The Drainage Commission of 1893 was followed by a revision of the drainage laws and the enactment of The Ditches and Watercourses Act, a most valuable aid in the settlement of local drainage disputes. The Toll Road Commission of 1895 dealt with those relicts of municipal mismanagement, and its report included suggestions for the purchase of the roads then in existence. The Tax Commission of 1898 included in its report the systems of assessment and taxation in other countries, and the report of a similar commission appointed in 1901 was followed by the adoption of the present law. A select committee on municipal ownership in 1904 set forth particulars of municipal ownership laws in other countries, and showed the extent to which the idea had developed in Ontario. The Hydro-Electric Commission reports resulted in the conservation of electric power development for the municipalities of the Province. The Railway Tax Commission of 1905 reported a large amount of well-considered information, and recommended radical changes in the system of railway taxation for Provincial and municipal purposes. The Highway Commission suggested plans, ways, and means for the permanent improvement of the highways of the Province.

The Statute Revision Commissioners, appointed every ten years, recommend many improvements in the Municipal laws.