

forty or fifty and when the Municipalities Bill became law some counties were credited with between one and two hundred. The general sessions of the peace were usually not well attended except by the few who took an active interest, but on occasions when some matter of widespread interest, such as the granting of liquor licenses or some questions of political moment were up, the attendance was large and the meetings frequently tumultuous.

The grand juries were composed of residents of at least three months' standing having freehold in the county of the clear yearly value of £10 or personalty of £100. The sheriff was required each year to prepare a list of those qualified to serve. Their names were to be written on similar pieces of paper and put in a box. At a stated time the names of those to be summoned to serve were to be drawn from the box. This method prevented jury-packing, and if it did not secure for the people the spokesmen whom they might have chosen it prevented the sheriff from stopping the questions of the people by summoning subservient tools.

The sheriff was appointed by the Crown each year. Previous to 1778 there was one provost marshal for the province of Nova Scotia. Thereafter a sheriff was appointed for each county with the usual powers of sheriffs in England. The chief justice or the presiding justice selected three names, one of which was the retiring sheriff (unless a majority of the justices of the peace protested) and the Governor-in-Council must select one of these as sheriff for the year.<sup>1</sup> In New Brunswick the provost marshal disappeared about 1790; and the appointment of sheriffs does not seem to have been hedged about with restrictions.

#### *Local Divisions*

There is considerable diversity in the three provinces with respect to municipal divisions. In all three the county divisions are the most important. New Brunswick was divided into counties, and the counties were subdivided into parishes, first by letters patent and later by Act of Parliament. In Nova Scotia the townships and settlements were the first to appear;

<sup>1</sup> N.S. Laws, 1795.