

April 1.

Cut of 20 Seats In Legislature Believed Likely

**Abolition of County
Councils Also Thought
Under Consideration of
Ontario Government**

MOVE NEXT SPRING

**Increased Economy and
Better Administration
Seen as Result of
Change**

Abolition of county councils and improvement of other forms of municipal government and administration, coupled with a reduction to seventy seats of the present Legislature membership of ninety, will be taken under consideration by the Hepburn Government between now and the next session of the House. It was learned on good authority last night.

The general municipal situation will be brought immediately under survey by Hon. Eric Cross's Municipal Affairs Department, and a Cabinet committee will likely be selected to deal with the redistribution question in time for possible passing of implementary legislation next spring.

Too Unwieldy.

Belief that the Provincial House is too large and unwieldy, in so far as membership is concerned, has long been entertained by Premier Hepburn. However, in whatever redistribution is ultimately authorized, more consideration than ever before will be given, it is said, to the ever-expanding north country.

Wiping out of county councils is said to have been considered at several Cabinet meetings last fall, and even in some measure right up to the present session. Reported plans were to test opinion on the ticklish issue by having a private member either introduce a bill providing for the abolition, or a resolution favoring such a course. These plans, however, were dropped, it is said, because of more pressing problems in respect of power and taxation jurisdiction.

Hon. William Finlayson, former Conservative Minister of Lands and Forests, gave the movement a shove yesterday when, during the Budget debate windup, he vigorously advocated the need for more regulatory control over municipal spending, and warned the Government that retrenchment should at first begin at home.

On Right Track.

"This Legislature is too large," said he, "and if it were cut to fifty members it would then be of such size as to enable it to conduct the affairs of the Province in an expeditious and more business-like way. You could go right down the line with county councils next. They should be abolished entirely."

Across the Chamber Mr. Hepburn nodded his head significantly. Later he is reported to have observed, "Finlayson is certainly on the right track there."

The former Minister of Lands and Forests argued that the Department of Highways would be well advised to take over the complete county roads system. He also felt that the Department of Education could assume that part of educational administration and costs which fall at present within the jurisdiction of county councils. A closer check on the books of all municipalities he also advocated. Indication that municipalities were not wholly capable of managing their own affairs was to be seen, he said, in the defaulting of a hundred or more.