

NEWS AND NOTES

CURRENT MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

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On September 20 the voters of Montreal adopted by an overwhelming majority the act of the Quebec legislature which provided for certain radical changes of municipal organization in the Canadian city. Despite the current American notion that municipal government north of the border has been efficient and progressive, it has been a matter of common knowledge in Canada for some years that their own metropolis was as completely honeycombed by inefficiency, corruption, and brazen dishonesty as any city of equal size on the continent. At the urgent request of various business associations a royal commission was appointed early in the present year to investigate the affairs of Montreal and the evidence presented to this commission disclosed a state of affairs which was not outmatched by New York City even in the days of the Tweed ring. Places and promotions were sold openly, it was shown; contracts went rarely to the lowest bidder and invariably to the parties who stood close to the aldermen; extravagance, waste, and plain maladministration were shown to exist in every branch of the city's business.

The legislature acted promptly; passing an act which reduced the number of aldermen to 25 (one from each ward), and deprived these of all powers save those of making city by-laws and voting the appropriations. It established a board of control or commission, to consist of four members elected at large and the mayor of the city *ex-officio*. These commissioners are to be paid salaries of not less than \$5000 or more than \$10,000 as the aldermen may decide. This board of control is to prepare the municipal budget, to have exclusive powers in recommending the expenditure of money, to have charge of the awarding of all contracts, to supervise the spending of money, and to control the heads of all departments.

The act encountered vigorous opposition from interested local politicians; but all the substantial business interests of the city rallied to its support and the voters endorsed it by a decisive vote. The system

adopted by Montreal has been in operation in Toronto for nearly fifteen years and has there proven very satisfactory.

The University of Wisconsin which has become during the last decade a pioneer in new and fruitful experiments along lines of public service has afforded new evidence of its progressiveness in the recent establishment of a bureau of municipal reference which is to be conducted in connection with its University extension division. It is intended that the bureau shall collect data and information on all subjects of municipal activity with a view to making this information accessible to the cities of Wisconsin in particular but also to American cities at large. At the outset data will be gathered concerning municipal courts, municipal employment, special assessments in cities, garbage disposal, sewage purification, city planning, uniform accounting, public sanitation, and similar subjects. When the information is gathered it will be duly condensed and put at the disposal of the public much in the same way that the legislative reference bureau of Wisconsin prints its regular bulletins. The bureau of municipal reference will also furnish information concerning the scope and wording of city ordinances, and when desired it will loan copies of ordinances adopted by various cities on any topic. It will be able to supply information concerning methods and results in any civic department, in short it will aim to be a clearing-house for municipal experiments and experience, assuming in this respect the service rendered to English cities by the local government board.

The personnel of the bureau affords an adequate guarantee that its work will be well done. Mr. Ford H. Macgregor will be in immediate charge and Mr. Louis E. Reber will hold the post of director. In addition it will have the active coöperation of Dr. Charles McCarthy who has conducted the legislative reference bureau of Wisconsin with such signal success, and of the various professors of political science at the University in Madison. All advice and assistance is to be free, and the correspondence and coöperation of any city which seeks information is heartily solicited.

The Wisconsin University extension division has also arranged to supply popular lecturers on municipal subjects to such organizations as may apply for this service. Subjects such as City Government by Commission, The City Beautiful, and American Municipal Industries appear on the initial list. Descriptive material containing full information in regard to questions and material suitable for debates on municipal topics has also been prepared and may be had on application to the University.

When the Massachusetts legislature established a permanent finance commission for Boston last spring and made several other important changes in the city's charter it could not reach agreement upon a number of points connected with the methods of nominating officers, the size of the city council, the length of the mayor's term, and the advisability of introducing the "recall" provision. Arrangements were therefore made to have the voters pass upon these matters at the polls. This decision involved no delay, for the state elections precede the municipal by about two months. The voters will decide the general questions at the former in November and two months later will elect city officers under such new arrangements as they may have adopted. Two plans are to go before the people. Plan 1 provides for the nomination of city officers by party conventions (by what might be called regulated party caucuses), for a council of 36 members (one from each of the city wards and nine elected at large), and that the present two-year term of the mayor shall be retained. Plan 2, on the other hand, provides for nomination by petition only, for a council of nine members elected at large with provision for minority representation, and for a four-year mayoral term with the possibility of a recall at the end of two years.

It will be noticed that whatever action the people may take the "joint primary system" will pass out of existence in Boston as a method of nominating municipal officers, and the present large council will at least be cut in two. In the opinion of most of those best qualified to pass an opinion the joint primary system has not been in any way a success in the Massachusetts cities. It has brought in its train practically none of the desirable features which its sponsors predicted some seven years ago. In the main the machine politicians have gone on record as in favor of Plan 1, but not wholly so: some of them have taken kindly to the idea of nomination by petition and have pledged their support to Plan 2. This latter plan, moreover, is backed by the various reform organizations and these are carrying on an active propaganda in its behalf.

The National Municipal League, through its committee on the coordination of instruction in municipal government has conducted during the past year an enquiry into the extent, scope, and methods of the instruction offered in this subject by the various colleges and universities of the United States. Statistics from 165 institutions have been compiled and are printed in the league's last annual report. The figures show that about 50 of these institutions provide more or less extensive courses

devoted wholly to the study of municipal government and the problems of city administration. Some of the larger institutions, like the University of Chicago and Harvard University maintain six or seven such courses. Among the institutions which do not offer distinct and independent instruction in this branch of political science the great majority report that a part of some general course is given over to the subject. This part varies from a single lecture to one-third of the whole course. The report also discusses various matters of interest to teachers of political science, the methods of instruction in municipal government, the scope covered, and the whole question of class-room machinery such as collateral readings, thesis work, the use of a syllabus, and so on.

Professor Goodnow's new volume on *Municipal Government*, a work to which teachers and students have been looking forward for some little time, has just been issued from the press of The Century Company. It is a substantial volume of nearly four hundred pages affording a general survey of the whole field of city government and administration, and seems excellently adapted to class-room use. A more extended notice of the book will appear in the next number of this REVIEW.

Among recent publications of interest relating to municipal affairs abroad special attention should be drawn to M. Cadoux's *La vie des grandes capitales: études comparatives sur Londres, Paris, et Berlin*. A preface is furnished by M. A. Lefèvre, président du Conseil Municipal de Paris. (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1908, pp. xiii, 259.) The author who is *chief de service* in the Prefecture of the Seine discusses in his various chapters the water services, the lighting, urban transportation, and other public monopolies in the three chief European capitals.

Other foreign monographs of interest are P. Loppin's *Le self-government local en France* (Paris: A. Pedone, 1909, pp. 132), and G. Towler's *Socialism in Local Government* (London: Allen, 1909, pp. 336). Some interesting data concerning the administration of German cities is given in Lindemann und Südekum's *Kommunales Jahrbuch* (Jena, 1908) and the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* has announced that a series of volumes on municipal functions in various European countries will shortly be forthcoming in its own publications.

The subject of the Baldwin Prize competition for 1909-1910 has been announced as City Government by Commission. It is intended that the

utmost latitude should be given to competitors in their methods of dealing with the topic but the following outline is suggested as one which might be advantageously followed:

1. A very brief outline of the municipal conditions which produced the movement toward the commission system of city government.
2. A study of the Galveston plan as the original type of the commission system.
3. A study of the various modifications of this type as adopted in other cities.
4. An analysis of the working of city government under the commission plan, what has been accomplished, what difficulties the system has encountered, and what remedies or safeguards have been or should be adopted.

Copies of the circular containing the terms of the competition which is open to undergraduates in any American college which offers independent instruction in municipal government may be had from Hon. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, North American Building, Philadelphia.

The American Civic Association and the National Municipal League have arranged to hold their Fifteenth Annual Conference at Cincinnati, Ohio, during the third week in November.

In connection with the compilation of the *Thirteenth Census of the United States* arrangements are being made to issue schedules which will enable the census bureau to issue more detailed and more valuable data relating to urban government and civic activities than it has hitherto been able to supply. Students of municipal science in the United States have not had at their disposal, up to the present time, compilations as comprehensive and as trustworthy as the *Municipal Year Book of the United Kingdom* or the *Statistisches Jahrbuch deutscher Städte* and this has proven a very great handicap. It is expected that this situation will be very greatly improved when the bureau of the census finishes its forthcoming task.

A new publication devoting its pages exclusively to matters of municipal interest has made its appearance. It is entitled *The American City*, and is published in New York by the American City Publishing Company with headquarters at 93 Nassau St. It will be a monthly periodical of about fifty pages and the subscription price is fixed for the present at \$1 per year. The first issue contains, among other contributions, articles

on The Rebuilding of the National Capital, by Hon. H. B. F. MacFarland, of Washington, D. C. on The Indispensableness of City Planning, by ex-President Eliot of Harvard; on The Housing Problem, by Richard Watson Gilder, and on the Individual Responsibility of Officials by President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, of the University of California. This is a very auspicious beginning. There is undoubtedly a place for a good publication in the field which this magazine endeavors to cover.

A phase of civic administration which is engaging more interest in this country is dealt with in *An Introduction to City Planning* by Benjamin Clarke Marsh (New York, 1909, pp. 158, published by the author). The writer is secretary of the committee on congestion of population in New York, (165 Broadway), and has dealt with his subject largely from the standpoint of planning as an aid to the relief of congestion. The book contains a chapter on the technical phases of city planning by Mr. George B. Ford.

A timely and informing article, entitled *The German Way of making Better Cities*, by Sylvester Baxter, appeared in the July issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

At the New York meetings of the American Political Science Association it is proposed to give a place on the programme to a discussion of the methods of instruction in municipal government.

CENTRALIZATION IN OHIO MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

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The Paine law of Ohio, providing for the remodeling of municipal government, gives to all cities in large part the high degree of centralization of administration that was enjoyed under the old "federal plan." It will be remembered that between 1892 and 1902 three Ohio cities—Cleveland, Toledo and Columbus—operated on a plan of government that justly attracted widespread attention and won national praise. Fixing final responsibility upon the mayor, it divided the administrative affairs of the city into several departments with a director, appointed and removable by the mayor, at the head of each. These officials in turn, with the mayor, then organized into a board of control, which reviewed at semi-weekly meetings the work of the several departments,