

The Government of Montreal

The question of making changes in the government of Canadian cities is exciting a good deal of interest in all kinds of circles, both municipal and otherwise.

As will be seen by referring to the Report of the U. C. M. Convention in our last issue, considerable time was occupied in discussing the various varieties which are called—and mis-called—Commission Government; and there was a great variety in the opinions expressed.

Reference was made to the government of Montreal by Mayor Lavallee and Ald. Boyd, both of whom believed that the present form would be changed or modified.

For many years the ordinary system of Canadian City Government prevailed, that is by electing a Mayor by all the citizens, and two Aldermen from each ward; then dividing up the actual government into Committees of the Council. Of course, the elections were never mixed up with Federal or Provincial ones; nor were they ever obscured by the election of paid officials.

But the wards in Montreal grew by annexation, and Council became unwieldy, so a change was sought, and what may be called the Canadian form of civic government was adopted; that is a Mayor and four Controllers were elected by the city, and one Alderman from each ward.

A body of business men of all races, creeds and parties was formed as the Citizens' Association, and this was largely instrumental in securing the new form of government and in the election of the Council, and it speaks well for the broad spirit of the citizens that the guidance of this body was followed, though many would have voted otherwise.

Unfortunately at the second biennial election, some men were returned who would not act harmoniously and who have tried to prove that the system is wrong.

As a result the Citizens' Association proposed some amendments which are modifications of the existing system, the principal one being the division of the city into five large wards, which are to elect three Aldermen each. So that the Council will consist of the Mayor, four (or five) Controllers, and fifteen Aldermen.

The problem of the government of Montreal is an exceptionally difficult one owing to local conditions.

The population for many years was overwhelmingly French speaking. And yet the "unwritten law" of the Mayor being alternately an English-speaking Protestant, an Irish Roman Catholic and a French speaking Roman Catholic, was always honorably observed.

This balance in the population has gradually changed until now the English speaking and French speaking citizens are nearly on a par—though the former include the foreign element.

As will be seen by the table of wards and electors on another page, there is a tremendous difference between them; for while the East Ward (in the business section of the city) has only 786 electors, Laurier Ward (a suburban district, recently annexed,) has 10,498. This is one reason why the re-distribution into five wards is advocated, so that each alderman will represent a fairer proportion of the whole. Of course in the older wards, the value of property is quite as large as in the newer suburban wards.

The difficulty therefore lies in keeping the proportion between population and business values.

As an old servant of the City said in discussing it with us, "We French speaking citizens have to

recognize that the vast business interests of the English speaking citizens demand as much consideration in city government as do our more numerous citizens. It is," said he, "a difficult problem, when some fanatic of either language may raise a sectional cry at any time."

But it is most encouraging to see the leaders of all parties, sects and languages uniting in a serious study of what is best for the city as a whole, and not for any party or section.

The solution must be based on the City's motto, "Concordia Salus," "There is Safety in Harmony."

Protecting the Law Breaker

A little over two years ago women and girls were burned to death in the factory of the Triangle Co., New York, because they were all locked in.

Like most evils, good arose from this culpable accident, and a law was passed making it penal to lock the doors of factory lofts during working hours.

One of the Triangle Co., Max Blanck has just been found guilty of the crime for which the new law was introduced, he having locked in 150 women and girls.

His case came before Chief Justice Riddell and Justices Kernochan and Herrman in special sessions. These learned judges have the option of fining the accused up to the terrible amount of \$50, or sending him to jail for 20 days.

What did they do?

They fined the miscreant the minimum penalty of \$20, practically apologizing for being obliged to take money from such a public-spirited citizen!

Is it any wonder that socialism is rampant?

Is it marvellous that members of American Bar Association spoke of the judiciary in the way they did?

Is it any wonder that tragedies occur almost daily?

Evidently these ornaments of the bench thought the whim of an employer—for locked doors in a factory are unnecessary and ridiculous—more worthy of consideration than the risk of the lives of 150 women and children.

Canadian Public Health Association

At the third annual Congress, recently held in Regina, Sask., the following officers were elected:

Dr. M. M. Seymour, Provincial Health Officer for Saskatchewan, President. The names of Hon. W. J. Hanna and Hon. George Langeley were added to the Honorary Presidency and Vice-Presidency. Vice-Presidents, J. W. Page, Quebec; T. Aird Murray, C. E. Toronto; Duncan Anderson, Toronto; Prof. J. A. Amyot, Toronto University; A. R. Whitla, Edmonton, and H. B. Lustin; General Secretary, Major Lorne Drum, Ottawa; Treasurer, George D. Porter, M. S., Toronto.

Fort William and Port Arthur were selected for the congress of 1914.

The association elected the following members as an executive Committee for the ensuing year: The President, General Secretary and Treasurer, ex-officio; Dr. C. J. Hastings, Toronto; Dr. C. A. Hodgetts, Ottawa; and Dr. Duncan Anderson, Toronto.

Another Board of Control

A proposal has been made by one of the aldermen that the City of Quebec should adopt the system of a Board of Control.

Quebec is evidently not carried away by the American fashion of Commission Government, in spite of the enormous crowd of American visitors who come to see the Plains of Abraham.