

**CONTROLLERS AND COUNCILLERS—(Contd.)**

thing to cause their defeat at the polls. For this reason the controller if he desires to continue to serve the city, must have one eye turned throughout the year to the next election. If every elector were closely informed on civic matters and influenced only by the city's interests rather than by individual interests, this would be alright, but, as it is, if some action of the controller displeases a section of the electors, even though such action may be to the advantage of the city as a whole, the result may be his defeat at the polls. It is impossible for any person holding a public office to go through a year without displeasing, not merely one, but several groups of people. The services of a good public representative may thus be lost to the municipality, while any policies he may have been carrying out must suffer through the change. At the same time there is always the temptation before the holder of the office to protect himself by avoiding the displeasure of these interested electors.

This difficulty could be largely overcome, I think, without losing to the electors their control of affairs, by having the controllers elected for two years instead of one. The best plan, to my mind, would be that of having both the controllers and aldermen—and, of course, the mayor—elected for a two year term, with an election every year for two of the four controllers and one alderman from each ward. Thus, if a civic administration were unsatisfactory the electorate would still have it in its power to change it each year.

**On Aldermen.**

Such a plan would make for continuity of policy and provide a more experienced public service. It would also inspire the members of the board of control to the giving of better service to the city. Annual changes in civic administration stand in the way of the business-like conduct of municipal affairs as much as anything else, I think.

Better results would also be obtained if the board of control devoted more time to the business of the city. The more thoroughly the board of control performs its duties and the more closely it attends to city matters, the more will the city council be able to abandon detail work and give its attention to watchfulness and intelligent criticism. And with the detail work taken off the hands of council a better class of men should be secured for that body. It has always been hard to persuade business-men to accept municipal office, largely because they have not the time. With the board of control doing the work and council having only to give sufficient attention to see that it does it properly, business-men could find time to sit in council.

There are other features of our system that might be

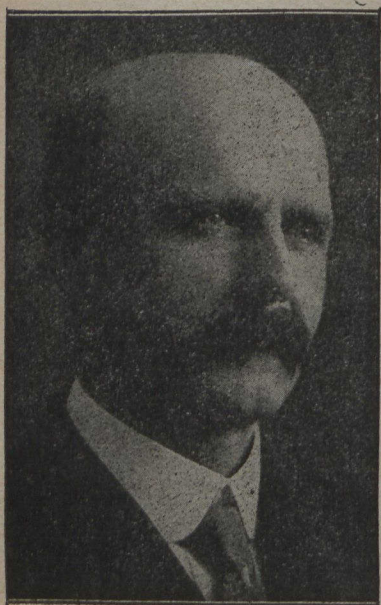
discussed. There are other parts of it that doubtless might be improved. But I have touched on what to me seem the most important points, and I believe that with a few minor changes, the board of control and council system will compare very favorably with any other system.

**President.**—"Your system is a good deal along that of the lines of the City of Montreal. Here they are elected for two years. It hardly gives a man a chance if elected for one year, then have to go before the people again. Last year at the Legislature there was an attempt to make the election every four years. I think that would be too long. I believe the people have the right to express their opinion every two years anyway. If they are elected for four years the people's representatives might not be so careful if they know they will be in for four years in any case. Apart from that, our system is practically the same as yours. At the last session of the Legislature there was a change by which the controllers and alderman will have to go before the people together in 1918. Before that two controllers went out every two years, so that there were always two old men to instruct the two new men coming in. I don't know whether the Legislature has in its mind that there will be a general change in administration or not when they made this change. Our board of control and aldermanic system has worked fairly well, but at times there has been friction between the two bodies. Sometimes the friction has been for the good of the city, but in other instances some of the aldermen felt that they had lost their power, and so they were not favourably disposed to the control. When the number of reports coming before the Council of Montreal are considered of the thousands we pass very few are rejected, and it takes a two-third vote to amend. We may by a majority vote reject but to amend has never been attempted. In most cases it has been satisfactory, but in some instances there has been feeling between the controllers and aldermen. With a large city like Montreal a government composed of two bodies must necessarily find itself faced with questions where the alderman and controllers do not see eye to eye. In many instances that would be for the good of the city, because when things come before our council of 20 aldermen, it opens the door for animated discussion, and in many instances reports from the controllers have been discussed in our council and the discussion has been distinctly for the benefit of the city at large."

**Controller Nelson.**—"Most of the trouble with the aldermen in Ottawa was over the question of patronage. We have practically eliminated that. We have a new commissioner of works. That man was brought there by the Board of Works, and there is not a man in the City of Ottawa who interferes with any man in his department, or who he has under him."

**Manager Form of Civic Government**

ALDERMAN P. W. McLAGAN, Westmount.



The position, which is rapidly becoming the profession, of city manager, is just a further step forward from the Commission or Controller system, which, in turn was the outcome of the impossible conditions of graft and mismanagement which had become characteristic of the old method of administering civic government in all details through committees of aldermen.

The history of this reform movement is well known to all students of civic government, but it may serve the purpose of the present discussion to restate it briefly. Up to the year 1900 the method of administering civic corporations by committees of alder-

men was practically universal on this continent, with the result that city and town government had become a byword for mismanagement and worse. How could it well be otherwise, when the work was generally done in the leisure time of the aldermen, who had already used up the greater part of the day's store of surplus energy in the prosecution of their own business? Such was the general situation when in 1900 a disaster of appalling magnitude occurred to Galveston in Texas. A huge tidal wave rolled in from the sea and practically destroyed the whole city. The existing aldermanic system broke down utterly in face of the crisis, and the Governor of the State appointed a commission of citizens—five in number—to deal with the situation. Men selected for their proved capacity to deal with large administrative matters. These men tackled the problems of the ruined city with such success that the citizens decided unanimously to continue to entrust their civic affairs to the same or a similar body of commissioners. The example of Galveston was speedily followed by Houston in Texas, and later by Des Moines, which city adopted in addition what are known as the initiation referendum and recall provisions. The Des Moines amended charter formed the model upon which most cities which adopted the reformed system built their new charters, and ere long some 400 United States and Canadian cities had adopted the commissioners system of civic administration, although in many cases in forms more or less modified from the Galveston or Des Moines originals. In some cases, as in Montreal, a board