

with large powers attract a better class of citizens than large bodies with restricted jurisdiction. The reduction in numbers of the school boards of St. Louis, Boston, and other large cities have served to show the truth of this aphorism in conclusive fashion. Even though party organizations may continue to dictate the nomination of commissioners, as they now do that of councilmen, these organizations will no longer be placed under pressure to give representation to every sectional, racial, and religious interest at the cost of placing inferior men in candidacy. That government by commission will eliminate partisan candidatures is something scarcely to be hoped for; but there is good reason to believe that it would remove from party organizations much of the sinister pressure with which these have now to contend.

Again, it is well known that municipal corruption nowadays arises as frequently from the power of municipal authorities to thwart the meritorious plans of public-service corporations as from their power to forward reprehensible projects. If the present system of checks and balances puts a restriction upon the ill-considered granting away of privileges, it none the less puts a premium upon the withholding of rights which should, in the public interest, be granted without hesitation. It is extremely doubtful whether the chances of obtaining a municipal franchise at the present time in any large city are properly proportioned to the merits of an application therefor. A small commission would, indeed, simplify the task of dealing with civic franchises on a business basis, and, if there be any fear that the unchecked power of granting municipal franchises is a jurisdiction too momentous to be vested in the hands of a small body, provision may be made, as in the Des Moines charter, for having the acts of the commission in this sphere subject to ratification by the voters.

Still again, as we are frequently reminded, the work of administering the affairs of a city is in every essential respect akin to that of conducting the affairs of a private business corporation. Now, the salient characteristic of sound corporate management is the centralization of powers in the hands of a small board of directors. What, we are asked, would

The Lessening of Civic Corruption

Approximates the Government of the City to that of a Business Corporation