



## SOME THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS

ON

### Municipal · Reform · in · British · Columbia.

BY ALDERMAN W. J. WALKER,

Chairman of the School Board of New Westminster, B. C., and a member of the  
Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ont., &c.



It is probable that more controversy is occasioned by different meanings attached to certain words, by the disputants, than by any differences of opinion between them, as to the ideas which those words are supposed to convey. So it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what is meant by Municipal Reform.

Primarily, the term is intended to convey the idea of the correction of the abuses of (and an attempt to develop into perfection) the government of the civic communities, and the management of the different corporate works undertaken by them.

Broadly, this governing power may be described as the legislative and executive functions. These functions are of a widely different nature, and it may be roughly laid down, that most of the abuses which have arisen have been occasioned by a careless and unbusiness-like confusion of these powers, in one body of municipal representatives. A

radical reform would, therefore, be initiated by separating them, and insisting that the people should elect one set of men to make the laws, and that another set of men should see that they are carried out. The former would be a legislative body, and the latter an executive body. The one would be a local home-rule parliament, and the other a local cabinet or executive council.

It may be well, in order to clear the way, and disarm criticism, to state that members of the Privy Council of England are not necessarily members of either house of parliament, and that the practical government of the country is carried on by permanent heads of departments or commissioners.

But, considering the commercial works which all modern political and social economists more or less agree should be in the hands of municipalities (i. e., gas works, water works, electric lighting, street railways, etc.), the executive councils should also be, if those works are to be successfully carried on, as much as possible of the nature of boards of directors of incorporated business companies.