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THE BETTERMENT OF CIVIC CONDITIONS.

From one end of Canada to the other there is a feeling of unrest over municipal problems. The present stringency in the money markets has called sharp attention to the enormous waste that has been going on in civic affairs for many years. Everywhere one hears of the general inefficiency of our municipal government.

Several important Canadian cities are trying, or proposing to try, experiments, which are a radical departure from the present system. Edmonton, and other places in the West, are trying a form of city government by commission. St. John, in the East, has followed their example. Westmount has a business manager. Ottawa has this year a mayor who is virtually a business manager. Some people advocate taking all questions of civic government completely out of the hands of the people, and placing them in the hands of commissioners, as is done in Washington.

The Boards of Trade of Toronto and other cities are talking of asking the Provincial Legislature to appoint a commission to investigate the whole question; but, judging by the present attitude of the Premier and the Provincial Secretary, they are not likely to meet with much encouragement. The public utterances of both gentlemen would appear to indicate that they think the Ontario Municipal Act not at present in need of much revision.

There can be little doubt that our city councils, as at present constituted, are not as efficient as they might be. They are especially weak on the side of administration. This arises from the frequent changes in the heads of the civic departments, and a consequent lack of continuity in business management. The chairman of a minor committee one year takes charge of the works department the next, and he looks to promotion, after