

Government of Lethbridge, Alta.

More than one speaker recently has quoted Lethbridge, Alta., as being under Commission Government, whereas it was only adopted at the election in December last, since which time a charter has been sought from the Provincial Legislature granting the right to have this new form of civic Government.

Until this charter is in force, the old system of a Mayor and six Aldermen still remains, the Mayor giving his whole time and being paid a corresponding salary. The organization of the Civic Departments has been as follows, this having been adopted by the Council, 7th February, 1911.

Memorandum re Organization of the City Departments

1. Every Head of Department to have entire control of staff under him, and to report direct to Council.
2. Council retains the right of fixing salaries.
3. The Heads of all Departments to meet twice a week for the discussion of routine work.
4. Estimates of all new work to be laid before the Council for ratification.
5. Drafts of all new work of any nature whatsoever are to be referred to the City Solicitor for approval.
6. Tenders for material of any class of work are not to be opened unless in the presence of the Council or three Heads of Departments.
7. All supplies to be purchased by tender for the current year.
8. The Council to define work for each Department.

The Audit, Legal, Sinking Fund and Health Departments all report to the Council, while the heads of the Departments report direct to the Mayor.

In order to get the details at first hand, we have secured information from an expert correspondent in Lethbridge, who writes:—

"The vote last December was taken at the same time as an election for Mayor, Aldermen, and School Trustees; judging from the vote, the people are not as yet educated. In fact they have only had in our local papers copies of the Des Moines System thrown at them, day by day for the past two years. It is the natural inclination of the public to go against the Government.

"The Government proposed is straight Commission with all the frills—Initiative, Referendum, Recall, No qualifications for Commissioner are necessary; he need not be even a ratepayer, or on the voters list. Three men will in future govern Lethbridge, instead of seven. It is very doubtful what class of men the uneducated electors will place in these responsible positions."

As Proportional Representation is in force in Lethbridge, every elector had 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice, but as Commission Government secured 695 votes out of 1054 that were polled, it won by a straight majority.

It will be very interesting to watch the result of this experiment, the second in Canada, St. John, N. B., being the first city to adopt Commission Government.

Do not Want Civics

The Protestant Teachers of the Province of Quebec do not want Civics to be taught in the schools.

The Committee in the Course of Study report: "We are not in favour of adding 'Civics' as a subject to the Course of Study, but recommend that a suitable text book be found and authorized as a reference book in connection with the study of Canadian History."

By the way, it is interesting to note in the "Educational Record" that two Committees are to be "submerged" into one.

The Earth

Ella Wheeler Wilcox in "Everybody's Magazine"

(Poetry, too often, seems far from municipal affairs, but this poem contains the case for Housing in a way that should put it clearly before every one. It is an appeal that should be heard. *Ed.*)

I

To build a house, with Love for architect,
Ranks first and foremost in the joys of life.
And in a tiny cabin shaped for two,
The space for happiness is just as great
As in a palace. What a world were this
If each soul born received a plot of ground—
A little plot, whereon a home might rise,
And beauteous green things grow!

We give the dead,
The idle, vagrant dead, the potter's field,
Yet to the living not one inch of soil.
Nay, we take from them soil, and sun, and air,
To fashion slums and hell-holes for the race.
And to our poor we say: "Go starve and die
As beggars die; so gain your heritage."

II

That was a most uncanny dream: I thought the
wraiths of those
Long buried in the potter's field in shredded shrouds
arose;

They said: "Against the will of God
We have usurped the fertile sod.
Now will we make it yield."

Oh! but it was a gruesome sight, to see those phan-
toms toil:

Each to his own small garden bent; each spaded up
the soil

(I never knew Ghosts labored so);
Each scattered seed, and watched, till, lo!
The graves were opulent.

Then all among the fragrant greens, the silent, spec-
tral train

Walked, as if breathing in the breath of plant, and
flower and grain.

(I never knew Ghosts loved such things;
Perchance it brought back early springs
Before they thought of death.)

"The mothers' milk for living babes; the earth for
living hosts;

The clean flame for the un-souled dead." (Oh,
strange the words of Ghosts!)

"If we had owned this little spot
In life, we need not lie and rot
Here in a pauper's bed."

Segregation of Vice

Another opinion, based upon careful study, has been uttered against the fallacy of segregation as a remedy for the social evil. The Portland, Ore., Commission on Vice reports:

"The history of every restrictive district in the country has been the history of police and political corruption, of crime and bloodshed and scandal. Far from eliminating graft, such districts have proved the nursery of official blackmail, the central point from which the scheme of protection has reached out."