

The Forum

H. S. ROSS, K.C.

"Don't let us complain of things or persons, or of the nineteenth century, or of the indifference of the country . . . but simply say to ourselves: These are the things and persons through which and with which we have to work, and by influencing them or managing them or forcing them, the end must be attained or not at all.—Benjamin Jowett.

City Manager—112,571 City.

The City Manager of Grand Rapids, Michigan, reports good progress during the ten months of operation under a city manager. Some of the improvements are:

Approximately \$600,000 worth of property previously exempted from taxation, without adequate reason, is being replaced on the rolls.

The City Attorney and City Treasurer are collecting taxes from receiverships and bankrupts, based on a far reaching legal decision secured by them which will amount to about \$50,000, previously respread at large and paid by the general taxpayer and small home owner.

All ordinances of the city are being systematically gone over, revised and consolidated, and brought up-to-date.

The inspection of food stuffs, and the conditions under which food stuffs are sold, has been put on a firm basis.

The work formerly done by nine sanitary inspectors is now being done by three.

The medical staff of the Health Department are acting as physicians and surgeons for the Police and Fire Departments.

A full time physician to work on tuberculosis has been authorized.

People needing and entitled to material aid are not only being helped adequately, but a real effort is being made to place such families on a self-sustaining basis, with a large degree of success.

Centralized purchasing under the Purchasing Department will show a saving of about \$30,000 this year.

In spite of increased service, increased wages, increased cost of all materials, and no increase in tax rate, the year will be ended with a substantial cash balance instead of a deficit.

Running on Schedule.

This is the way the city manager of Waltham, Mass., is starting out, according to the Waltham Free Press:—

A definite schedule of office hours for the department heads has been arranged by City Manager Bingham, so that in future the public may know of the time when they can meet the supervisors at the department offices, on matters of business. Notices have been prepared by the City Manager and will be posted, showing the office hours of the city officials, and the office of the City Manager will be open in accord with the same schedule.

The office of the City Manager will be open for the transaction of official business of the city mornings from eight to ten o'clock. This means that the time will be given exclusively to conference on city work and meeting of city officials. From ten to eleven o'clock and from two to three o'clock visitors will be received, and any, aside from city officials, who seek conference with the City Manager on city matters must call in the two hours designated.

The same schedule will apply, so far as is possible, to the department offices.

In the other hours, the City Manager and department officials will be free for outside work, inspections, and other lines of their daily routine.

The adoption of a definite schedule was a necessity, for with almost a continual line of calls the City Manager could not expect to carry out his daily plan of work.

With the schedules posted, the public will have opportunity to know just when it can confer on city matters, and the new plan will work out well to general advantage.

Taxation.

Government (under our present system or lack of system) means taxation, and taxation means government. And how we dislike being fundamental when dealing with what we have been taught is a very difficult and delicate phase of our governmental problem. The people of California

are carrying on a campaign called The Great Adventure to free the land of the state to the people, open the sources of food and provision the Allies—by an initiative amendment to the State Constitution providing for the single tax on land values. The election is November 5, 1918. The proposed law is as follows:—

"The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

"A new section to be known as Section 15 is hereby added to Article XIII. of the Constitution, to read as follows:

"On and after January 1, 1919, all public revenues, state, county, municipal and district, shall be raised by taxation of the value of land irrespective of improvements thereon; provided that war veteran, college and church exemptions in section 1¼, 1½ and 1a, Article XIII. of the Constitution, are not affected hereby."

The intent of this single tax amendment is to prevent the holding of land out of use for speculation and to apply the land values which the community creates to community purposes. All constitutional provisions and laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed."

If 100,000 voters sign the initiative demand the voters may vote yea or no on the question of freeing twenty million idle acres of California. The Great Adventure polled 263,000 votes last year and needs only 70,000 more in order to win.

There is a strong Anti-Single Tax League and a vigorous campaign is being waged.

No Spoils at Dayton.

Mr. Barlow, the new city manager, announced that with the exception of one or two necessary adjustments there would be no changes in personnel. Absence of personal politics guarantees under the city manager plan, continuity of municipal policy.

Boston's Mayor.

The Mayor of Boston is to be limited to a single term of four years, and no longer, subject to recall at the end of two years.

The Short Ballot Bulletin (283 Fourth Ave., New York City)) says of this change:

"The philosophy underlying this change is interesting, but why if the mayor is a good one, should he not be retained—good officials are none too plentiful. If he is a 'bad-one' don't re-elect him. It is another attempt at Government by repression instead of government of responsible power."

Proportional Representation.

This review is issued quarterly by the American P. R. League Franklin Bank Bldg., Philadelphia. The January number is particularly interesting, containing a re-statement of the case for P.R. The article is entitled: "The Fundamentals of P.R. And Why P.R. is Fundamental." There are introductory statements by Dr. Eliot, President Emeritus, Harvard University, Wm. D. Foulke, President American P.R. League, and D. C. Coates, Vice-Chairman National Party.

It is pointed out the majority system in multi-member districts or a large district is used for the election of the commission in most of the cities governed under the commission-manager plan. What in those cities (is asked) is its effect on the community? At Dayton the administration of the manager, Henry M. Waite, was efficient and humanly sympathetic. Yet after four years, the city was divided from top to bottom—split in two—by the block vote of commissioners in November, 1917. Professor Raymond Moley wrote in the Survey of December 22, 1917: "In Dayton the present commission is composed of four members of a non-partisan organization and one Democrat. During the past two years a considerable amount of dissatisfaction has been expressed on account of the personnel of the commission. It has been repeatedly asserted that the membership of the commission represents only the business and professional classes of the community." Under the block vote 58 per cent of the voters elected 100 per cent of the group of representatives chosen, and that forty-two per cent have no representation at all. While the