

COMMISSION IN DES MOINES EXPLAINED BY ONE WHO HELPED TO PUT PLAN IN OPERATION

John MacVicar Describes Working of New Municipal Organization—Responsibility on Few Men Declared to Make Them Efficient and Salaries Paid to Ensure the Thorough Doing of Tasks

City government by commission, now crowded by many to be past the experimental stage, is a topic of deep interest in St. John and therefore the Times to-day presents to its readers a first-hand opinion of the working of the new plan in Des Moines. It is a city that was one of the pioneers in the effort to raise the standard of municipal efficiency. The writer of the article, John MacVicar, has been secretary of the League of American Municipalities since its organization a number of years ago. He assisted his home city of Des Moines in changing its form of government, was elected to the first commission to serve under the new system and has been re-elected for a second term of two years. He writes:

We have been slow to understand that what is needed to secure results in city government is capacity to perform—to do things. Our business men have also failed to see that in their efforts to build an enterprising and prosperous city a municipal government can be made an important factor, though now it is usually a handicap.

It seems not to have occurred to our municipal reformers or legislators that what is needed to secure good results is to place or concentrate responsibility rather than to divide it by devising innumerable "checks and balances." With such direct responsibility and power comes opportunity, and it is my observation that many capable and earnest men have gone out of municipal office discouraged and almost demoralized for lack of opportunity to make good.

But that day of little faith in the power of democracy to do things well has almost passed away. The schoolmaster has been abroad in the land. The people are learning to rule cities, states and nations, and a hundred American cities, led by Galveston and Des Moines, today demonstrate that it is possible for the people to rescue their cities from the domination of the few, from the despotism of the politician and the boss and rule them for the people's good.

Galveston First Tries Plan

Galveston, devastated by a tidal wave and threatened with bankruptcy, introduced commission government as a war measure. Des Moines had no floods, but had other calamities which in a way were almost as disastrous to the city's welfare. Our city noted the success of the municipal management at Galveston, and our commercial organization went before our legislature with a bill similar to the Galveston plan, which at the first session attracted little attention and no consideration from that body. The movement of commission government, however, continued, and the newspapers and interested citizens redoubled their efforts, and public sentiment in favor of the movement; and, at the next session of the legislature, with the assistance of Governor Cummins the Des Moines plan, differing materially from the Galveston charter, and which was based on much patriotic consideration, was made a law.

Our commercial body believed it possible to make over the city government from a weighty liability to a live asset and this has been done.

The most essential and fundamental features of the commission form of government as embodied in the charter of my home city of Des Moines, are the elimination of ward and party lines, the concentration of power and responsibility in a single body of five officials elected by the people of a united city, and the introduction of direct legislation through the initiative, referendum and recall.

Among the many advantages of this simple and extremely democratic system are the shorter ballot, simplifying the election and enabling both the individual voter and the community as a whole to

know just what they are doing in the polling booth; the unification of the city as a political organism and of the municipality as an expression of its political life; the creation of a new and better civic spirit, which is also expressed in a quickened industrial and business activity, to the benefit of all; the elimination of partisan politics from the city's business; the selection of municipal employees and minor officials by a responsible body, having power to make the city's civil list elastic, so that it contracts and expands with the city's needs instead of growing into an unvarying burden upon the public; the consequent elevation of municipal employment to the plane of merit and honor, instead of letting it fall to the level of inefficiency or graft; the payment of salaries for the practically undivided time and energy of the council or commission; the transaction of public business in both large and small affairs, without delay; a better quality of work both in the direct service of the city and in service performed by contract, and the retaining in the hands of the people of the entire power of both legislation and administration through the initiative, referendum and recall, thus putting the political machine, the objectionable ward politician and the municipal boss out of business and opening the door to every citizen who has the desire and the capacity to serve the city in office.

Many Cities Follow

More than 100 cities in 21 different states have within less than three years adopted new charters along these lines and several hundred additional cities are considering the adoption of like measures whenever the legislature will permit.

Many commission charters vary in more or less essential particulars and some appear to have been formed with a view to presenting novel and original features rather than by profiting by experience already gained from the operation of the more approved forms. For example, some Colorado cities have thought best to elect each commissioner for the specific department in which he is to serve, instead of leaving it to the commission to assign its own members to the several places. So far as I know there was no reason arising from the practical workings of the Galveston or Des Moines plans for making this change. On the contrary, it makes the commission less elastic and deprives the city of the possible advantage of a reassignment of the commission if the first allotment proves not to be the best. Besides, it reduces the responsibility of the commission as a whole.

A still graver and more essential mistake, in my judgment, has been made by the city of Boston, which in the abundance of its caution, adopted several of the good features of the Des Moines plan, but left out the one essential element of the commission plan itself, thus depriving itself of its chief advantage. Having its feet firmly on the ground of experience, a mayor of large powers was no reason for the Des Moines plan, but the city at large and at a supposedly non-partisan election, with certain safeguards real or supposed thrown around it, is probably an improvement upon the old charter of Boston; but why the city of Boston should have been so close to adopt a method providing divided responsibility that has been previously tried and found wanting in Indianapolis and St. Wayne, Ind., and elsewhere, is something an uncultured western man can hardly explain.

Another fundamental element lacking in the Boston charter, if I may be permitted to criticize, is the important power of appointment of the working body of the city government reserved by the state for appointment by the Governor. This is not only a further division of responsibility and powers properly belonging to city officials, but also it denies the people of the city the right of home rule, and cannot fail to have a detrimental effect upon the civic spirit which counts for so much in city government. We should not fear to place upon the people the full burden of the responsibility of their government.

Better Service Secured

Better service is secured under the commission plan because the city government is constantly in the line of sight of publicity; because being elected at large, the five men are free from ward influences, and when right upheld by the whole city, the official is able to render more independent service; because, owing both his nomination and his election directly to all the people, he is emancipated from partisan pressure and the clamor for rewards for service rendered; because, representing the entire city and not a small fraction of it, his service trains him to take a broader view of both his duties and his opportunities for public service. The entire city organization is free from the complications of county, state and national politics, and becomes an instrument for transacting the city's business and nothing else.

The initiative and referendum place in the hands of the people the means to prevent unwise and venial acts on the part of officials, and permit a direct voice in enacting or repealing wise or unwise measures.

Objection is made that it would be fatal to our public institutions if the legislative and the administrative bodies were joined in one, and fatal to our cities if the tax levying and tax spending body was one and the same. There is no objection, as far as I am concerned, to the city council is not in fact a legislative body. Any man of experience knows that when a state legislature gets through enacting laws for a municipality it leaves very little for the city council to do in the way of legislation. Its duties might be likened to those of a business corporation with powers to elect bylaws for its conduct.

The primary evil in the conduct of affairs in all cities, is first and foremost the demoralization of officials because of the prevalence of politics, particularly party politics. The officials elected are rarely free moral agents. Few officials, however honest, are lacking in that element, which appeals to the sense of obligation for favors received, and the

official is a rare exception who does not have political ambition.

Des Moines is United

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the Des Moines plan, it has brought results in Des Moines. To be specific, it has created a new, active and intelligent citizenship. Previous to the advent of the Des Moines plan, the community was divided against itself and we marveled that, with such internal dissension, our city did not progress and prosper. We had an east and a west side of one river and a north and south side of another. We had a west side school district and an east side school district. We had seven wards and seven councilmen besides two councilmen-at-large, all serving for nominal salaries; a mayor, a board of public works, a board of health, a board of fire and police, a board of parks and a board of public library.

The legislature after repeated efforts by its members, permitted the adoption of the Des Moines plan of city government, and this appeared to be the one thing necessary to accomplish the city's regeneration.

The hardest task of all was the changing the board of public works. The five commissioners or councilmen first elected under the Des Moines plan had previously held public office, to pay the livery or county, and had to become accustomed to the new order of things. The newspapers of Iowa outside of Des Moines elevated their eyebrows when the result of the election was known. "The character of the men elected," said the Sioux City Journal, "includes the possibility of the success of the plan. But within two years a Sioux City man under those men of only moderate abilities adopted the same plan of government. Public opinion undertook the task of making over the politicians on the council. The newspapers and the people pledged support, but demanded action. The new government was organized and the board of public works already referred to was created upon the assumption that it was to be the body to take charge of the city's government, with entire charge of the streets and all public improvements, street lighting, street cleaning and making all purchases pertaining thereto. It was the intent of the law that the council should not be a mere legislative body, to approve contracts made by the board of public works and the city commission, to pay the bills and payrolls, to levy the taxes and to pass such ordinances as might be necessary. It was planned that the board of public works should be wholly independent, politically of both the mayor and council; but, with that plan, the city of Des Moines found itself handicapped by political pressure from both. On the one hand it found itself under obligations to the mayor for appointment and reappointment, and on the other to the council for confirmation and for the funds with which to conduct the city's work.

Modern municipal government has been added to the public works department and the former shuffles conduct, which was real or supposed thrown around it, is probably an improvement upon the old charter of Boston; but why the city of Boston should have been so close to adopt a method providing divided responsibility that has been previously tried and found wanting in Indianapolis and St. Wayne, Ind., and elsewhere, is something an uncultured western man can hardly explain.

An intelligent system of inspection has been introduced, the inspection of city buildings and the inspection of city work. The payment of extras to contractors, formerly a common custom, is now unknown. The contractor of public work has for the first time been given to understand that specifications have been drawn up and that the quality of work required is to be maintained. The city hall, finding no one with time to entertain him, has abandoned that resort as a loafing place. Money formerly wasted has been conserved to prevent the annual deficit or used to repair neglected pavements and to increase the street cleaning funds, and the streets and alleys are for the first time actually cleaned. At the end of the first year of commission government, the general deficit of commission government in 1907 was turned into a surplus of \$100,000 in 1908. Tax levies were revised downward and public improvements multiplied. The city, for the first time, discontinued the bills and collected the interest from the banks on its daily balances.

These improvements were commented upon and the council was encouraged.

The non-partisan feature of the Des Moines plan has actually removed party politics from our municipal elections and our city employees are no longer used as the tools of party machines for the city, county or state organizations.

The change has worked wonders in local politics. Our county and state political contests are tame affairs with the city organization removed. At our second election under the Des Moines plan the city employees were started by the appearance of a notice prominently posted in every office in the city hall, which notice was directed to be posted by the council, notifying all city employees that under the civil service rules they were not permitted to take any part in politics except to vote, and warning them that any infraction of this rule would render them liable to dismissal. The rule was strictly observed.

Our acts have not been faultless. We have simply abolished an antiquated and complicated system that made it practically impossible for first-rate men to accomplish anything, and have installed a simpler system under which it has become difficult for even second-rate men to avoid giving good tests, and themselves good examples of efficiency and self-reliance.

PRUDENTIAL INVESTMENT CO. LTD.

PAYS 12 PER CENT

The shareholders of the Prudential Investment Co. Ltd. of Vancouver (B. C.) will be pleased to note on another page the dividend notice of the company. For the half year ending Dec. 31st, 1910, a dividend of 12 per cent on the paid-up capital of \$1,000,000, or \$120,000, has been declared. Although this prosperous company is only three years old, it has a record of 100 per cent increase in value, and the 7 per cent cumulative first preference stock is now being placed at par.

MRS. PETER GREEN, JR.,
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Says:—"Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup is the Best Cough Syrup She Ever Used."

She writes:—"Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup is the best cough syrup I ever used. My baby had a very bad cold. I was using Dr. Wood's medicine until that cough seemed to help the child. I bought a bottle of Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup, and I have it in the house at the present time for the children. I don't think I could get along without it. I wish to thank you for all the good it has been to my family."

Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup contains all the lung healing virtues of the Norway pine tree, which combined with Wild Cherry bark, and other potent remedies, makes it one of the greatest known preparations for Coughs, Colds and all Throat and Lung Troubles.

It is put up in a yellow wrapper; three pine trees the trade mark; price 25 cents at all dealers.

Manufactured only by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

MORNING NEWS OVER THE WIRES

During Saturday's fierce gale and blinding snow storm two men lost their lives near New Glasgow. Alexander McDonald lost his way on the ice and broke through together with his horse, and was drowned. A man named Starr, who was driving to Dominion with a companion named O'Hanlon, was so badly frozen that he died. Two men and a girl were killed by the falling of a large engulphed in Philadelphia yesterday. Half a dozen were injured, several seriously. The dead were John Ellis, 40 years old; Henry Hahn, 58 years old; and Ruth S. Ribbold, aged 17. The sign fell from the top of a four-story building.

On Jan. 30—Representatives of the Dominion Steel Company, who are in the city, are urging the removal of the steel houses which will expire in June. One argument is that it would offend, or tend to, the effect of the proposed reciprocity agreement upon the industry.

MORNING LOCALS

At a largely attended meeting of the Liberals of Westfield held last evening, delegates to the Kings-Albert convention, which is to be held at Hamilton on Feb. 15, were elected as follows: C. R. McKenzie, chairman; C. T. Hayter, J. A. Lingard and J. Lingard, vice-presidents; R. T. Ballentine, C. T. Crawford, P. G. Nae and E. R. Macdonald. The meeting was most enthusiastic and in addition to the election of delegates some very interesting matters were discussed.

The informal dance given by the Norumbega Club in Keith's theatre assembly rooms last evening was largely attended. A pleasing programme of dances was carried out, after which luncheon was served.

The adjourned meeting of the creditors of the White Candy Company will be held this afternoon. It is understood that an offer has been made to the company to move their business to a Nova Scotia town and it is said they are considering the offer.

The Epworth League of the Queen square Methodist church had a delightful social last evening. Music and amusements were indulged in by the young people and refreshments were served. Mrs. Rodgers were the hostesses.

There was a large attendance yesterday afternoon at the meeting of the St. John Art Club in their studio, Union street. Miss McGovern continued the reading of the art criticism of Kenyon Cox. The subject was Millais and Burne-Jones. The reading aroused great interest. A committee of the ladies served 5 o'clock tea.

At the close of Sunday evening's service in the Ludlow street Baptist church, a congregational meeting was held. Rev. W. R. Robinson presiding. The meeting was for the purpose of electing two deacons, and resulted in the election of L. L. Sharpe and James Gray. Good feeling and harmony prevailed and the congregation was much pleased with the results.

With the consent of King George V., Art. II, R. V. de Bury, of the Royal Artillery, has been given authority to assume the name and title of Count Vincent de Bury, Capt. de Bury was graduated from the Royal Military College, Kingston, in 1892.

PILES QUICKLY CURED AT HOME

Instant Relief. Permanent Cure—Trial Package Mailed Free to All in Plain Wrapper.

Piles is a fearful disease, but easy to cure, if you go at it right. An operation with the knife is dangerous, cruel, humiliating and unnecessary. There is just one other sure way to be cured—painless, safe and in the privacy of your own home—it is Pyramid Pile Cure. We mail a trial package free to all who write.

It will give you instant relief, show you the harmless, painless nature of this great remedy, and start you well on the way toward a perfect cure.

Then you can get a full-size box from any druggist for 50 cents, and often one box cures.

Insist on getting what you call for. If the dealer gives you something else, tell you something just as good, it is because he makes more money on the substitute.

The cure begins at once and continues rapidly until it is complete and permanent.

You can go right on with your work and be as usual as before all the time. It is well worth trying.

Just send your name and address to Pyramid Drug Co., 92 Pyramid Building, Montreal, Me., and receive free by return mail the trial package in a plain wrapper. Thousands have been cured in this easy, painless and inexpensive way, in the privacy of the home.

No knife and no torture. No doctor and his bills. All druggists, 50 cents. Write today for a free package.

George E. Allen of Sanford, Me., has been a dairy for 28 years, thus beating the record of Charles J. Gregory of Glen, Me., who has been a dairy for 24 years. Mr. Allen began his 37th year.

It requires more than a century for a cedar tree to grow large enough to yield a barrel of lumber.

Our Annual Mid-Winter Clearance Sale

OF BOOTS, SHOES, SLIPPERS AND RUBBERS

Commences Wednesday, February 1st

The goods in this sale comprise all Broken Lines, left over from last season, single pairs, and lines which we have decided to discontinue.

Remember this is a sale of fine quality footwear, among them you will find the famous Walk-Over Shoes, Queen Quality Shoes and other first-class makes reduced to less than the price of ordinary shoes.

Come and Secure Bargains

Men's Velour Calf Walk-Over Bala—All sizes; \$5.50. Reduced to \$4.00	Women's Platinum Calf Walk-Over Bala—Sizes 3, 3 1/2, 4, 5, 5 1/2, 6; \$5.00. Reduced to \$3.75	Girls' Patent Colt Button Boots, Suede top. Sizes 11, 13, 13 1/2, 1; \$3.00. Reduced to \$2.10
Men's Patent Colt Walk-Over Bala—All sizes; \$6.00. Reduced to \$4.50	Women's Tan Calf Walk-Over Bala—Sizes 2 1/2, 3, 4, 4 1/2, 5 1/2, 6; \$5.00. Reduced to \$3.75	Girls' Dongola Kid Lace Boots—All sizes; \$1.60. Reduced to \$1.10
Men's Tan Calf Walk-Over Bala—All sizes; \$5.50. Reduced to \$4.00	Women's Patent Colt Blucher Bala—Sizes 2 1/2, 3 1/2, 4, 4 1/2, 5 1/2, 6; \$5.00. Reduced to \$3.60	Men's \$1.10 Storm Rubbers—All sizes. 85c.
Men's Calf Bala, Goodyear Welt, sizes 6, 8, 9, 10; \$3.50. Reduced to \$2.40	Women's Dongola Kid Blucher Bala—Sizes 2 1/2, 3 1/2, 4, 5, 5 1/2, 6 1/2; \$2.25. Reduced to \$1.30	Men's \$1.00 Rubbers—All sizes. 80c.
		Women's 85c. Storm Rubbers—All sizes. 65c.
		Women's 75c. Rubbers—All sizes. 60c.

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Will protect you against colds, coughs and sudden exposure to variable weather, by means of the surplus of natural heat it generates in your organism.

It is a Canadian product for the use of Canadians in our Canadian climate. Fully matured under Government supervision.

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MONTREAL CAPTURING THE NEW YORK GRAIN TRADE

New York, Jan. 30.—Many great ocean steamships leaving New York now go out ballasted with water where once they carried grain. So the Interstate Commerce Commission heard here today when it resumed the adjourned hearing relative to the alleged discrimination of railroad grain rates against New York and in favor of Montreal. The witness who so testified was

James T. Parker, of the firm of Parker & Graf, members of the New York Produce Exchange.

Mr. Parker contended that a continuation of the five and a half cents per bushel rate would result in New York losing all of its export grain business. As a matter of fact, he asserted, it had already been lost and he maintained that a rate of four cents per bushel in effect between May 15 and November 15 is needed in order to encourage the movement by way of this port.

W. A. Walburn, representing the New York Chamber of Commerce, announced that the chamber proposed to submit a new basis of rates which would not disturb the existing rate structure, but which would put New York on an equal footing with Montreal.

In a letter received from R. M. Fawcett, of Saskatoon, now ranching in the middle west, he says that he will soon return to New Brunswick, as he is not satisfied with things in the west. He would advise all farmers who are comfortably situated in this province to remain on their holdings.

THE BEST REMEDY

For Women—Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Belleville, Ont.—"I was so weak and worn out from a female weakness that I concluded to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I took several bottles of it, and I gained strength so rapidly that I seemed to have a new woman of me. I can do as good a day's work as I ever did. I sincerely bless my mind to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Compound, and I am so glad to tell you for your kind letter. I give you permission to publish this and for your wish, Mrs. ALBERT B. BART, Belleville, Ontario, Canada."

Women everywhere should remember that there is no other remedy known to medicine that will cure female weakness and so successfully carry women through the changes of life as Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from native roots and herbs.

For 30 years it has been curing women from the worst forms of female ills—inflammation, ulceration, displacements, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, and nervous prostration.

If you want special advice write for it to Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass. It is free and always helpful.