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STUDIES IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

The recently issued volume "Municipal Government" is an important addition to the literature of that subject. The subject is one concerning which not a great deal has been written. Political writers have for the most part devoted their attention more to the division of power between the Dominion and the provinces than to the distribution of power within them. But the past decade has brought many changes, and the sphere of municipal activity has widened. Local government in this country is no longer a matter of the simple organization of the past. In the many large towns and cities it has become a study of considerable complexity and more elaborate machinery for the proper conducting of local affairs has perforce had to be devised.

In the work referred to the principles of local government in the Dominion are analysed and discussed in sixteen papers contributed by writers of undoubted ability and knowledge. They are edited by Mr. S. Morley Wickett,

for some time lecturer in political economy in the University of Toronto. No attempt is made, Mr. Wickett explains in an introductory note, to set up generalizations as to the discovery in local laws or practices of regard for certain traditional political principles. "To undertake that would be at present highly venturesome, perhaps fantastic. Canada is a country in the making, and the influences of day-to-day legislation are too chaotic and utilitarian. But it is just this practical character which adds to the interest and value of a review of political institutions in a young commonwealth."

Mr. Wickett points to the fact that the large number of amending acts passed each year is gradually bringing about growing similarity in municipal law and organization, Ontario serving most frequently as the model. The editor himself contributes a very comprehensive description of the municipal government of Toronto. Other papers from his pen deal with city government in Canada, municipal government in the North-West Territories, local government in British Columbia, and present conditions generally. Mr. W. D. Lighthall, Mayor of Westmount, Quebec, contributes a suggestive sketch of that "model town;" Mr. Adam Shortt, a historical sketch of the municipal government of Ontario, and Mr. Alan C. Ewart a history of the municipal government of Manitoba. Each of the other papers deals with subjects of equal interest, and together they form what is perhaps the most complete study that has yet been attempted in this important field of Canadian public life. For students who would go beyond the scope of this book, Mr. Wickett has compiled three bibliographies of the subject.

It is impossible to recommend the book too highly to municipal officials and all who take an active part in local government. As a work to be studied and as a work of reference, it is quite indispensable

The Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto, are the publishers; price \$3.50.

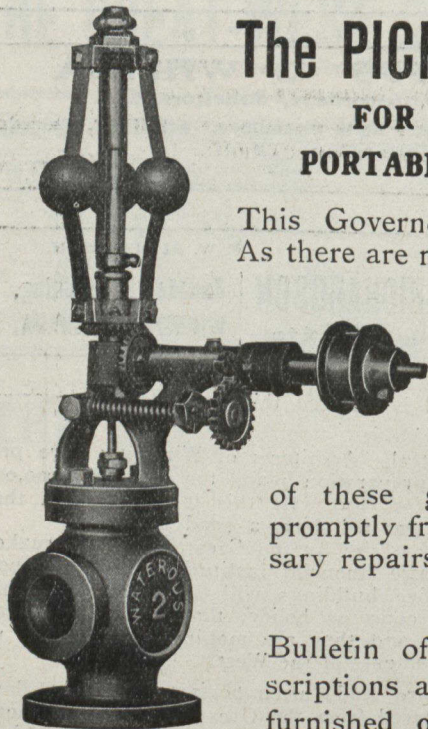
"Experiment" writes to ask when the idea of towns or cities insuring all the houses in them first arose. Charlton T. Lewis, in a paper prepared for Black's Encyclopedia, says that when the common council of the city of London, about 1680, voted to insure the houses of citizens at lower rates than the fire office, then just founded, the courts put a speedy end to the movement; holding that the charter conferred on the city no power to transact such business. "Thus the socialistic theory that insurance is properly a branch of government is almost as old as the business itself."

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