

"Much has been said and written about Municipal Government by Commission during the last two or three years. We have seen the subject discussed in magazines and newspapers, so that even those among us who have not given much attention to it, or are not particularly interested in the various forms of civic government, are asking: "What is Commission Government? Where did it originate? How does it differ in form from those with which we are all familiar? Why has it spread so rapidly in the United States? Why has it not been equally popular in Canada? etc.

"This form of government originated in the city of Galveston, Texas. In 1900 there was a terrific tidal wave and hurricane which swept over the city of Galveston, and I think 1,600 of its inhabitants lost their lives. The city was practically wiped out. In the months that followed this terrible disaster, the ordinary civic government proved utterly helpless and incompetent, and finally it broke down altogether, so that those men who had a stake in the city saw the people leaving every day, and the credit of the city becoming worse and worse. So they decided that unless there was some very radical means adopted the city was doomed. They petitioned the State Legislature to give them a new charter, and to replace it temporarily by a commission to be under the control of five men, who would act efficiently. There was quite a struggle in getting this charter, but finally they obtained it.

"The Commission consisted of five, two appointed by the city and three appointed by the Government of the State, though later these men were elected by the city. For want of a better name to describe the new form of government it was called "Commission Government," and this has stuck to it ever since. These men were paid officials. The President-Mayor, as he was called, presided at all the meetings, had a vote, but no veto. Various departments of the city's activities were divided among the four Commissioners. They were given what were considered in Galveston, particularly wide powers, although it does not appear very extreme to us as we are familiar with such