

ALDERMEN AND COMMITTEES—(Continued)

The other causes of the marked failure of this innovation are, according to me, as follows:

1—The physical impossibility for 4 or 5 men to attend to the extensive and important business of a large City;

2—The forced abandonment of a large part of the administration into the hands of the heads of departments, who have an interest in giving importance to their respective department, either by unreasonably increasing their staff or by executing permanent works on the largest possible scale, the importance of their service naturally implying the importance of their position;

3—The almost complete absence of relations between the Commissioners and the great majority of the employees, who are, nevertheless, under their control;

And I am not speaking here of the unavoidable differences of opinion existing between the Commissioners and the Aldermen.

Notwithstanding the contentions of those who are in favor of maintaining the Board of Commissioners, the administration of a large city cannot be compared to that of a private concern. It is true that important companies, such as the Grand Trunk Railway Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, are administered only by a few men; but these organizations are controlled by a certain number of shareholders, and all the efforts of those who manage them tend to realize the largest possible profits and to increase as far as possible the amount of dividends. On the contrary, the Cities being "bodies without a soul," each rate-payer considers he has the right to get his share of improvements, etc., in return for the taxes he is paying. The task is obviously too arduous for a limited number of administrators.

Moreover, the managers of large companies are carefully selected from among experienced men, while the Commissioners, whatever may be their good will, cannot, even in four years, become acquainted with the innumerable details of a civic administration; each Commissioner is in charge of so many departments that he cannot get familiar with the working of the machinery thereof and give each of them the attention it deserves.

I therefore come to the conclusion that the system is not good and I am of opinion that the management of municipal business should be entrusted to a Mayor and one body—whatever may be the name given to those of whom the same shall be composed. The number of these representatives should be proportioned to the population of the City administered by them and should, of course, be large enough so that the influence of monopolizers, schemers and other scourges of civic administrations, who, unfortunately, are now very numerous, may not be easily exercised.

The work should be divided between a certain number of Committees.

The Board of Trade, the Chambre de Commerce, and all the leading institutions entrust the administration of their affairs to Committees and obtain most satisfactory results. Why should not this system be applied to municipalities, and how is it to be assumed that four or five administrators can efficiently manage and supervise all the departments of an important city.

The chairman of these Committees might be elected by the real estate owners of the whole of the City, owing to the importance of their office and also in view of the paramount interest which the rate-payers have in supervising the expenditure of public money.

I also consider that the civic administrators should be subject to the recall law; the will of the people who elect their representative is supreme, and they have the right to replace those they consider as unworthy of representing them, on account of their incompetency or dishonesty.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I am of opinion that the ideal system of civic government is the system of representation by a Mayor and one body: Aldermen, Commissioners or others, forming a Council divided into Committees; and it seems to me that the number of representatives for such Cities as Montreal and Toronto, should be at least 24.

These few suggestions and remarks are based on my fifteen years' experience as an Alderman and are the result of the constant study I have made for the purpose of improving the City's administration system.

DISCUSSION.

President Boyd.—"I am sure this paper will be of interest to you all. Alderman Lariviere has had a long experience in municipal affairs in Montreal. He sat here while the Committee system was in vogue, and he has been on the City Council while the present system has been in

operation. I agree with his paper to a great extent. At first I was in favour of the Board of Commissioners and the Aldermen, but it has not been as satisfactory as it should be, but I think that some change will be coming in the near future. No doubt Toronto and Montreal could not adopt satisfactorily a commission form of government such as they have in Lethbridge. As Alderman Lariviere has stated, the tremendous amount of work that Montreal has to have done, could not be left in the hands of a few men. It could not be attended to satisfactorily. I think we owe a hearty vote of thanks to Alderman Lariviere for this paper. It opens up the first of a series of discussions on administration. The other papers to come this evening deal with the commission form and city manager form of government, and we will get information from them as well."

Mayor Hardie.—"He says this city should be ruled by twenty-four men. In that I probably would agree with him, but could not the work be divided up so that each of these twenty-four men would be responsible to the people?"

Alderman Lariviere.—"I think that one committee cannot fill the position very well. Municipal administration is not the same as in incorporated companies. There are so many details, so many employees who are trying to draw the most they can from the municipalities. I think you have experience of these difficulties, and Mr. Boyd too. That is why I do not think one body of administrators is able to do good practical work. There should be a number of committees."

President.—"I am against the committee system. I differ with Alderman Lariviere in that."

Mayor Hardie.—"He says that the salary list has doubled, trebled and quadrupled since 1908. Will he tell me how much the population has increased in the same time, and what extra duties were incurred that caused that increase of salaries?"

Alderman Lariviere.—"I suppose that there was an increase in the duties, but not enough to warrant them doubling and trebling the number of employees."

President.—"In 1910 the City proceeded to annex about nine outside municipalities. That is the cause of the increase in the salary list."

Alderman Lariviere.—"We increased the population but we increased the employees too. If I had more time I would show you that that does not make much difference. Let me take the year 1911 after those annexations were made. Mr. Pelletier has given me the reports of 1911. Since 1911 the number of employees has doubled, and the salaries and wages have doubled as well, and as I explained to you they doubled the debt. As Alderman Boyd says, we made some annexations. It is true we annexed about one-quarter more employees than they had before they were annexed. It seems to me that the first body of Commissioners in Montreal failed because, though they were honest and well intentioned, they had no experience at all in municipal affairs, and they were entirely controlled by employees. To me it seems that this is the principal reason for the increasing of expenses over the old scale."

Alderman Ryan.—"Do you think that if you gave the heads of departments some latitude, you would have a better service. When you engage a head of a department, and call him director or chief or what you like, he should be really the head of the department. I do not think that the aldermen should interfere with the men who are engaged. I think Mayor Church made the best suggestion, when he said that the key to good municipal administration was to get good men at the heads of departments, and to give them full confidence, and to allow them to run their department." In the City of Toledo, Ohio, there is a Council or Commission, the Mayor is the whole thing. He is elected for two years, and he is the administrative head. The aldermen only have legislative powers. You speak of your City Councillor as having been here twenty-five years and that he must know what is wanted in the city. The same should be true of the assessor, engineer, and treasurer. If you were to place more confidence in them, and give them charge of the department, they would show results and lessen the number of employees."

Mayor Stevenson of London.—"We had in London twelve aldermen elected from wards. We then changed to election from all over the city. We have now gone back to the ward system, with four controllers elected from all over the city."

President.—"That is practically our system."

Mayor Stevenson.—"We have four committees to work, three aldermen on each committee, and a controller on