

Government by the old ward system, but is a combination of the two, and as such cannot continue indefinitely.

Mayor Lavallee discussing the matter, says in part:

"After fourteen years experience in civic matters, and after a thorough knowledge of past and present conditions, I am absolutely convinced that the present system of Government cannot continue. The Board of Control and the City Council are finding it impossible to work together. The Aldermen have too little to do, and as a consequence, spend their time in hampering and thwarting the wishes of the Board of Control."

Mayor Lavallee then added: "The people should be asked at the next election to decide upon what they want; if they wish to revert to the old ward system, it is for them to say. On the other hand, if they want Government by commission, they must pronounce for that. The present arrangement with two bodies continually in conflict, does not make for good government. Such an arrangement would not be tolerated in any business organization in the country. Under the present arrangement, we have a most roundabout way of doing things. The Board of Control passes recommendations, which are sent to the City Council for adoption. It is held there until the Council meets, and then is very often sent back to the Board of Control for further consideration. This results in needless delays."

In conclusion, Mayor Lavallee said: "I have not the slightest doubt but that the ward system is a failure, but I am also ready to admit that our present system of Government is also a failure. I would suggest that a Board of Control of seven or nine members be elected by the City as a whole, and the management of the municipality be turned over to them. Certainly some change must be made if Montreal is to make any progress at all."

These remarks by Mayor Lavallee are likely to bring the issue to a head. Montreal has obtained the unenviable reputation of being the worst governed city on the continent. Scores of things which are of the most vital interest to the city, are simply thrown between councillors and controllers like a football, and in the end nothing is done. We have only to point to a few instances. The Tramways question has now been dragging along for nearly three years, and apparently we are no nearer a satisfactory settlement of the question than we were years ago. There is also such questions as provision for parks, play-grounds and boulevards, the purchase of the water-works, the placing of overhead wires in conduits and many other questions, which are receiving

little or no attention. Montreal according to competent business men, will have a million people within the next ten years. We are making absolutely no provision for the needs of a million people. A score of matters should be settled at once, and some intelligent provision made for the future growth of the city. We have continued too long our "topsy-like" method of growing up. The first step towards the new condition of affairs is to abolish the aldermen, and have the city governed by a Board of Control consisting of carefully selected and well trained business men.

AMERICAN RAILROADS AND FREIGHT RATES.

American railroad men are casting envious eyes on Canada, and are wishing that some of the liberality which characterizes the Canadian Government would find its way to their side of the border.

In the United States, the railroads have been forbidden by the Interstate Commerce Commission to increase their freight rates. At the same time, they are being forced by their employees to increase wages. In addition, the cost of material and everything which goes into the upkeep and operating of a railroad is on the increase, which adds to the burden of the companies; in brief, the roads are between the "upper and nether millstones," and are finding the situation a very trying one.

The railroads are now making a determined effort to secure permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to increase their freight rates. At the same time, they are carrying on a campaign in the press for the purpose of securing the sympathy and support of the public in their fight. They point out that the railroads are needing money very badly, yet are unable to secure it. The New York Commercial and Financial Chronicle is authority for the statement that since 1908 short-time notes of railroads bearing high rates of interest have increased from 187 million dollars to 319 million dollars in 1911 and to 368 million dollars in 1912. The railroads have secured the money represented by the difference in these figures, but they have had to pay high for it, and it is a system of financing that cannot be continued. Within the past two days comes announcement of a receivership for the Frisco System, controlling more than 7,500 miles of road, and while the financial position of this road has been somewhat precarious for years the immediate cause of the receivership is the maturing of two and one-half million dollars of short-time notes.