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MUNICIPAL GOVT. IN SASKATCHEWAN—Cont.

of publicity by those who should be in the best position to consider them with due regard to the needs of the times and the practicability of the remedies proposed.

President Wilson has said that the great weakness of the American Federal system of government on which their state and municipal governments are modelled is that it parcels out power and confuses responsibility.* Many of the commissioner forms of municipal administration that have been set up in some of the cities of the United States are still open to this objection being nothing less than councils of reduced numbers called commissioners instead of aldermen, and drawing salaries for work for which the aldermen received none.

Another feature of parliamentary government is that the executive early in the sessions of the legislature submits a budget or program of contemplated expenditure. President Wilson and ex-President Taft have expressed regret that their political systems do not afford opportunity for the submission to the legislature of such a financial program, and efforts are being made to have budget methods adopted in several States.

Section 49 of the Saskatchewan Cities Act requires the commissioners to bring down a budget and reads as follows:—"The commissioners of the city shall submit to the council at its first meeting in each year recommendation and estimates for expenditures which in their opinion should be made by the city during the year; and the council shall deal with the same and shall provide the necessary funds for such expenditures as it may determine to make."

Many of the Canadian municipalities which are contemplating seeking changes in their charters should consider the essential features of this native system, which parcels out power, but fixes responsibility both as to duties of the commissioners and of the council. It also makes self-evident the obligations and opportunities of citizenship in its relationship to the council, so that the commissioners, the aldermen and the people can see which of these bodies are derelict in their respective duties. The mere facilities which the system affords for definitely placing blame for mistakes and negligence insures that there is not so many mistakes nor so much negligence to locate as there is where "the city" is held guilty for the carelessness exhibited by the administrative agents, where municipal affairs are handled under the direction of council committees.

This form of government has been in use as above described for some years in the city of Regina. The animated discussions which take place around the council board of that city between those who administer the affairs and those who represent the people would, to the casual observer, seem to indicate that everything there was going wrong, but these very conferences between these bodies have the result that nearly everything is carried on in a much better manner than they would be under a council committee system. Commissioners who are always accountable to the aldermen are bound to constantly examine their own record to see if they have left undone anything that they should have done, or have done anything that they should not have done. The aldermen must take greater interest in the affairs of the city in order that they may intelligently discuss its business with the commissioners. Regina had for a while also something very similar to the caucus when the council for some time endeavoured to hold some of their meetings with the press and public excluded.

The people's part, which consists of instructing and electing the Mayor and Council is still hampered, as it is in practically all our municipal systems by the electoral laws which invite haphazard nominations and indiscriminate competition among candidates. This difficulty will not be overcome until the people realize that in any democratically governed community it is necessary to have election laws which permit of the orderly elimination of candidates representing minor issues and ambitions in order that there may be fair contests between those representing main issues and real abilities.

References x ss. 44-49. Cap 16, St. Sask., 1915.—*"Congressional Government."