

municipal government, for all must admit that unless we can elevate the personnel of our municipal officials we can not expect to make any wonderful improvement.

In order to accomplish the second object which the framers of the law had in view, that is, to invest the whole governmental authority in a small deliberative body, it was necessary to greatly reduce the number of elective officials. This has been accomplished by electing a mayor and four councilmen who are vested with all legislative, executive and judicial authority formerly exercised by the different departments of the city government. This small governing board then appoints such subordinate officers as are necessary to carry on the functions which must be performed by the city government. The city attorney, the city treasurer, the city auditor, the city engineer, and numerous other officials formerly elected by popular vote, are now appointed by this governing board subject to removal at their pleasure.

In order to accomplish the third object which the framers of this law had in view, that is, to provide a system of government which should be adapted to perform the work which a city must perform, and to simplify the present complex system, the city affairs are to be administered through five departments, as follows:

The department of public affairs.  
The department of accounts and finances.  
The department of public safety.  
The department of streets and public improvements.

The department of parks and public property.  
The mayor, by virtue of his office is chairman of the council and is in charge of the department of public affairs, exercising a general supervision over all business of the municipality.

At the first meeting of the council, immediately following the election of its members, the work of the city is assigned to its most appropriate department, and each councilman is assigned to a department as superintendent, the theory of the law being that the man who is best qualified by reason of experience or training will be placed in charge of that particular department wherein his experience and training will prove most valuable. The superintendent is held accountable for all matters which come under his jurisdiction and is charged with the responsibility of all that is carried on in his particular department.

There is much to be said in favor of this provision, perhaps the most important being that by this system there is a definite responsibility placed on a designated official, and it will be impossible to continue the practice of shifting responsibility of one department to another and in that manner so bewilder the average citizen that he is contented to accept present conditions rather than undertake the almost impossible task of fixing blame.

Aside from the importance of a fixed responsibility, it may be safely asserted that this system of dividing the work facilitates the performance of the functions which a city is required to perform. The most important duty of the municipality is in reference to public improvements and certainly in this particular field of work the nature of the duty is not such that it requires a large deliberative body. It is not of such nature that a local representation from the different wards is necessary. The system of checks and balances is not necessary. In fact, it will be found that the principles which enter into the performance of this duty are the same principles which govern the action of the individual in conducting his private enterprises. It may be objected that the city is not like a private enterprise. It is true that it is not conducted for the purpose of personal profit, but it is conducted for the purpose of extending the greatest possible good to the greatest number at the least possible expense to the individual.

This arrangement also affords an opportunity for creating an original work in governmental affairs. A very wide latitude has been allowed the councilmen in the discharge of their duties. Responsibility has been centered and the overlapping and conflicting departments which usually existed under former systems have been eliminated. The eliminations of these conflicting duties removes one of the most serious defects in city charters, for under the existing system the over-lapping of governmental departments and the fact that no one department has entire control of public work results in extravagance, waste and general inefficiency. There is no co-ordination or concentration, no method by which comprehensive plans may be taken up and executed so as to insure intelligent and economical care in their construction.

The provisions of the law to which I have

called your attention represent the manner in which the administrative functions shall be performed and the means by which men shall be elected to direct the performance of these functions. The principal idea, as you will have seen, is a greatly reduced number of elective officials with a consequent centralization of authority lodged in a small deliberative body or governing board. The provisions of which I now speak are the safe-guards or check upon public officials. It has been objected that this centralization of authority might lead to the forming of a powerful political machine and a form of despotism. The objections, however, on this score are not well based. If the council was vested with final power and the people had no recourse but to put up with whatever wrong the councilmen might be the authors of, then there would be some foundation upon which to base this objection.

The first of these provisions has reference to the question of granting valuable franchises and special privileges. Before the city is permitted to enter into any contract with a public service company operating street car lines, gas, telephone, electric light, etc., the council must submit the proposition to a vote of the people, and if a majority of the votes cast are in the affirmative, then the franchise may be granted. Otherwise, the act of the council becomes null and void. All franchises are also limited to a period of twenty-five years. It is hoped this compulsory referendum will be the means of securing adequate returns from public service companies for the very valuable privileges which are granted by the city, and which become more valuable as the city increases its population.

A further provision designed to remove an indirect influence which very often has been detrimental to the city, is that provision of this charter which makes it a criminal offense for a city officer to be interested, either directly, or indirectly, in any contract to which the city is a party. Furthermore, no city official shall be interested directly or indirectly, in any contract to which a public service company is a party. A provision of this character is very important where the city council sits as a board of review for the purposes of adjusting questions raised in reference to the amount of taxation levied on a particular property.

A further provision of the law which is somewhat unique has to do with the question of civil service. At the first meeting of the city council three commissioners are appointed who constitute the civil service board, and in whose charge is placed the work of preparing the civil service examination. All employees of the city, with the exception of unskilled labor and the heads of departments, such as city attorney, city treasurer, city assessor, etc., (all of whom are appointed by a majority vote of the council) must pass a civil service examination, and once having been selected, while they continue to perform their duties in a competent and satisfactory manner, they can not be removed. The civil service commissioners are appointed for a period of six years, thus removing them from all political influence which might be exerted by the council. It is expected that this provision will result in the city being unable to secure a very much higher grade of employee, and that the service given will be very much more satisfactory.

A further provision of the law, is the publicity feature. Every successful candidate for office within thirty days after his election, is required to publish under oath a statement of his campaign expenses from whom such contributions were received and the manner in which they were expended. The city departments are required to prepare monthly statements showing the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. These statements must be distributed to the public library, newspapers, and to such citizens as request copies of the same. An annual examination of the books must be made, statements prepared, and the same distributed in the manner of the monthly statements. It is hoped that these itemized statements giving a summary of the proceedings of the city will afford the means whereby the citizen may comprehend, to some extent, at least, the manner in which his taxes are being expended.

Having explained these provisions, let me direct your attention to that particular part of the charter, which, taken in connection with the centralization of authority makes it the most advanced type of city government. The provisions to which I refer now are the initiative, referendum and recall, which confer upon the electors the power of direct legislation. In order to exercise the right of the initiative, a petition must be filed signed by electors equal

in number to twenty-five per cent of all votes cast at the last preceding general election. After the city clerk has found that the petition complies with the requirements of the statute he shall transmit the petition to the city council, and the council without alteration, shall pass the measure asked for in the petition. If the council refuses to pass the ordinance desired, then the same shall be submitted to the people at a special election called for that purpose. If a majority of the votes cast shall be in the affirmative, the ordinance or measure shall at once become a law and can not be altered or appealed except by the re-submission to the people. In case the petition which is presented to the council is signed by not less than ten, nor more than twenty-five per cent of the voters, then the council shall pass the ordinance or have the same submitted at the next general election. The safeguard, known as the referendum, may be exercised by proceeding in the same manner as in the case of the initiative. If an ordinance is passed by the city council which does not meet with the approval of the citizens, they may file a petition and have the same submitted to them at a special election to be accepted or rejected, and during this time the ordinance shall be suspended from going into operation, and unless repealed by the council it must receive a majority of the votes in order to become effective.

The latest innovation is the provision for the recall, by which a municipal officer who proves incompetent or dishonest may be removed by a vote of the electors. In order to exercise this right a statement must be prepared, briefly setting forth the charges, and filed with a petition signed by twenty-five per cent of the voters. Upon this petition being presented to the council a special election shall be called for the purpose of determining whether or not this officer may continue to hold his position. Unless he files objections his name shall be placed upon the ballot with such other names as the citizens desire to present, and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall assume the office.

It is the initiative, referendum and recall which make this charter the most democratic form of city government in the United States. The people may, if they wish, pass upon all acts of the administration. It affords them the opportunity of directing their own affairs and, at the same time, places the whole power and control of municipal officers in their hands. It is often said that municipal misrule is due to an apathy on the part of the citizens. If this be true, it may be said that the apathy is due to the fact that, heretofore, the people have not had the right or privilege of participating directly in the management of their government.

#### THE STORY IT TELLS TO HIM

A little blue story book, faded and worn,  
Has its own hallowed place on the shelf,  
Where the little queen heroine wise but forlorn  
Calmly communes with herself.

But the page is turned down where the wonderful prince  
Boldly knocks on the fierce ogre's door.

Ah, he has not looked at the story book since,  
By which he once sat so much store.

She said: "Daddy, dear, don't read any more,  
For somehow I can't understand."  
So he turned the page down with the prince  
at the door  
And held her wee feverish hand.

But while the prince waited his promise to keep,  
And the little queen sat on her throne,  
An angel band sang his wee girlie to sleep  
But left him awake and alone.

The brave little prince still waits with a frown  
For the ogre to come or to go,  
But the place in the book where the page is  
turned down  
Is only for "him" to know.

Oh, little blue book, thy covers are dim,  
But thy stories are happy and bright,  
Save one little tale told only to him,  
Which is breaking his poor heart tonight.

—Chicago Record-Herald.

Charges of corruption in the Panama deal are considered treason and sedition. Charges of corruption in Muskogee town lots are considered an evidence of patriotism and high-mindedness by the same parties who charge treason and sedition.