

**MODEL CITY COUNCIL.**

**OBJECT-LESSON IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.**

**Thoroughly Representative Body of Seventy-Two Members—They Have No Special Privileges or Passes—Public Ownership of All Monopolies.**



R. George F. Parker furnishes a study of the city administration of Birmingham to the Century under the title of "An Object Lesson in Municipal Government." Mr. Parker says: The governing body, executive as well as legislative, is the city council. The eighteen wards are each represented by four members, one having the title of alderman, and three that of councillor, all meeting in a single body. One is elected annually for each ward, so that two-thirds of the councillors, and all the aldermen, have had experience. They are chosen by burgesses, who are male or female occupiers of any dwelling house, shop, or manufactory, or of any land or tenement of the annual value of £10. The difference between burgesses and parliamentary electors is that women are admitted to the former.

The parliamentary electors number \$1,037, and burgesses and school board electors 92,769, the difference representing with fair accuracy women voters. Members of parliament are elected by districts, councillors from wards, and the school board on a general ticket. No two classes are voted for at the same election, though practically the same machinery is employed. The expenditure permitted to municipal candidates is about £60 each. Vacancies in the council are filled by special election. One alderman from each ward is elected by the council for six years, half the terms ending every three years. As a rule they are re-elected indefinitely, party or factional considerations having little influence.

The council is reorganized on the 9th of November of each year, when the general purposes committee, comprised of the mayor as chairman, and the chairman of each of the working committees, nominates the committees for the ensuing year. Outside persons are appointed as additional members of the Museum and School of Art, Free Libraries, and Technical Schools Committees, who in practice control the technical work, the council members retaining financial management.

Each member of a committee proposed is voted for separately. The wishes of individuals are rarely consulted until their names are presented, when they may decline and be excused. None may serve on more than two committees, nor be chairman of more than one. Every effort is made to secure the very best results. No precedents require the appointment of old members even to important committees, and a new member known to be capable and interested in some special work has no difficulty in obtaining an assignment that may enable him to do his best. But in practice the experienced men are reappointed without question. Each committee selects its own chairman.

The council is a thoroughly representative body. Of the seventy-two members of the present council, twenty-three are manufacturers, six are classified as gentlemen (men retired from business), six are provision merchants, five are brass and iron founders, solicitors, jewelers, and medical men respectively, three are merchants, there are two each of auctioneers, chemists, and drapers, while printers, teachers, butchers, bakers, glassworkers, tin-plate workers, and newspaper managers each have one. So far as I can find out, but one publican has ever been in the council, although this class had much influence prior to 1871.

No member has any privileges on a railway or public conveyance of any sort, even on the tramways belonging to the city, or admission to a theater or entertainment, and no one is permitted to vote on a question when he

has a personal interest. He is subject to a fine of £50, with loss of office, if he enters into any contract with the city, or sells an article of even the smallest value to the council, or to any of its subsidiary or associated committees or departments. So strictly is this observed that a member of a committee, suspected of a desire to sell eligible property to the city, was forced to retire from public life.

When the work of a committee is to be discussed, it presents a report of all it has done since its affairs were last before the council, setting out what it proposes. This report or agenda must be printed and sent to each councillor three full days before the meeting. In some cases, especially when a new scheme is proposed, each member is requested to make a personal investigation of the conditions with which it is proposed to deal.

**The German Emperor's Children.**

How the German emperor will bring up his only daughter is no subject of wonderment to the Berliners. They know that, princess as she is, she will be taught to be a good housewife, to sew, to cook perhaps, and to order dinner certainly. For the sovereign's ideal woman is a strictly domestic person, as his ideal man is a stout soldier. His little boys haven't much fun in their daily lives. Concerning these lives the Sketch says: In the Spartan upbringing of his children the kaiser rivals his ancestor, Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. According to Klausmann's "Leben in Deutschen Kaiserhaus," the life of the royal children of Berlin is not sweetened by hours of inactivity. In their years of infancy the kaiserin ministers to almost all their wants, spends a good part of the day with them and enters into all their amusements. When the princes arrive at the age of 9 things are all changed and it is all work. They are then allowed about an hour and a half out of their waking hours to themselves; all the rest of their day is spent in study and physical training. Even in holiday time their tutors accompany them to superintend their studies.—Philadelphia Ledger.

**Afraid to Wear Their Jewels.**

A curious fact concerning the festivities over the coronation of the czar is the enormous impetus given to the manufacture of paste gems. Russians, it appears, even of rank and status, are prone to the weakness known as kleptomania, and wise women prepared for possible loss by substituting sham jewels for real. A pageant and display such as has been described must inevitably call for the wearing of such gems as are seldom seen. It is rather amusing to learn that much of the splendor is pretense and that, too, because the grand dames do not dare trust their treasures in a crush, even though the crowd be composed of their own kind. Among the Muscovites, however, the sin is said to be held a trifling one, and the story is told that one lady of high rank was caught appropriating her cousin's emeralds, and that the victim declined to prosecute, merely saying: "Poor Sophie! It is a very painful and nervous disorder."—New York Journal.

**A Speaking Gown.**

A well-known club woman the other day went to her dressmaker to order a gown. The woman asked at once: "Shall you wear it to the club meetings?" The reply was in the affirmative. "And to make speeches in?" was the next question. Again she said yes. "Then I must have it trimmed accordingly," said the dressmaker. "It will be eyed closely and for long periods of time at once by women at leisure to observe. Such a gown must be absolutely perfect."

**Sensible Constance.**

Mr. Crimsonbeak—When Constance was younger she used to ride a wheel and I tell you she'd take nobody's dust. Mrs. Crimsonbeak—You don't say so?

"Yes, but now she has reached the marrying age she's willing to take almost anybody's."—Youkers Statesman.

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