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THE COUNCIL-MANAGER PLAN OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Story No. 2

*Some Other Important Though
Not Essential Features*

This series is intended to give information. It is not a brief for or against the Council-Manager form of Municipal Government. It is published in response to repeated requests for definite information.

If you have Votes, prepare to use them NOW.

SOME FEATURES USUALLY OR SOMETIMES FOUND IN COUNCIL-MANAGER CITIES.

1. **A Small Council.** The Council usually consists of from 3 to 9 members, although larger cities may have more. The size of Council is not an essential feature, but the advocates of Council-Manager Government stress the importance of the small council as being conducive to business-like deliberation and tending to diminish petty wrangling and meaningless discussion.
2. **A Council elected at large.** The purpose of this provision is to promote the decision of civic policies on city-wide rather than on local consideration, i.e., to eliminate as far as possible what is commonly called ward politics. In large cities the principle of voting at large is sometimes modified by electing representatives in large districts.
3. **Election for a period longer than one year.** This provision was in the interest of continuity of policy. The same end could be attained by electing for overlapping terms of two years. This would probably afford better control by the voters, particularly in countries where the recall does not obtain.
4. **The Initiative.** This is the power of the people at their option of proposing ordinances or by-laws and adopting them at the polls, if not previously adopted or petitioned by Council. This is the power of direct legislation. This provision is hardly in conformity with Canadian or British traditions which are based on the principles of responsible government. The initiative should not be necessary in British countries, and if adopted might result in further weakening the prestige and, therefore, the personnel of legislative bodies.
5. **The Referendum.** This is the power on the part of the people, at their option, to approve or reject at the polls any measure passed by Council or submitted by the Council to a vote of the electors. This provision does not fit in well with British ideas of governmental responsibility. It may readily be used so as to encourage "passing the buck" and so as to undermine the importance and weaken the personnel of legislative bodies.
6. **The Recall.** This is a provision by which any officer holding an elective office may be recalled by a vote at the polls at any time or within specified times of his term of office. This practice is also foreign to British practice and liable to be subsversive of legislative independence. Overlapping terms of one or two years would provide frequent tests of popular opinion and would operate in some such way as by-elections in Dominion affairs, so as to encourage or discourage the prosecution of policies recently acted upon by Council. With a live electorate the overlapping term method would provide a Council sufficiently sensitive to public opinion.
7. **A Civil Service Commission.** Where found, the members of this Commission are usually appointed by Council. They may be removed by Council, usually by a vote greater than a majority. They prescribe rules for appointment and promotion and prepare eligible lists, but the heads of departments are not necessarily appointed from these lists. While the Civil Service Commission may discharge for cause the manager, and department heads may discharge employees of their

OTHER FEATURES

own motion, and all promotions are made on the basis of personnel records kept by a department head. Under certain conditions where a system has grown up of Council actually as well as theoretically making appointments, discharges and promotions, it may be necessary to establish a Civil Service Commission, but where the heads of departments are customarily given wide powers in these regards, the establishment of an independent Commission might be a retrograde step. Under such conditions appointments, promotions and discharges might be left in the hands of the City Manager and his department heads, with or without validation by Council.

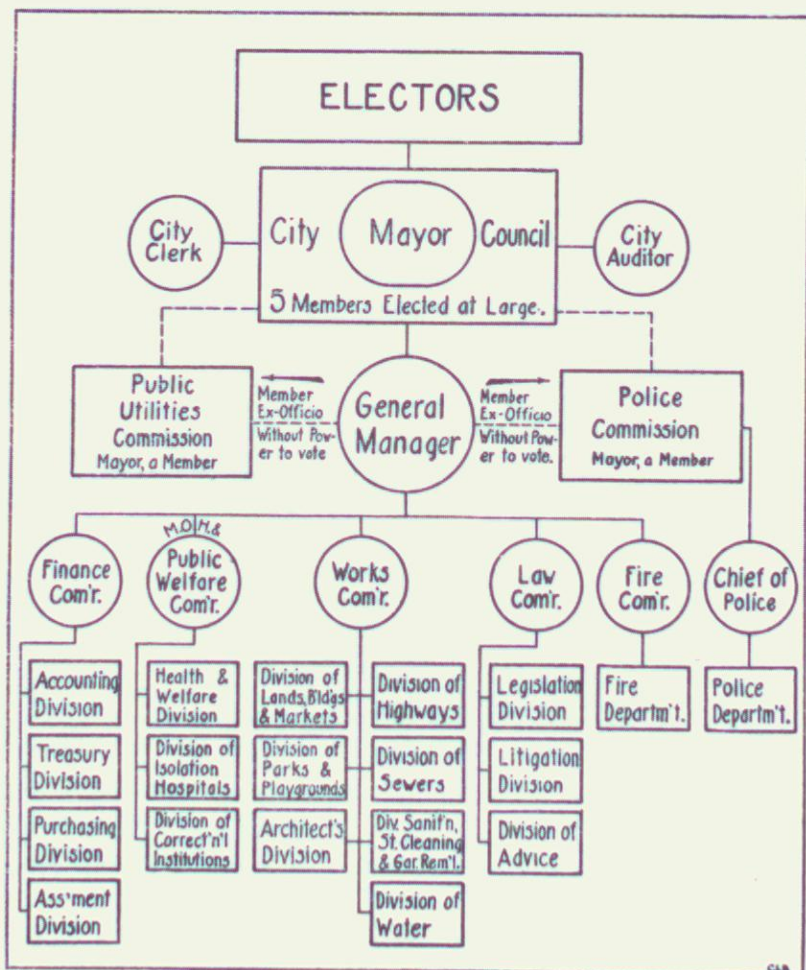
The power of instant removal of the City Manager by Council is sufficient guarantee that Council will have adequate power to prevent the making of improper appointments, although it may not, if public opinion be sound, be sufficient guarantee that the City Manager will always be amenable to suggestions of appointment for patronage purposes.

Under Canadian conditions a City Manager should not find it difficult to maintain the efficiency of this organization without resort to an outside Civil Service Commission and a Council should be able to prevent bad appointments, while it should not have the power to prevent good ones. The wise City Manager will appoint himself to be his Civil Service Commission, where one does not exist, by establishing a Bureau of Personnel.

8. **Mayor sometimes appointed by Council.** This method of appointment is recommended by some and reminds one of the practice in England. It is, however, not essential to the Council-Manager system, and almost certainly would be a mistake under Canadian conditions. It may be provided that the candidate getting the largest number of votes, if all are elected at once, shall be Mayor. There is no reason in a 5-member Council why two members of Council might not be elected each year for a term of two years, while the Mayor might be elected annually.
9. **A small number of Administrative Departments.** This is practically an essential feature of the Council-Manager plan. It minimizes overlapping and promotes co-operation and tends strongly to reduce cost of operation. Many Canadian cities now suffer from over-departmentalization.
10. **The Auditor is a part of the Finance Department,** under a Commissioner or Director of Finance. This is contrary to Canadian conditions. The Auditor should report directly to Council, as should the City Clerk.

Following is a chart in more detail than that in the preceding number. It illustrates a possible type of Council-Manager organization for a Canadian city. It is quite possible that a different grouping might be better. As there are variations under the Mayor-Council system there are variations under the Council-Manager system. The conception of the latter as a cut-and-dried, inflexible system has prevented it from getting an impartial consideration in many quarters. The Bureau, in presenting this chart, desires to make it clear that it is intended simply to illustrate the system

as it might be applied to Toronto. The grouping of departments must not be taken as criticism in any sense of the services of the heads of existing departments. It is generally recognized that the permanent officials form the backbone of municipal government. The chart, therefore, must be regarded as entirely impersonal.



It will be noted that the schools remain under separate administration as at present.

Next number in series

Advantages claimed for the Council-Manager Plan.

VOTE as you wish, but **VOTE**