

HELPING CITIES TO HELP THEMSELVES

How the State University, Through its Extension Division, is Placing the Practical Assistance of Experts at the Disposal of Wisconsin Cities

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WITH the enactment last June of the statute permitting Wisconsin cities to adopt a commission form of government the history of municipal government in this state has entered upon a new era. This law provides for a radical departure from our present city organization. It gives expression in our own state to that deep unrest which has seized the cities throughout the country. Things are going wrong with them. The new law is to afford every community a chance at a possible remedy. The idea itself seems to have seized the popular mind like wildfire. It looks promising, but can obviously not be guaranteed in advance as a specific for all civic ailments.

New Ideals

ASIDE from this new interest in the form of city organization, the municipalities of this state, as elsewhere, have been awakening to a fuller realization of their great mission as agents in the cause of social progress. Health is to be improved and happiness to be increased and life itself to be prolonged by a closer and more intelligent attention to the social significance of public administration. Cities are becoming more interested in public sanitation in the milk and food supply, in public baths and playgrounds, in the beautification of their surroundings by parks and boulevards and far-sighted city planning.

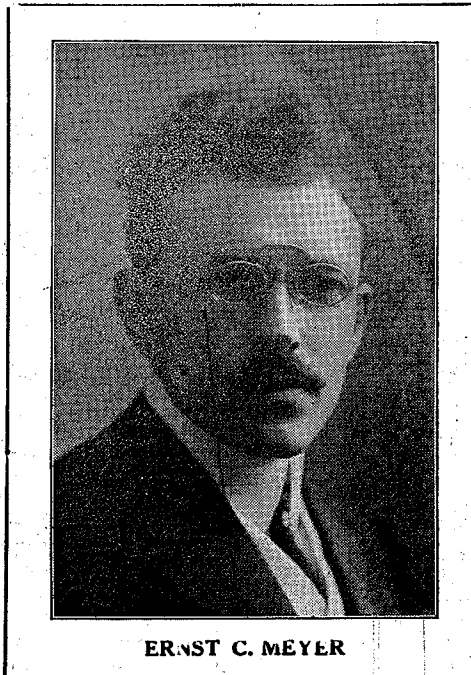
Reliable information is necessary if progressive policies of this kind are to be intelligently carried forward. No city is sufficient unto itself. The question arises: What are other cities doing? How are they doing it? What are the results? What can we learn from the undertakings and experiences of foreign cities?

Municipal Reference Bureau

TO assist the citizens of this commonwealth in their quest for information there has been newly organized in the Extension Department of the State University a Municipal Reference Bureau which will be glad to receive inquiries from all sources on germane subjects with the assurance that reply will be made as promptly and as fully as the newness of the work and the best efforts of those in charge will permit. Mr. Ford H. MacGregor, who has had considerable experience in civic work in other states and who will assist in municipal research work in the University, has been placed at the head of this work.

Seminary in Public Administration

THIS Bureau will occupy a peculiarly advantageous position to supply information because of the intimate relation which has been established between it and various Departments and Schools in the University. It has been decided to closely affiliate it with the research work in municipal administration conducted in the seminary on public administration in the Political Science Department of the University. In this way students of public administration are given an opportunity to engage themselves in a most practical manner with the living problems of city government in the state as brought out by the inquiries received at the Bureau. The people of the state, on the other hand, are given the direct benefit of the investigations



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in this line as carried on by the University which they support. The University thus becomes in one more way the pulsating heart which assists, as far as it can, in applying that understanding which is the power of life to the body politic of this commonwealth.

While the Extension Division employs a large number of specially trained men along many lines of work, such as Prof. Huels in engineering, many inquiries will undoubtedly be received which can best be answered by men in other departments of the University who possess still more specialized knowledge of the subject matter of the inquiry. Arrangements have therefore been made with Dean Turneure of the College of Engineering, and Dean Russell of the College of Agriculture, both of whom are much interested in the new Bureau, and with the men concerned, to have certain inquiries referred to these colleges through definite channels. Considerable assistance will undoubtedly be rendered by the Department of Horticulture of the College of Agriculture, especially in landscape gardening, and by the College of Engineering in sanitary engineering and public improvements.

As is well known, both of these Colleges have been, and still are serving the interests of the people of the state along many lines in much the same way. The Municipal Reference Bureau will in no wise interfere with this valuable independent work, but rather it will still further enlarge the opportunities for public service.

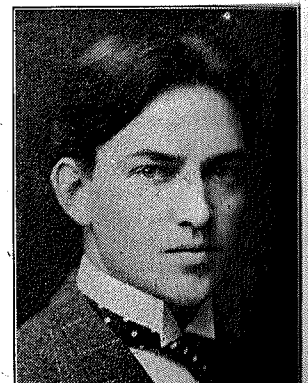
Legislative Reference Department Assists

THE Bureau will also be greatly assisted in its work through the assured hearty cooperation of the Legislative Reference Department of the Free Library Commission. Dr. Charles McCarthy, who, as is generally known, is in charge of this work and who also lectures in the University, has already given his Department a national reputation. Much valuable material on the question of city government has accumulated here. All of it has been placed at the disposal of the Municipal Reference Bureau. It was Dr. McCarthy who first conceived the idea of creating this Bureau.

The same may be said of the Railroad Commission which in its capacity as supervisor of public utilities naturally is in possession of a wealth of practical information in this particular field, all of which can be generously drawn upon.

Advisory Non-partisan Service

IT ought to be clearly understood at the outset that the information supplied will be advisory only. Scrupulous care will be used in its compilation and uniform accuracy will be the aim. But the Bureau cannot occupy the position of a responsible administrative, or engineer-



FORD H. MAC GREGOR

Who is at the head of the Municipal Reference Bureau.