

A GENERAL MANAGER FOR MONTREAL

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With Proportional Representation—Council of Nine—Mayor Appointed By Council. :: :: :: :: :: :: :: ::

THE ups and downs of municipal government in Montreal make rough riding. Legally and practically the Quebec legislature is supreme. It can amend Montreal's charter or the franchise of its public utilities at will. Practically it has done both. The tramways are now in the hands of a commission appointed by the province. The commission is a sort of benevolent autocracy and so far as the street railway franchises are concerned Montreal, her council and her people are treated as "wards."

However, popular opinion has it that Montreal was very badly governed by Mayor Mederic Martin and the Council. Therefore an "Administrative Commission" was appointed by the Quebec legislature to govern the city. The mayor and council remained in office—with practically no powers.

Subsequently the legislature appointed a charter commission to draft a new charter for the city—presumably with the expectation that the charter would be passed without further ado—an expectation which is certain to bring disappointment. There will be opposition at Quebec—delay—then possibly rejection.

The commission has chosen the following framework for the charter which is now being drafted:

1. *Complete home rule:* "The city of Montreal shall have all the powers now vested in the legislature of the

province of Quebec as regards the administration of the said city, and the powers of the said legislature are to that end delegated to the said city." It may, however, be taken for granted that the Quebec legislature will not abdicate.

2. *Unicameral legislative body:* Mayor appointed by council from among its members!—"The city shall be governed by only one body to be known and designated as 'The Council' which shall have all the administrative and legislative powers to be conferred upon it by the charter." Montreal wants no more of divided authority. The "board of control" form of separation of powers and responsibilities is gone for good. There will be opposition to the idea of an appointed mayor but it is nevertheless a sound principle.

3. *One electoral district:* council of nine—proportional representation—four year terms! It must be remembered that Montreal has a peculiar problem. Two thirds of the population are French catholics. Seventy-five thousand are Jews. The rest are English protestants and Irish catholics. The Irish and French entertain a mutual antipathy towards each other, and the English and Jews have an influence unwarranted by their numbers. The council proposed is too small. Proportional representation would help but has small chance of final adoption. Combined with so

small a council (or better still a council of fifteen) and proportional representation, the single electoral district is good.

4. *General Manager!* The manager is to be appointed, suspended or dismissed by the council—"by majority vote"—"for cause." "He shall be chosen solely on the basis of his executive and administrative capacities." His powers are set forth at length. He would have powers of appointment over all heads of departments except

the city clerk, city attorney and city auditor. His appointments could be rejected only by a majority vote of the whole council. The mayor would have only the functions of a dignitary.

The talk of Montreal is that there is no man living—whether French or English—who can govern Montreal.

The *Chambre de Commerce* is actively opposed to the proposals. Even forward looking citizens are pessimistic.

THE ANTITHESIS OF HOME RULE

BY IRA W. STRATTON

Former Mayor of Reading, Pennsylvania

Reading must automatically abolish her present commission government and take up a new form with new corporate rights and duties simply because her population has reached 100,000. Her new form would be the same as that of Pittsburgh. :: :: :: :: ::

I

THE Constitution of Pennsylvania, adopted in 1874, permits of the classification of cities. The act of May 23, 1874, provides for three classes. Since that time, the legislature sought to extend the number of classes of cities from three to five, and again to seven, but these acts were declared unconstitutional, it being held that the power of classification permissible under the constitution having once been exercised by the legislature in the act of 1874, it was not competent thereafter to extend the number of classes as originally fixed.

First Class Cities are those containing a population of one million or over (Philadelphia). Second Class Cities are those containing a population of one hundred thousand and under one million (Pittsburgh and Scranton). Third Class Cities are those containing a population under one hundred thousand.

II

The press bulletin from Washington, gives the population of Reading, Pa., as 107,784 for the 1920 census. When in the course of time these figures are officially transmitted to the state authorities, then becomes operative the Act of June 25, 1895.

"Whenever it shall appear by any such census that any city of the Third Class has attained a population entitling it to an advance in classification, it shall be the duty of the Governor, under the great seal of the Commonwealth, to certify the fact accordingly, which certificate shall be entered at large upon the minutes of the council of such city, and recorded in the office for recording of deeds of the proper county. . . . At the next municipal election . . . the proper officers shall be elected to which the said city will become entitled under the change in classification."

A state constitutional amendment was adopted by vote of the people in 1909—which provides for all regular municipal elections to be held in odd