

# LA GRANDE'S GOVERNMENT IS NEW YORK DEBATE MATERIAL

How La Grande's form of city government has spread in popularity throughout the country is already very well known to most readers of the Observer. But when a young lady in Mount Vernon, N. Y., secures data from this city upon which to base her debate it is decidedly interesting. Miss Constance Lambert, a pupil of the high school in Mount Vernon, has for some time been collecting data on the commission-manager form of government to use in the high school debate in her city. The Observer prints here argument as used in the annual debate with much pleasure. It is needless to say she received the favorable decision of the judges for when one reads her argument it plainly shows that she has a keen grasp of the commission plan. In her manuscript she has chosen to call it Plan C in order to distinguish it from other forms of government.

Following is the manuscript reproduction:

My colleague proved to you a few moments ago, that Plan C remedies the defects of the present form of government. It does much more than that. It remedies the defects of the old commission plan as well.

In the first place, Plan C, by providing for a city-manager appointed by the council, does away with all attempts to choose administrators by popular election. This is a very desirable thing; for it is as hard for the people to estimate executive ability in candidates as to judge the professional value of engineers or attorneys. The running of a city is not a task to be performed by a man elected on account of his popularity; it is rather the job of an expert. Furthermore, by making sound judgment and common sense the only requirements in the commissioners

themselves, Plan C broadens the field of popular choice, and leaves the voters free to choose candidates with reference only to their representative character. For instance, the laboring class can freely elect its own men to the commission, and there is no requirement—as in the old commission plan—that these representatives shall, in spite of their inexperience in handling large affairs, be given the active, personal management of a technical, municipal department. In short, the commission-manager plan requires expertness in administration at the point where it is most valuable—namely, at the head.

And when we have once secured a capable, efficient manager for our city, we are permitted, under Plan C, to keep him, as long as he suits us and we suit him, for there is no fixed term of office for the city-manager. This comparative permanence in the office of the chief executive tends to rid us of amateur and transient executives and to replace them with trained men. This permanence also makes more possible the planning and carrying out of far-sighted projects which cannot be accomplished in a short term. It is worth the while of the executives to educate themselves thoroughly in affairs of city government when they know that such education will be useful for a long time and in more than one city.

But again, the centralization of responsibility found in Plan C, does away with the confusion in the old commission plan between the responsibility of the individual commissioner and that of the commission as a whole. For example:—Under the old commission plan, each commissioner has charge of a separate department. At one of the council meetings of a city governed in this

way, the commissioner of public works asks for permission to let a contract for paving a street. This is granted him by the commissioner and he sets to work on the job. Later, crooked dealings are discovered in this very paving contract. Who is to blame? "The commissioner of public works," declare the other members of the council, "for he actually let the contract." "The council as a whole," says the commissioner of public works, "for they gave me permission to let the contract." And so it goes. Responsibility cannot be placed. Nobody can be made to pay.

Then too, the commission-manager form of government is bound to bring with it harmony between the municipal departments, for, says Mr. Lent D. Upson in the "Review of Reviews": "Under the city-manager plan, the departmental heads work together and not independently. Increased efficiency and economy are the results. The achievements of Dayton have been brought about with such dispatch only because authority and responsibility for the efficient operation of all the city departments are centered in one individual. Experience points against such a result under the federal and old commission plans with their checks and balances and dissipation of power and responsibility."

The truth of this statement has been realized already by two cities, Abilene, Kansas, and Amarillo, Texas, which were until recently governed under the old commission form, have joined the ranks of the twenty other cities operating under the manager plan; and a large majority of the cities now governed under the old commission form, are seriously considering the adoption of the more progressive manager plan.

Is this to be wondered at? Look at the results of the plan in the cities which have already adopted it. (Here she reads extracts from La Grande letters and from a letter from Mr. Monroe, of Montrose, Colorado, to show how the manager plan has benefited those cities.)

With such results as these, is it not fitting to call the city-manager plan "the last word in municipal reform?"

Then, since our present form of government is unsatisfactory, first, because it is inefficient, second, because it does not provide for home rule; since Plan C remedies the defects of the present plan, first, by doing away with extravagance, second, by making for efficiency, and third, by providing for home rule; finally, since Plan C remedies the defects of other commission plans, first, because it provided for expert administration of city affairs, second, because it allows permanence in the office of chief executive, and third, because it means harmony between the municipal departments, it would be for the best and lasting good of Mount Vernon to adopt the commission form of government with a city-manager as stated in Plan C.

vent unfair business methods by the various sales managers, and the shippers of fruits."

Prices Also in Charge. The council also would be empowered "to take such action as in their judgment may be deemed necessary to secure the full value of the fruit to which the grower is entitled."

The committee recommended that the fruit be standardized as to pack and auctioning fruit be discontinued as far as possible.

The expenses would be met by a levy upon growers of an amount not to exceed one-fourth cent a box on apples and pears one-fourth cent a crate on strawberries one-sixth cent a package on all other small fruits. The executive officers salary was set at \$300 a month by the committee. The point on which the 106 delegates split was the manner in which the executive three should be elected. Yakima and Wenatchee delegations, representing 63 votes, wanted them elected by an advisory board or a council of one man each from eight or ten districts, to which intermediary committee the governing board would be responsible.

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## PROGRESS IS NOW CERTAIN

### FRUITMEN AT TACOMA REACHING SOLUTION.

Stormy Meetings Held but General Results Seem to Be Sure.

Good progress is being made at Tacoma toward solving the fruit marketing question, it appears from news dispatches from there. A Tacoma dispatch dated Wednesday says:

After differences between the various factions of the fruit growing districts represented in the convention in session here seemed to have brought the meeting to a deadlock beyond breaking, W. H. Paulhamus last night brought forth the dove of peace and within 15 minutes had things going smoothly. It was evident that the fruitgrowers will be able to effect a definite organization at the session to be held tomorrow morning.

In tonight's session, lasting until midnight, the growers got a few steps in advance. They tentatively decided that there should be a board of control of ten members, to be appointed, one from each of the ten fruit districts. This board is to have general supervision over the executive committee, with power to discharge any or all the committee. A committee consisting of E. W. Ross, of North Yakima; John F. Davies, of Opportunity; and C. T. Haskell, of Wenatchee, was appointed to redraft the entire organization report.

Peace Follows Storm. Tuesday's was a stormy session although not a bitter one, but the long afternoon and night meetings resulted in the fruitgrowers thoroughly thrashing out their differences and arriving upon a ground of mutual understanding.

The report of the committee on organization was presented this morning by Chairman John F. Davies, of Opportunity, representing Spokane, and signed by seven of the eight members.

The recommendations are that the present convention, elected on a tonnage base, be made a permanent organization, meeting annually; that the convention elect a growers council, consisting of one delegate from each of the 10 districts and that this council shall choose from its number an executive committee of three members, who have in turn appointed an executive officer. The growers council would be authorized according to the report, "to take such action as in its judgment is deemed best to pre-

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