

CITY MANAGER SYSTEM BRINGS GOOD NEWS FOR THE TAXPAYER

By H. S. Gilbertson.

(This is the seventh of 14 articles on the city manager plan, by H. S. Gilbertson of the National Municipal League.)

The remarkable progress of Dayton under the city manager plans of municipal government has been told in fuller detail than space will allow for the rest of the 100 city manager towns, but nearly all of them have similar stories to tell.

Nearly all, but there are a few where the change has not brought progress or efficiency immediately, cities that have elected unprogressive councils which put in local politicians as managers and have sat down and stagnated.

Yet even there issues have cleared; obstructive influences have been identified, and successive elections brought relief.

One such council in Ohio played politics two terms, but the town saw exactly what was going on, and at the third election a discriminating landslide put three of the councilmen out of politics and installed a harmonious, live council and a new, high-grade manager.

There is no magic in this plan of government that will prevent the people from electing the wrong men. The plan compels them to make their mistakes in broad daylight, and the chance to go astray under those conditions is the irreducible hazard of democracy.

Almost always they have chosen better men than have hitherto been successful in local politics. Of course what one town is proud of, another may consider old-fashioned, but every town reports improvement.

Here are some typical reports of financial progress:

San Jose, Cal. (population 40,000) ran in 1919 with less expenditure than the old government in 1916, despite advanced costs.

Manitowish, Mich. (population 10,000), had, under the old government, voted a bond issue of \$80,000 for a new trunk sewer. The new government spent \$1200 cleaning tons of debris from the old sewer, which was then found adequate.

Sandusky, Ohio (population 23,000), reduced its debt \$230,000, and in 1919, under the new plan, its operating expenses, despite ascending wages and costs, were less than under the old plan in 1914.

Ashtabula, Ohio, is still living within its pre-war tax rate.

Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. (population 12,000), saved \$57,000 in two years.

Alhambra, Cal. (population 10,000), bought the water system and ran it for \$14,000 a year less than the private corporation did.

In Waltham, Mass., the new government increased the city tax rate only eight per cent, while labor increased 54 per cent; the water and engineering departments were combined, thus saving salaries and increasing efficiency; by stopping leakage and waste, an expenditure of

\$300,000 for a new water supply was avoided.

Griffin, Ga. (population 8249), saved \$43,000 the first year by improving every department, and did more street work in one year than in any previous five years.

Wichita, Kan. (population 72,000), built a sewer by direct labor at a cost of \$214,000. The lowest contractor's bid was \$316,000.

Webster City, Iowa (population 6000), has saved \$36,000 a year since the adoption of the plan.

Among the most significant features of business administration in most of these cities is the adoption of a modern budget.

The needs of the city are carefully planned a year ahead in great detail and there is a powerful incentive to live within the income.

Economy is made possible, too, for the reason that a lot of political creditors are eliminated and political "fences" do not have to be built out of the city treasury.

NEW TRANSMISSION DEVICE INVENTED

Patent Is Granted Ernest Dick—Six Speeds Ahead And Four in Reverse Is Made Possible.

A three-speed transmission for a Ford car, giving, in combination with the Ford transmission, six speeds ahead and four in reverse, has been perfected by Ernest Dick of Bend, and the first one built is being installed this week on a touring car. It was cast at the Bend foundry, being the first aluminum casting ever made here.

The transmission is called an under and over drive combination. The patent has already been granted. Double ball bearings are used. The gear is always in mesh, therefore it is not necessary to release the clutch when shifting speeds. The control lever is similar to that used in other cars. The gear is 1 1/2 inches longer than the old-style Ford transmission.

Work for All.

A remedy for tuberculosis has been found in the butterfly; and next somebody will be putting the humming bird to work.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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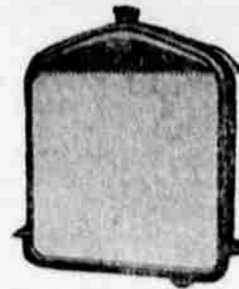
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Banks Optimistic

"The bankers of the important financial centers, who have been steadily and actively participating in handling the financial problems which have characterized the period of readjustment from war conditions, are uniformly optimistic on the present financial and business situation," says Edward Cookingham, president of the Ladd & Tilton Bank, Portland, Oregon. "It is important that all of us—bankers, manufacturers, wholesalers, farmers and wage earners—recognize the fact that the economic adjustment now going on is inevitable and must run its course. However, there are so many favorable features to the present situation, and so much of encouragement in the future outlook, that it is difficult for me to be otherwise than optimistic."

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