

7-11-1924

City Club of Portland Bulletin vol. 04, no. 39 (1924-7-11)

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.)

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Recommended Citation

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.), "City Club of Portland Bulletin vol. 04, no. 39 (1924-7-11)" (1924). *City Club of Portland*. 51.

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"Harmony in
Diversity"

PORTLAND CITY CLUB
BULLETIN

"Active
Citizenship"

VOLUME IV

PORTLAND, OREGON, JULY 11, 1924

NUMBER 39

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 1924

Hotel Benson, 12:10 Sharp

Speaker

DR. CHRISTIAN GAUSS

of Princeton University

Editor, Author and Lecturer

Subject

"Democracy's Failures"

EARL KILPATRICK -- *Chairman of the Day*

Dr. Gauss, head of the Department of Modern Languages at Princeton University, is nationally known as an editor, author and teacher. He was Paris correspondent for the Associated Press and reported the Dreyfus trial in 1899. In 1914 he reported the Caillaux murder trial in Paris for the New York *Evening Post*. This speaker comes with a message on the failures of democracy and the reasons for the collapse in Europe during the crisis following the war. Where democracy seems to be breaking down and in how far the forces and weaknesses are showing in America will be discussed.

Dr. Gauss is giving courses in the Summer Session of the University of Oregon on the English romantic movement and main currents in Western European culture.

SIMPLIFICATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOUGHT

The report of a special City Club committee appointed some weeks ago to make a preliminary study of local governing bodies is presented in this issue of the *Bulletin*. The committee clearly points out the need for simplification and consolidation, recommends a definite outline for further study of the facts by the Government Organization and Public Finance Section of the Club and suggests a method of procedure toward the desired end.

The members of the special committee which made the preliminary study and prepared the report are A. L. Veazie, chairman, Charles McKinley, M. D. Wells, Lyman Griswold, C. C. Chapman, W. H. Brown and Richard W. Montague, chairman of the Section.

The Board of Governors has approved the report and it will be submitted to the Club for

Continued on page 3

PORTLAND CITY CLUB BULLETIN

Published Weekly By

THE CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND

Office of the Club 607 Oregon Building
Telephone Broadway 8079

Subscription Price \$1.00 per year

Entered as Second Class Matter, October 29, 1920, at the postoffice at Portland, Oregon, under act of March 3, 1879

City Club dues are \$1.00 per month, payable semi-annually on May 1st, and November 1st. There is no initiation fee.

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"To inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse them to a realization of the obligations of citizenship."

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REPORTS TO BE PRESENTED

Two reports of unusual importance are to be presented to the Club for adoption at today's meeting. The report on Unification of Railway Terminal Facilities in the City of Portland, printed in last week's *Bulletin*, and the preliminary report of the special committee on Simplification of Local Government should be carefully studied by every member. Plans are already being made to carry out the recommendations of the report on Government Simplification should that report be acted upon favorably at the meeting.

MT. HOOD IS CLIMBED

The beauties of Oregon's famous Mt. Hood and Paradise Park were revealed to the eyes of a party of City Club members who climbed the immense snow fields and rocky sides of that rugged mountain last week end.

The party, composed of City Club members, Mazamas and others, reached the summit of the mountain on Saturday noon after a climb of almost nine hours. The trip has been described by some of the old members as being the most beautiful ever taken by a City Club party. Eighty-five out of the 88 persons succeeded in reaching the top where each was presented with a Mazama ribbon.

Frank M. Redman, who was in charge of the trip, reports that the climb was enjoyed by all and that there were no accidents to in any way mar the pleasure of the hikers.

COMMITTEES APPOINTED

The City Planning Section met last Thursday for the purpose of perfecting a permanent organization. The following committee appointments were made:

HOUSING

Jos. Jacobberger, Chairman

H. M. Esterly E. F. Lawrence
Dr. C. U. Moore Carl Stebinger
H. C. Kendall

ZONING

Ormond R. Bean, Chairman

Ralph H. Cake Dr. C. V. Luther
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SECTION BEGINS WORK

In anticipation of the adoption by the Club of the preliminary report on Simplification of Local Government, Mr. Richard W. Montague, chairman of the Government Organization and Public Finance Section has appointed the following men as chairmen of seven sub-committees to follow up the recommendations of this report:

MacCormac Snow, Estes Snedecor, M. M. Matthiessen, C. C. Chapman, Dr. Otis B. Wight, Jas. J. Crossley, John A. Laing.

The plan of work being undertaken by these sub-committees will be further explained in next week's *Bulletin*.

GOVERNMENT SIMPLIFICATION

Continued from page 1

adoption at the regular Friday meeting, July 11. The report follows:

TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS:—

Your special committee appointed to consider the subject of a consolidation of local governments, was directed to prepare a report on three specific features, as follows:—

1. Is the evidence of duplication, diversity and lack of responsibility and standardization in our city and county government sufficient to justify the community's embarking on a serious study of the remedy?

2. How shall the community organize and begin such a study?

3. What should be the outline of the subject matter covered in such a community study?

Certain outstanding facts call for a study of the need of organization and simplification of the local governing agencies of this community.

Three of the important criteria in testing the government of a metropolitan area are these:

1. Is the political jurisdiction of the city extensive enough to cover the entire urban area?

2. Are related functions performed by single or closely co-ordinated departments rather than by independent agencies?

3. Does the overhead control vest in a central accountable legislature which has available for use an ensemble of information on accounts, budgets, taxes, and indebtedness?

Governing Bodies Are Diversified

Obviously, Portland cannot meet these requirements. Portland has six governing bodies

and in addition a Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission which has a limited jurisdiction over budgets and tax levies. In fact, the creation of the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission can be regarded as a practical expedient to secure a measure of co-ordination in the finances of the governing bodies. However, there can be no permanent solution as long as the government of the city is split up among six bodies which are more or less independent.

The main argument for consolidation is not so much the waste arising out of duplication of overhead offices (although there is some duplication in the governing bodies themselves and in the legal, engineering, accounting, treasurer's and purchasing departments) as it is the lack of complete jurisdiction over the entire urban area and the many diversities in methods and jurisdiction where there ought to be uniformity. Both of these facts are serious obstacles to the quick and efficient solution of our city planning and other problems, and are a handicap to the government of our community.

Most of the services of local governments are performed in whole or in part by the municipality of the City of Portland, but there is a large suburban fringe outside the legal limits which is a part of the economic city and to which these services are not available and over which desirable public control does not extend. For example, these suburban districts cannot properly provide for police and fire protection; they are not subjected to building code control and health inspection; they cannot provide street improvements under a practical assessment procedure as they could if they were inside the city line; they are unable to get sewer systems and have to form independent municipalities in order to get the benefits of the Bull Run water supply.

There seems to be no logical reason why the hospital service furnished by the public should be split between the county and the city, the people outside the limits of the city contributing to the general charity hospital and the tuberculosis pavillion but not to the emergency hospital or the isolation hospital. Until a year ago a similar situation obtained in the matter of the care of delinquents, the detention home for children being under county jurisdiction and financing while the women's detention home was under city control.

Jurisdictions Overlap

The functions of the Port of Portland and the Dock Commission both relate to the same purpose, yet the territorial jurisdiction of the one is much larger than the other. In other words, the property owner in Multnomah or Hillsdale should be required to contribute taxes for Dock terminal development as well as for Port channel development and maintenance.

But even if the entire urban area were within the city limits, there would still remain much

diversity in methods and authority due to the existence of overlapping jurisdictions in the same territory.

Of the many examples of diversity which have a bearing on this question of the consolidation of local governments, the following may be suggested without explaining the points in detail:

- (a) Diversity in the method of selecting the governing bodies themselves.
- (b) Diversity in the method of selecting administrative officers.
- (c) Discrepancies in jurisdiction over streets as between city and county.
- (d) Overlapping of jurisdiction with respect to trans-Willamette river bridges.
- (e) Diversity among the various governing bodies in regard to overhead and financial control in the operation of the government.
- (f) Diversity in tax limitations.
- (g) Diversity in limitations on bonded indebtedness.
- (h) Diversity in matters of personnel control and civil service systems.

Study of Reorganization and Simplification is Recommended

In the light of the foregoing, we recommend that the City Club appoint a committee which shall undertake to study and collate the facts and conditions which relate to the need of reorganization and simplification of the governing and tax levying bodies operating in Multnomah County and the laws under which they operate, and to make report of its findings in such time that the Club may, if it be so advised, alone or in conjunction with other interested persons and civic bodies, urge upon the Legislature meeting next January the passing of a law for the appointment of a Commission with authority to prepare a measure or measures directed to correction of the defects and excesses of the present laws and practices and to submit the same to the electors of the several municipalities or administrative subdivisions concerned by referendum, or to a succeeding legislature for enactment.

We are aware that this is not an ambitious program. It may even seem hesitating and timid. But after such consideration as we have been able to give the subject, and discussion of the obstacles in the way of more immediate and energetic action, we are convinced that the method proposed will in the long run be more efficient and expeditious. Careful study and full presentation of the facts are due from any who propose material changes in governmental methods which do actually work, although they have defects. Public support and some degree of official authority must sooner or later be secured for any such changes which can hope for successful adoption or operation. All these take time and call for an aroused public knowl-

edge and interest, such as can hardly be obtained in matters of this rather technical and abstruse character by the work of an unofficial organization. We do not blink the many difficulties in the way of this plan, but those besetting every other plan that has been suggested to or among us seem still more formidable, and the plans less promising.

Broad Investigation to be Made

On the third point mentioned in the introduction, namely, the scope of the study, we suggest that the permanent City Club committee or committees undertaking the investigations should keep in mind the broadest possible conception of their assignment rather than limit themselves to a narrow outline.

In order to point out the almost unlimited nature of this study and the magnitude of the task which confronts the committees, we suggest that the following matters should be given consideration:

- (a) A fact study of the administrative arrangements and framework of our present local governments.
- (b) A fact study of the various services now being performed or authorized to be performed by the present governmental organizations, outlining in detail legal authority as well as practices and customs.
- (c) A fact study of present overhead and financial control such as budgets, tax limitations, debt limitations, purchasing procedure, accounting procedure, personnel control and direct legislation.
- (d) A study of the law of "Municipal Home Rule" together with a study of legal procedure required to consolidate or change boundaries of local municipalities and to readjust jurisdictions.
- (e) A comparative study of the modern tendencies in other metropolitan areas with respect to the solution of their consolidation and simplification problems.
- (f) Critical suggestions for any changes deemed necessary in the framework, organization or powers of our local government, including consideration of the areas or districts to which the respective government services and costs should be applied.

Respectfully submitted,

- A. L. VEAZIE, *Chairman*
- CHAS. MCKINLEY
- M. D. WELLS
- LYMAN GRISWOLD
- C. C. CHAPMAN
- W. H. BROWN
- RICHARD W. MONTAGUE,
Chairman of Section