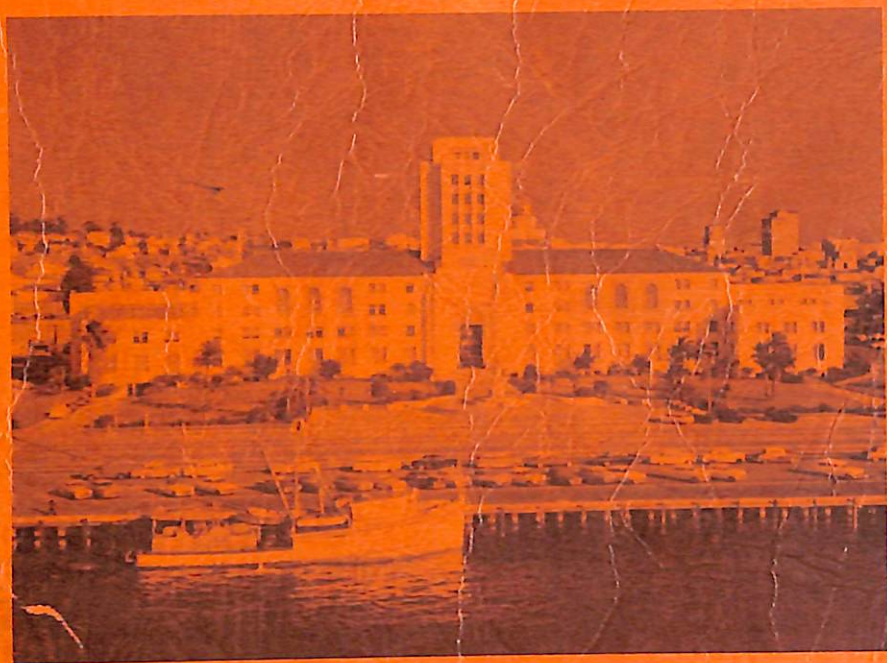


# CITY MANAGER GOVERNMENT in SAN DIEGO



By HAROLD A. STONE

DON K. PRICE

KATHRYN H. STONE

for the Committee on Public Administration  
of the Social Science Research Council

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

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## FOREWORD

THE CITY MANAGER plan of government is perhaps the most important experiment in government in the United States since the adoption of the Constitution. It has already profoundly affected municipal government in this country and will have even more far reaching influence in the future. It has also had significant influence upon other units of government. A few cities have operated under the plan for over a quarter of a century, many for more than twenty years, and there were 453 cities in the United States with this form of government in January, 1939. The time is ripe to appraise the results.

The Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council undertook in 1937 a nation-wide study of the results and practical operation of the city manager plan of municipal government. A staff of three persons visited eighteen carefully chosen cities, of which San Diego was one, and has written a series of case studies on individual cities which gives a realistic account and a penetrating analysis of the plan in actual operation under varying local conditions.

In addition to the research of the staff, over thirty cooperative studies were made by professors and graduate students of political science at universities throughout the country.

There is no agreed measuring stick by which to judge the success or failure of a city government. It is to be admitted at once that the form of government is only one factor affecting the practical results—though an important factor. Each of the cities covered has been placed under the microscope, and the actual results under the manager plan have been compared with those under preceding forms of government within the same community.

The results of this research will be presented in a series of case studies of individual cities, of which San Diego is one, and in a volume of general analysis, based upon the experience of the fifty cities covered. The staff spent several weeks in San Diego during December, 1937, and January, 1938, and the study was written in August and September of 1938. The authors are greatly indebted to public officials and citizens of San Diego for their unstinted cooperation in the study.

The authors are solely responsible for all statements of fact and opinion which appear in this study. The Social Science Research Council has provided the necessary funds; in accordance with its customary practice,

the Council has not reviewed or passed upon the findings, nor has its Committee on Public Administration, under whose auspices the study was made.

JOSEPH P. HARRIS  
*Director of Research*

### IMPORTANT DATES IN SAN DIEGO'S GOVERNMENT

San Diego incorporated .....	1850
First city plan .....	1908
Civil service established .....	1915
Voters defeat first city manager charter .....	1929
Voters approve second city manager charter .....	1931
Charter becomes effective May 1 .....	1932
H. H. Esselstyn, Manager (May-July) .....	1932
A. V. Goeddel, Manager .....	1932
Fred W. Lockwood, Manager .....	1933
George L. Buck, Manager .....	1934
R. W. Flack, Manager .....	1935—

# City Manager Government in San Diego

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## I. THE CITY

THE GREAT Franciscan, Junipero Serra, in 1769 raised the cross on a high hill overlooking the beautiful harbor of San Diego. But he left this site for the presidio and established his mission where irrigation was possible, a few miles up the valley of the San Diego River. A small community, the first settlement in the Spanish territory of California, developed around the presidio. In spite of great difficulties, the mission's work of civilizing the Indians went on heroically in the valley. For a half-century San Diego was an important Spanish outpost.

Under the indifferent rule of Mexico after 1822 the community declined in importance. Richard Henry Dana, viewing it in 1832, saw a straggling town of about forty dark-brown adobe huts and two larger ones, plastered, which belonged to the *gente de rason*. The presidio was falling into ruins and the work of the mission had lost its vitality. Only a few ships stopped at the port. The city's somnolence was hardly broken by the raising of the American flag in 1846 or by the incorporation of the city in 1850, the year in which California became a state.

The American founder of the modern city was Alonzo Horton, who in 1867 sold out his furniture business in San Francisco and bought a thousand acres near the old town of San Diego for \$265. There he promoted the first of the city's real estate booms, subdividing his land into small blocks so that he could realize the greater value of many corner lots. The next boom was caused by the coming of the railroad in 1885; in little more than a year the population increased five times and real estate values soared. The population grew rapidly from that time on, especially between 1920 and 1930, when it increased from 80,000 to 158,000. Estimates in a city report for 1936-37 show the population to be about 170,000, with 30,000 in adjoining communities.

Geographic characteristics have played a large part in determining the nature of the city. Before 1885 its aridity and isolation hindered its growth; but since the World War the climate and the port have been

responsible for its rapid development into a minor metropolitan community. The migration of retired Midwesterners started after the Panama-California Exposition which in 1915-16 advertised the mildness of San Diego's climate. The Federal government's war-time base, established in San Diego in 1917, became the first of an important series of developments which have resulted in the maintenance there of the Navy's largest training station and airport, and the harbor is the home port for the Navy's light forces afloat.

### *A Sprawling City*

Growing rapidly in an automobile age, the city sprawled over a bushy mesa cut by many canyons. During the mid-twenties, new subdivisions sprang up like mushrooms. Many persons retired from other businesses and professions to trade in real estate. They thought San Diego would grow into a second Los Angeles. Competition among real estate men accentuated the dispersion of population.

The community had an area of over one hundred square miles within which to grow, but the eastern boundary line was relatively close to the center of the city, and numerous tracts to the east were annexed between 1920 and 1930. To the south are several independent villages that are as intimately connected with the San Diego community as some of the areas within the city boundaries.

East San Diego, a large middle-class neighborhood, had grown into an independent village before it was annexed in 1923. North Park, the El Cajon Avenue section, Mission Hills, Point Loma, Mission Beach, and Pacific Beach are communities, very different in character, which have developed within the city's large area. La Jolla, almost twelve miles north of downtown San Diego along the ocean, is a most exclusive community, which the passing motorist takes for a separate village. Thus the city has been decentralized and a number of satellite areas have developed, each possessing its own trading center and a neighborhood loyalty. Each has its own organizations and special interests. Each feels that it should have a distinct voice in the affairs of the municipality.

The contemporary population of San Diego is heterogeneous and lacks unifying traditions; it is new and mobile; it has not settled into well defined and accepted social positions. Groups are based on religious sectarianism; former residence, as the "Iowa Club"; the special real estate interests of the various distinct communities; downtown business interests; the Navy; various sporting elements; and the rather significant racial groups, including the Mexicans and the Orientals. There have



been no large portions of the population sharing similar tastes and objectives; and there has been little disposition to reconcile differences in the interests of good government.

Such conditions have not produced strong leaders. A few outstanding men, such as Spreckels, the utilities and railroad magnate, have exercised great power in the building of the city, but men of this caliber have never accepted leadership in the city government. They have in the past found it easy to bend the government to suit their larger purposes. Today they are gone and absentee owners control the important economic interests, such as utilities, the newspapers, and some of the largest real estate developments.

### *Economic Assets*

The port is San Diego's greatest asset. The Navy payroll is \$2,500,000 a month and makes up about one quarter of the aggregate payrolls in the city. The port is headquarters for a customs district and handles a small amount of commerce. Hoping to increase the shipping trade and to attract larger and larger portions of the Navy, San Diego citizens have been willing to vote large sums of money for harbor improvement. The city government by 1937 had spent \$5,500,000, and the Federal government almost as great an amount.

Climatic conditions which favor year-round flying have given the city an advantage in the development of air traffic. Lindbergh Field, an exceptionally fine flying field on the edge of the harbor only five minutes from downtown San Diego, is on a fill made by the city government by dredging the harbor. The U. S. Navy air base near by, and the Army flying field on North Island, have attracted air industry. Recently an eastern corporation which is one of the largest manufacturers of airplanes established its factory in San Diego.

Another major source of wealth is the tourist trade, which is being constantly stimulated by the Chamber of Commerce and the city government. A state law enacted in 1927 permits local governments to appropriate by ordinance a maximum of 5 per cent of the total tax rate to advertise the community. Since then the city has spent annually sums ranging from \$7,500 during the depression years to \$22,500 in the years of the recent exposition for promotional advertising.

### *The Newspapers*

The city has for years had three daily papers. The *Sun*, one of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, has been active in initiating local reform

movements and has taken credit for reform accomplishments. The *Union* and the *Tribune*, morning and evening papers, are controlled by Colonel Ira S. Copley, who became wealthy through the utilities industry. All three newspapers have given strong moral support to good government in their editorial columns, but the constant play of publicity during the years of political conflict in San Diego has seriously injured the prestige of city government among the citizens. The *Sun* has always supported city manager government in preference to other forms. The *Union* and *Tribune* helped in the campaign for the present charter, which they have supported ever since.

The *Herald* is the most important of numerous small weekly journals. It is now edited by the son of a well-known old-time printer-journalist who was during his lifetime severely critical of the city manager plan. The *Herald* has been consistently opposed to the principles of the manager form.

#### *Local Government*

San Diego's local government is carried on by the county, the school district, and the city government. With the help of Federal money, the county and city have recently joined in the construction of an office building, to be the first unit in the civic center on the water front. The county is the general agency for relief and welfare, functions in which it is assisted by the state and Federal governments. The public health department is maintained jointly by the city and the county. All tax collecting and assessing is done by the county.

A board of education of five members is elected at large from a school district which is not coterminous with the city and is financially independent. A joint recreation program is maintained by the city and the schools.

The city government is entrusted with broad and important powers. California state law provides generously for home rule, even giving cities the right to treat of nonmunicipal affairs in their charters if the state has not by legislation preempted the field. A description of the city's more important concerns will indicate the scope of its responsibilities and the character of its services.

To furnish water has always been the city's basic problem, for San Diego is semiarid, with less than ten inches of rainfall a year. To cope with this problem the city has often employed specialists, ranging from a rainmaker to an internationally famous engineer. Several reservoirs have been constructed in the foothills. Yet the city council now thinks

that the present supply will soon be inadequate, and it is negotiating with the Federal government to obtain water from the Colorado River through the All-American canal.

San Diego has had an effective planning and zoning commission since 1923, though planning efforts date from a much earlier time. George W. Marston and other public spirited citizens in 1908 hired the planning expert, John Nolen, to make a plan. A prominent architect, Bertram Goodhue, designed and supervised the construction of the Balboa Park buildings and grounds for the exposition of 1915. These have proved a permanent contribution. Federal-city funds have within the last few years renovated the old buildings, and the original site was kept as the nucleus of the 1935-36 exposition. In 1926 John Nolen was again employed by the city planning commission to make a comprehensive plan, which has been largely followed since that time. State law requires the city to have a master plan and provides ample power and scope for planning and zoning. The city also has a special organization plan for meeting a possible catastrophe.

The development of the park system is of great importance to the city because of the part it plays in attracting visitors and new residents to San Diego. Balboa Park, which covers 1,400 acres in the center of the city, has been the site of two expositions and is the city's greatest show place. It has a permanent cultural center with museums, an art gallery, elaborate provisions for out-of-door musical and other performances, and many special buildings, left from the two fairs, in which many organizations maintain club rooms. It has many recreation areas including a fine club house and two golf courses; a swimming pool; tennis courts; a Boy Scout Lodge; and numerous corners for shuffleboard, roque, bowling, and horseshoes, "which constitute a great attraction for the more elderly and the retired population."<sup>1</sup> A sizeable area of the park is occupied by a zoo which is exceptionally fine for a community of San Diego's size.

A playground and recreation department was organized in 1927 and now has fourteen playgrounds, one recreation area, and three community houses under its direction. By agreement with the school board, the major expansion has been made on school grounds. The high-school stadium is owned by the city and operated by the Board of Education.

Several private organizations administer particular interests which are partly financed by the city and are under its general supervision.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report of the City of San Diego, 1936-37.*

The zoo has for years been under the direction of a privately organized Zoological Society; the Junipero Serra Museum, given to the city by George W. Marston, is under the care of the San Diego Historical Society; Community Players operates the Globe Theater in Balboa Park; and the Fine Arts Gallery is the responsibility of the Fine Arts Society.

The public library, also under the authority of the city, is important to a resort and residential community. According to the figures of the American Library Association for 1937, 51 per cent of the population of San Diego hold library cards. This is the highest among thirty-eight cities between 100,000 and 200,000 population, and only three other cities of this group have a higher per capita expenditure for their libraries.

The extensive construction which occurred between 1920 and 1930 led the city to adopt building codes and enlarge its inspection departments. This was an extremely important step as it checked the shoddy building which had characterized so much of the earlier construction in the city.

Many departments of the city must contend with special problems. A huge city area varying in elevation from sea level to several hundred feet, cut by precipitous canyons, confronts the public works department. The police department must cope with the difficulties of a seaport and navy town. The proximity of the international border line has caused trouble, especially during the prohibition era when Tia Juana and fashionable Agua Caliente attracted a new sporting element, and when bootlegging across the border was a regular business.

The city has tried many variations of several forms of local government. One hundred and twenty-five changes were made in the charter at fourteen elections between 1889 and 1931. In 1929 the voters rejected a city manager charter. But those who had led the campaign against it offered to compromise on another charter, which was drawn up by a second board of freeholders and approved by a large majority of the voters in 1931. It provided for a manager with ample power over most of the city's services.

For three years, from 1932 to 1935, the new government floundered in a sea of difficulties. Four managers were employed in this period. Since the formation in 1935 of an active citizens' group which has succeeded in electing councilmen in support of the charter, the city has enjoyed a constantly improving government under the administration of Mr. Robert Flack, the fifth manager.

## II. MAYOR-COUNCIL GOVERNMENT:

1915-32

**S**AN DIEGO has had five different forms of government since 1889, when a bicameral council elected by wards was established by charter. In 1905, the bicameral council was changed by charter amendment to a unicameral body, still elected by wards. In 1909, again by charter amendment, a commission plan was established with five commissioners elected at large. In 1915 the commission form was replaced by a mayor-council plan, which was often erroneously described as a city manager plan because of the title of one appointed official, the "manager of operations," who had charge of all public works and engineering.

### *Organization*

The government between 1915 and 1931 did not conform closely to any general pattern, but may be loosely referred to as a mayor-council plan. Five councilmen and a mayor were elected at large. The mayor was president of the council but had no vote. Though the charter gave the mayor veto power and made him the chief executive officer—provisions that usually characterize a strong-mayor form—his power over administration was so restricted that he was hardly more important than a councilman. In actual practice the government was more nearly like a weak-mayor form, for there was no single executive in charge of administration. The plan of organization is shown in Table 1.

The mayor's control over the departments was restricted in several ways. Many functions were scattered among a number of operating boards and commissions, including those for parks, cemeteries, playgrounds, health, library, harbor, and others. Personnel matters were under the direction of the civil service commission. The planning commission, although set up in 1916, was not important until it was reorganized in 1923. The water system was at first under an operating board, but was put under the "manager of operations" in 1924.

By its power of appointment and by withholding confirmation of the mayor's appointments, the council was able to take from the mayor the control of most of the administrative operations. The council appointed the clerk, attorney, fire chief, city engineer, street superintendent, purchasing agent, and the manager of operations. The appointment of the fire chief, the purchasing agent, and the manager of operations

## City Manager Government in San Diego

TABLE I. ORGANIZATION OF SAN DIEGO  
(About 1931. Prior to Manager Plan.)

### *Elected Officials*

MAYOR. Chief executive, with veto power; two-year term.  
 COUNCILMEN (5). Overlapping four-year terms; elected at large.  
 TREASURER. Four-year term.  
 POLICE JUDGE.

### *Appointed by Council*

MANAGER OF OPERATIONS,<sup>1</sup> acting for the council in the management of:

Sewer maintenance	Vocational home
Maintenance of buildings	Dog pound
Water supply	Engineering
Pueblo lands	Street maintenance
Collection and disposal of garbage and refuse	Machine shop and yards
Building, electrical, and boiler inspections	Street cleaning

FIRE CHIEF.<sup>1</sup>

CITY CLERK.

CITY ATTORNEY.

PURCHASING AGENT,<sup>1</sup> in charge of the warehouse and the print shop.

CITY ENGINEER.

STREET SUPERINTENDENT.

HYDRAULIC ENGINEER.

SUPERINTENDENT OF WATER DISTRIBUTION.

### *Appointed by Mayor and Confirmed by Council*

AUDITOR.

POLICE CHIEF.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>2, 3</sup>

CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>2</sup>

PARK COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>2</sup>

PLAYGROUND COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>2</sup>

HARBOR COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>2, 3</sup>

LIBRARY TRUSTEES (3).<sup>2, 3</sup>

HEALTH BOARD (3).<sup>2, 4</sup> to which plumbing inspections were assigned.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS (3).

### *Other Boards and Commissions*

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
 THREE PENSION BOARDS } the same as shown in Table 5.

NOTE: Assessing and tax collecting done by the county, and welfare and relief largely administered by the county. After 1915, when the mayor and five-man council were installed, many changes took place which are not shown here. The above table outlines the organization as it existed in 1932 just before the manager plan became effective.

<sup>1</sup> Appointments confirmed by mayor unless made by a 4-out-of-5 vote of the council.

<sup>2</sup> Operating Boards.

<sup>3</sup> Organization and duties the same as shown in Table 5.

<sup>4</sup> Health work partly carried on by city and county by a joint staff.

had to be confirmed by the mayor, under a specific provision of the charter. By his veto power, the mayor could hold up other appointments. But in either event the council could, by four out of five votes, overrule the mayor's objection. The mayor had the power, subject to the confirmation of the council, to name the chief of police, the auditor, and the members of the operating boards. The scope of the activities under the mayor's control was limited in 1928 when the council voted to have the tax collecting and assessing done by the county.

The charter called the mayor the chief executive and gave him the responsibility of supervising the departments, yet it did not give him enough authority to do so effectively. He had a means of influence over the council through his power to appoint the auditor, who was required by the charter to make the budget and submit it to the council and to certify that funds were available before any appropriation ordinance should take effect. The council did not pass a single annual appropriation ordinance, but appropriated funds at nearly every meeting. One mayor prevented at least a few expenditures of which he did not approve by ordering the auditor not to certify the appropriation ordinances, even though the auditor was supposed to do so whenever funds were available. Such an irregular means of control illustrates the difficulty that even the strongest mayor had in trying to effect coordination under San Diego's scrambled charter.

Considerable confusion resulted from the title "manager of operations." In many cities this title would have been "director of public works," or simply "city engineer," but in San Diego this position and that of a city manager were confused. Some of the managers of operations belonged to the International City Managers' Association and attended their conventions. Until 1929, when the association applied a stricter definition of manager government, San Diego was included in its list of manager cities. San Diego was therefore widely though erroneously known as a manager city.

### *No Partisan Control*

During the 1920's there was no national party organization, no political group, and no individual boss that could control the elections of mayors and council members in San Diego. Each election was a free-for-all, with independent candidates enlisting as much personal support as possible. From the time that mayor-council government was established in 1915 until about 1925 the council had a bipartisan political complexion, including Democrats and Republicans who had run with-

out organized party backing. Political leaders with moderate prestige in the community served on the council, usually holding their seats for several terms each. Some of them were small business proprietors, such as Virgilio Bruschi, who ran a small grocery for fifty years and for most of that time retained the political support of his neighborhood.

During the early 1920's the occupations of politics and real estate became identified to some extent. Don Stewart went on from municipal politics into real estate. He had served three terms on the council and had been city treasurer for eight years. Later, he became influential enough in the Democratic party to be appointed postmaster in 1934. John A. Held, a member of the county Republican committee for twenty years, and a member of the city council, also went into real estate. During the later 1920's, when the real estate business was overcrowded and less remunerative, real estate men began to go into city politics, and took the place of party workers on the council, the members of which drew a \$2,000 salary. Of the seven men who served full terms on the council between 1925 and 1932, five were real estate men and two were leaders of labor unions. Men in San Diego who were inclined to follow an opportunistic career rather than a settled line of work turned during the 1920's to real estate development, municipal politics, or both. The tremendous mobility of the population at this period favored the opportunist.

The two men who served as mayor from 1921 to 1931 were professional men of high social standing. John L. Bacon was a consulting engineer. Harry C. Clark was an attorney who had had an engineering as well as a legal education. He had been a construction engineer on municipal projects before turning to the law, and when he was elected mayor he was president of the San Diego County Bar Association. Walter W. Austin, who was mayor for a year in 1931-32, was a successful business man who belonged to many lodges and civic organizations.

These mayors and councilmen sought public office eagerly. After serving as mayor for two terms, Mr. Clark ran for the same office again and was defeated; Mr. Austin, after his term as mayor, ran in 1935 for the council and was beaten. Of the seven men who served full terms on the council between 1925 and 1932, six have since run losing races for the council, and three of them have done so twice. Candidates did not feel that they had to depend on nomination by any organization.

### *Minor Pressure Groups*

In the absence of any party or other political organization as a domi-



TABLE 2. MAYORS AND COUNCILMEN OF SAN DIEGO, 1923-32

*Mayors*

- JOHN L. BACON (1921-27). Engineer; now chairman of civil service commission.
- HARRY C. CLARK (1927-31). Attorney; president of San Diego County Bar Association; college degrees in law and engineering; Mason, Veteran of Foreign Wars, American Legion. (Defeated for mayoralty in 1931.)
- WALTER W. AUSTIN (1931-32). Proprietor of Austin Safe and Desk Company; graduate of Northwestern Medical School; international head of the Dramatic Order of Khorassans; Rotary, Mason, Elk, Eagle, Knight of Pythias. (Defeated for council, 1935.)

*Councilmen*

- JOHN A. HELD (1923-27). Real estate and insurance; former member of state harbor commission, county Republican committee for twenty years.
- DON STEWART (1919-27). Clothing store; city council 1903-05; city treasurer and tax collector 1909-17; then real estate and insurance; appointed postmaster, 1934; leading Democrat; director of Chamber of Commerce, Cuyamaca Club.
- VIRILIO BRUSCHI (1917-29). Grocery proprietor; political leader; Odd-fellow, Mason. (Defeated for council, 1929.)
- LOUIS C. MAIRE (1925-32). Real estate and insurance; auto sales.
- HARRY K. WEITZEL (1925-27). Grocer. (Removed from office when convicted of soliciting a bribe.)
- E. H. DOWELL (1927-31). President of A. F. of L. council. (Defeated for council, 1925, 1931.)
- S. P. McMULLEN (1927-31). Owner of bakery, real estate; resigned position on council to become county supervisor. (Defeated for council, 1925.)
- F. W. SEIFERT (1927-29). Army air corps; later district manager of General Petroleum Co. of California. (Defeated for council, 1929.)
- J. V. ALEXANDER (1929-32). Real estate.
- IRA S. IREY (1929-32). Real estate and insurance. (Defeated for council, 1927, 1932.)
- J. J. RUSSO (1931-33). Movie projector operator; president of A. F. of L. council. (Defeated for council, 1929, 1933.)
- ALFRED STAHEL (1931-32). Real estate. (Defeated for council, 1932.)

nant force in municipal campaigns and policy, many minor pressure groups exerted as much influence as they could. The strongest of these groups were the city employees. They were organized in 1928 into the Municipal Employees' Association, which grew in political influence. Its recognized leader was the man who served as city treasurer from 1919 until 1933, Jack Millan, who eliminated all his opponents in the primary in 1925 and again in 1929. Mr. Millan had gone to San Diego in 1905 to die of injuries received in an accident in the Navy, and re-

mained alive to compose music for community pageants with titles like "Heart's Desire," and to become the most influential leader in San Diego politics.

The fire department had considerable political strength of its own, in addition to the influence of the whole group of employees. The fire chief, Louis Almgren, built up a good department, and also made it a force in elections. Mayor Austin was elected with the help of the firemen; his son was a member of the department.

Because of the rapid development of the outlying areas within the city limits, organizations and firms promoting development became pressure groups of great importance. Eighteen separate tracts were annexed to the city between 1920 and 1930, and building was going on rapidly within the extensive limits of the old city. Commercial clubs sprang up in the outlying neighborhoods, each demanding the help of the municipality in promoting the growth of its section. Under the special assessment system in effect in San Diego, the outlying development was carried on principally at the cost of the areas benefited; and in the face of organized neighborhood pressure the council found it impossible to plan deliberately for the city's growth. Salesmen of patented paving materials, street lights, and sewer pipe circulated petitions in each new neighborhood for development that specified their particular products, and asked the council to put closed specifications in the advertisements for bids. When the engineering work became too heavy for the city staff to handle, engineering firms sought appointment as deputy engineers on a fee basis, and several of those who were appointed collected fees for planning projects that were never completed. The council let the contracts for subdivision development, and the letting of contracts and the drafting of specifications were influenced by the pressure brought by companies building streets or selling paving, street lights, or sewer materials. A real estate developer could protect his interests and help his friends by being on the council.

The chief of police alone among the major department heads was appointed by the mayor, and the mayor was therefore in a better position to exercise his power under the charter to direct the affairs of that department. But many of the council members tried individually to influence the police department, either for the favors that it could dispense or to induce it to enforce moral regulations more strictly, and the mayor was continually bickering with them over their attempts to give orders to the police. During the last few years of mayor-council government, there was general dissatisfaction with the work of the police department,

which was pretty thoroughly demoralized. It could not satisfy the two halves of the community, of which one wanted strict regulation, the other little or none. In 1931, both the candidates for mayor who survived the primary emphasized in their campaigns their determination to bring about more strict law enforcement. One of them was the incumbent mayor, who had been unable to control the police department effectively enough to bring about the degree of enforcement he wanted. He was defeated.

The electorate of San Diego made many important decisions of municipal policy by direct vote. By passing on bond issues, it determined when the water system should be extended. By voting special tax rates it supported the park and the harbor. Council members spent a great deal of time, and newspapers devoted a great deal of space, to persuading the voters upon questions like these.

There was plenty of publicity about municipal politics, although there was little about the work of the city departments. Besides the three daily newspapers, San Diego had and still has about a dozen small weekly papers, each of which expounds the point of view of some political faction, neighborhood, cult, or individual. These journals helped to generate a tremendous amount of political gossip, much of it vicious and untrue. By their comments these papers furthered the disunity of community feeling and spirit and made the job of governing the municipality far more difficult.

### *Council Procedure*

The procedure of the mayor and the council did not give the electorate much chance to consider broad issues. They referred a great many matters to the department heads for reports, but the reports were discussed in detail rather than in terms of the principal issues that they involved. The meetings of the council were long and the members spent a great deal of time debating matters of little importance.

The system of checks and balances led to a tremendous amount of maneuvering for influence, with each mayor and each councilman trying to extend his authority as far as he could. The charter provision that the mayor should have supervisory power over all departments and public institutions was made a joke, and there was no individual or group in whom responsibility for the city government was concentrated.

The inefficiency of such a system was strikingly demonstrated in the council's dealing with the city's most important engineering problem, its water supply system. By 1926 the councilmen had outgrown the

superstitions of their predecessors who had hired a rainmaker in 1913 to fill the city's reservoirs, only to have the downpour that followed his efforts wash out an important dam. (That council, incidentally, refused to pay the rainmaker, and some of its members even talked of suing him for damages.) In 1926, the councilmen themselves proceeded to direct the work and bungled all aspects of the matter except that of persuading the city to vote a two-million-dollar bond issue. In 1928 they hired a hydraulic engineer who had helped build the Assouan dam, but they would not take his advice and their interference drove him to resign. They started work on two sites, the first of which was unsuitable for geological, the second for legal, reasons; and when they abandoned them they had spent nearly \$1,500,000 and faced the prospect of paying still more to owners of land and riparian rights. The prestige of the mayor-council government never recovered from this episode.

#### *How Municipal Work Was Done*

The period of mayor-council government from 1915 to 1932 was also the period of the city's most rapid growth. Many of the new citizens knew little of the history of San Diego's municipal government and gathered their impressions of current affairs largely from the newspapers. Thus public opinion of the city government during this period was formed in large part by the headlines which exposed the council's faulty decisions about the water supply and which gave the impression that the police department was allowing the city to become a place of cheap vice and a mere annex to the sporting places across the border in Mexico. The commendable work of many of the city departments went unchronicled and was almost unknown.

In spite of the frequency with which opportunists sought councilmanic offices for personal benefits, in spite of the groups that pressed their claims upon a council willing to do favors, San Diego developed many excellent ways of getting municipal work done. It early adopted centralized purchasing, civil service, pensions, audits, and various techniques of management, many of which are considered good practice today. Dozens of well established and up-to-date procedures were inaugurated under the mayor-council government before 1932, largely upon the initiative of the individual departments.

The checks and balances of the patchwork charter prevented the direction and coordination of the city's services as one unified organization. The large and important public works department was under the direction of a manager of operations. Every other department and division

had its own executive, but the organization as a whole lacked purposeful control. The mayor was prevented by the council from exercising what power he possessed, and many activities were under operating boards and commissions. Some cooperation among the various departments was carried on by department heads on their own initiative.

Some of the achievements of the city government before 1932 may be described. Although these accomplishments were miscellaneous and without executive direction, they provided continuity from one form of government to another and gave the city managers of San Diego a basis upon which to build.

### *Police Records System*

August Vollmer, who had gained a national reputation among public administrators for police methods and management, was employed by San Diego in 1916 to overhaul and modernize the records kept in the police department. He did such a good job of it that the forms, files, and paper work follow substantially the same plan today. His system was slightly modified in 1934 when the uniform crime records developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and promulgated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation became recognized as another improvement in police records. Mr. Vollmer started a card file listing the names and descriptions of all persons with criminal records known to the San Diego police; it is still in constant use and, according to the chief of detectives, is the most valuable record in the department. Another system, started in 1916, is the "active file" which holds cards of unsolved and pending cases arranged in such a way that the cards are periodically brought to the attention of the officers, reminding them that there is an unfinished job. Pawn-shop and fingerprint records are continuous since 1916. Reports of cases investigated by detectives follow the plan recommended by Mr. Vollmer.

### *Engineering Department*

In San Diego the city engineer is in a separate division of the city government, quite apart from the public works department. His division operates as a service agency, ready to advise and to give engineering service to anyone in the government. This plan of organization is of long standing in the city, and the present director of public works does not know how it could be arranged any other way, though in most municipal governments the city engineer is either in the public works department or is in charge of it.

The engineer in San Diego for many years has given full time to engineering work without being encumbered with the details of administering a large public works department. What is probably of greater significance, he has had the opportunity of viewing all the engineering problems of the city without becoming engrossed only with streets and sewers to the neglect of the inspection, park, and other departments.

### *Centralized purchasing*

The present city officials do not know just when centralized purchasing was started—probably sometime prior to the mayor-council form of government and during the period from 1909 to 1914. This was back in the days when the centralization of purchasing was a novelty in municipal government, and before Russell Forbes had published his treatises on public buying which have become standard works on this subject. The purchasing procedures have not changed appreciably for many years, and the manager plan has had little or no effect on them. A printing plant and a stockroom were part of the purchasing department before 1932.

### *Civil Service*

A civil service system was set up by charter amendment in 1915. It provided for a commission of three appointed for four-year overlapping terms. Appointments were to be made by the mayor and confirmed by the council. Many of the civil service provisions in the charter were excellent and advanced for the time. They placed nearly all employees, including common labor, under civil service. Only department heads and their secretaries were exempt. The civil service system functioned successfully in stopping the dispensing of jobs as patronage, and provided a good means of recruiting personnel. But it did not keep municipal employees from taking part in campaigns. The civil service provisions in the charter contained a clause that prohibited employees from participating in politics. It made any violation of the clause a "misdemeanor," but did not mention discharge as a penalty. Civil service only strengthened the position of incumbent employees, who, secure in their positions, felt free to campaign for larger departmental budgets, higher salaries, and better pension systems.

Some department heads had trouble with the civil service commission when they tried to discharge unsatisfactory employees and others did not. The health officer states that discharges are handled in the same

way today as when he became health officer in 1921. He has been upheld by the commission when discharged employees appealed for a hearing. On the other hand, one of the superintendents in the public works department and a former manager of operations feel that there was little protection from unsuitable employees. The latter cited two instances prior to the manager plan in which employees were reinstated after he had discharged them for incompetence and insubordination.

A recruitment procedure was designed for the purpose of selecting qualified candidates for jobs, and only those on the eligible list could be appointed. A rating system patterned after Probst<sup>1</sup> was used twice a year to rate the proficiency of a number of employees, and promotional examinations were given in many instances, although the entire city service was not covered because the civil service commission had no further control over policemen and firemen once they were appointed. The police department developed its own rating and promotional procedure; no progress was made in this direction in the fire department. Certification of payrolls by the commission was a regular duty of long standing. Pension systems for police and firemen were started in 1923, and for other employees in 1927.

### *Municipal Services*

Before 1932, San Diego was giving a number of services to its citizens which were considered advanced and progressive when they were started. A planning commission was established in 1916 but did not become effective until reorganized in 1923. A major street plan was adopted in 1930. John Nolen made a master plan for the city in 1926. The present scope of health service was planned and started when the city and the county reorganized the health department in 1924 and 1925. Little change has taken place in recreational service since the schools and city joined forces in 1927. The water system was largely developed and many miles of paving had been laid by 1932.

To get a good water supply had always seemed so important that the disposal of sewage had gone wholly without attention until the situation reached an aggravated stage. Sewage has always been run into the harbor. As the volume of sewage has grown, it has created an increasingly annoying problem for ships that anchor in the harbor and for swimmers. City refuse dumps have created a similar problem with their smoke and fumes.

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Probst invented a widely used rating system for determining the proficiency of employees.

Although the municipal services of the various departments were in many respects on a high level prior to 1932, the new manager government faced many vexatious problems when it took hold. It was expected to handle the water problem more skillfully and less expensively, to bolster up the morale of the police department, to do something about the dance halls and the moral problems of the city, to find a way to build an adequate city hall, and to solve the long standing problem of sewage disposal.

### III. THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW CHARTER

A CITY is essentially a corporation," said the new mayor of San Diego as he took office under the new charter, "in which every taxpayer is a shareholder. . . . The shareholders in other corporations do not concern themselves about the political views of their trustees. . . . The people . . . demanded that the business of the city should be conducted on strictly business principles."

This statement was not made upon the establishment of city manager government nor by the advocates of that plan in 1929, for it had been made by the mayor in an inaugural address in 1889, forty years before. And the city, by adopting current reforms (such as commission government and a civil service system) before 1915, had indicated that it accepted the theory that municipal government should be nonpartisan. Party workers, it is true, had been elected to office after that, but the problem that faced the reformers in the late 1920's was not one of freeing the city from the control of a partisan machine. It was rather a problem of integrating a political and administrative system that had been thrown into chaos by the political influence of different pressure groups, and by the adoption of unrelated or contradictory charter amendments.

The city manager charter, which went into effect in 1932, was the result of four years of effort. The story of these four years may be outlined chronologically in a sentence: The mayor appointed a citizens' charter committee in 1928 to study the existing charter; on the recommendation of that committee, the city elected a board of freeholders<sup>1</sup> to draft a charter in 1929, but defeated the charter that it proposed; a second

<sup>1</sup> A charter drafting committee, under California law, is known as a board of freeholders.



board of freeholders was nominated and elected in 1930, and the charter that it drafted was adopted by popular vote in 1931 and became effective in 1932.

### *The Beginning of the Charter Movement*

The movement was started by Mayor Clark, who first undertook to have the deficiencies of the existing charter thoroughly exposed. He had found through personal experience that the mayor had not sufficient power to supervise the employees of the city. He appointed a citizens' charter committee in 1928, naming representatives of as many neighborhood and occupational groups as he could include. This committee, which held twenty-eight evening meetings, made an intensive study of the existing charter through ten subcommittees. In this study it called for expert assistance. Three professors of government, William B. Munro of Harvard, Samuel C. May of the University of California, and Arthur G. Peterson of San Diego State College were consulted.

The committee reported that the older charter "contains a mass of confused and often contradictory provisions, . . . many . . . obsolete or rendered ineffective by others; . . . in many instances an overlapping and conflict of delegated powers and duties, . . . in others a total want of defined powers and duties as would enable such officers to function properly." It therefore recommended that a new charter be drafted and adopted.

The recommendation fell on ground that was becoming more fertile year by year. Special assessments and taxes had been increasing, and the California Taxpayers' Association recommended in a report of May, 1928, a complete reorganization of the government, suggesting the city manager form as a means of efficient and economical administration. There was dissatisfaction with the organization of the water department, to which the same report called attention: the accounting system made it impossible to determine the costs of the water supply, and the city was probably contributing to the support of the water department out of taxation. After the fiasco of misplacing the dam in 1928, the community began to feel even more strongly that a reorganization of the water department, insulating it from political influence, was necessary. The police problem was becoming more acute, and the newspapers were continually demanding reform.

Under these circumstances, the members of the council made no active objection to a change in the charter, and some of them supported the movement. One councilman said that "the taxpayers are on the verge

of losing faith in this city as a place in which to make their investments." A new charter, he argued, would help President Hoover's plan to stabilize business. The councilmen were genuinely concerned about the decline in the prestige of the city government. When a vacancy had occurred in 1927 they had had difficulty in getting a suitable man to accept the position. The first ten to whom it was offered refused it, and the typical refusal was, "I would not want to take the job and have the press start in on me, as it would hurt my business."

### *The Charter of 1929*

The mayor and council were convinced that a new charter was needed, and the sentiment in the community was increasingly in favor of immediate action. There was no difficulty about getting the council to arrange for the election of a fifteen-member board of freeholders in accordance with the California Home Rule law. The prospect of helping to draft a modern charter appealed to many idealistic citizens who were interested in improving the government. Mayor Clark's nominating committee was careful to name such persons for the job of drafting the new charter. Those whom they chose were easily elected, only one other candidate being nominated. The first board of freeholders had the inclination to draft the best charter possible without compromises.

Two of the fifteen members of the board were women, representing the civic study clubs and intellectual interests of the women of the city. The other members of the board were professional and businessmen of the city, most of whom were not identified with any of the pressure groups that had been active in city affairs, and none of whom had ever held municipal office.

Academic influence was strong in the board that drafted the charter in 1929. The chairman of the citizens' charter committee of 1928, the chairman of the 1929 board of freeholders, and the most active leader of the movement for revision, was John W. Snyder, who had formerly been a college instructor but was then a well-to-do real estate man. He consulted with the three professors who had advised the citizens' charter committee, and led the freeholders to employ Professor Edwin Cottrell of Stanford University as a paid consultant. Mayor Clark and the former mayor, John L. Bacon, appeared before the board to advocate the city manager form of government and to point out serious faults in the existing form.

The charter which was drawn in 1929 provided that the council should appoint only the city manager, city clerk, auditor, attorney, civil service

commission, funds commission, and three members of the city planning commission. The city manager was to appoint all other department heads, six members of the city planning commission, four unpaid operating commissions (the harbor, park, recreation, and library commissions), and the advisory board of health. A council of nine members, including a mayor elected by the council itself, was to have no salaries. Each member was to be paid only a nominal fee for each meeting attended. The council was to be elected by the whole city for four-year overlapping terms, although three members were required to live in each of three districts. The manager was to have a salary of \$10,000 or more, which could not be reduced during the tenure of any individual, and he could be discharged only upon written charges and after a public hearing. The water department was to have an accounting system to show clearly the cost of water to the city.

The board of freeholders were pleased with the charter in which they had incorporated many of the principles recommended by their advisers. But only 41 out of 204 precincts approved the charter when it was put to a vote, and all but one of the precincts which voted for it were in the more fashionable central neighborhoods. The campaign for the charter had been handled by a young woman with no political experience, while an unorganized alliance of pressure groups had been ranged against it.

Each of the pressure groups wanted to reform the old charter, but objected to some specific provisions of the proposed one. There were the city employees, especially the fire department; a group of men who wanted to run for office in the future; the outlying neighborhoods, and especially their business clubs and improvement associations; the labor unions; and the shipping interests. The *Sun* had advocated the charter. The *Union* and *Tribune* had opposed it on the grounds that it included changes that were too far-reaching. Their particular fear was that the important activities of the harbor might be subjected to political influence if put under a city manager.

### *The Charter of 1931*

The groups that fought the proposed charter in 1929 then set out to show that they were sincere in protesting their desire to reform the old charter. Jack Millan, the city treasurer, the strongest opponent of the 1929 charter, offered his support in the drafting of another charter. He asked that a more representative board of freeholders be nominated. Mayor Clark responded by appointing an advisory committee to nominate another board of freeholders. This time he placed four city officials

on the committee, including Mr. Millan and Mr. Almgren, the fire chief. The committee this time nominated some persons with political experience or ambitions as well as a number of those who had served on the first board. An exciting election ensued, and eight members who had not served on the first board were elected to the second.

The new members included three real estate men, a banker, two women prominent in the D.A.R. and political party work, the editor of a neighborhood paper, and a labor union secretary. Their disposition was to make compromises that would facilitate the adoption of a new charter. Seven members of the first board were elected to serve on the second board. They held more or less consistently to the principles of the first charter, but realized the necessity of many changes.

### *City Employees*

Mr. Almgren, the fire chief, had said publicly before the election of the 1931 freeholders that he would never agree to a charter which put the fire department under a city manager rather than the council. The firemen had actively campaigned in the election of the 1931 freeholders against Mr. Snyder and his principal associates and for a group of real estate men who were the political allies of their department. The firemen had fought the 1929 charter for several reasons: it gave the city manager control of the fire department, it gave insufficient protection to the tenure of the firemen, it failed to provide specifically for the retention of the existing platoon system, and it provided for a superintendent of fire prevention. The police department, objecting on similar grounds, also had worked against the 1929 charter.

The new board invited Chief Almgren to advise what provisions were acceptable to the fire department, and it conceded his points, granting nearly identical privileges to the police department as well. The chiefs were to be appointed by the manager, but only with the consent of the council, and could be removed by the manager, but only after a public hearing before the council. Employees of the departments were to be recruited by the civil service commission; they were not, however, to be subject to the civil service provisions of the charter thereafter, but were to be supervised, promoted, and dismissed in accordance with the regulations of a merit system established by the department chief with the approval of the council. Police and firemen were to be exempt from the power of the manager to transfer employees from one department to another. Each department was granted a special pension fund which was to be administered by its own representatives and to be set up on

financial terms favorable to the employees but costly to the city. The fire department was given two special privileges: Its chief was "preferably" to be chosen from among the active members of the department, and the double platoon system was not to be tampered with.

### *Potential Candidates*

There had apparently been some general sentiment in favor of the popular election of a mayor and other officials. Since several of the new freeholders had their eyes on municipal political careers, it was easy for them to take advantage of this sentiment and obtain the adoption of amendments financially favorable to their careers, in spite of the protests of most of the seven members who had carried over from the former board. The board voted for a mayor with a salary fixed at \$5,000 to be elected by the people; for a city attorney, similarly elected, with a salary of \$6,500; and for salaries for council members. The members who had served in 1929 bargained the politically ambitious members down on the councilmanic salaries from \$4,000 to \$3,000, in return consenting to the withdrawal of a clause that freeholders should be ineligible for election to the council for two years. These concessions in the charter removed the objections of those who felt that municipal political leadership deserved adequate compensation.

### *Outlying Neighborhoods*

Since the 1915 revision of the charter, the city had taken in by piecemeal annexation a considerable area to the east of the city. In this area there lived in 1929 about one-third of the total population. The outlying sections to the north, where only summer camps had existed in 1915, had become settled neighborhoods, almost separate communities. These neighborhoods now demanded distinct representation on the city council.

The 1929 charter had been defeated in the outlying neighborhoods partly because it had provided for election of the councilmen at large. Of the eight members of the 1930-31 board of freeholders who had not served in 1929, four were interested in real estate developments, one was the editor of a weekly paper in an outlying neighborhood, one was a labor union representative, and two were women. The leader of the real estate group, Albert W. Bennett, had political ambitions, and was an ally of the employees' groups that gained such important concessions. He brought before the board representatives of ten neighborhood improvement clubs of south and east San Diego to demand representation

for their neighborhoods, and he pointed out that East San Diego, with one-third of the whole city's population, had never had a council representative. By threatening to vote against the city manager plan, he obtained the concession that the council should be composed of a mayor and six representatives, each from a single district, and that each district in a primary election should nominate two candidates, of whom one should be elected to the council by the city at large. Thus the outlying areas won the right of district representation.

### *Labor Unions*

Another group that fought the first charter was the labor union leaders. The single freeholder who refused to endorse the 1929 charter was the labor representative, who had corresponded with labor unions in other cities and reported to his followers that organized labor should not endorse such an autocratic form of government. Before the charter was drafted in 1929, the *Sun* mentioned the name of John N. Edy, then city manager of Berkeley, for the San Diego managership. The labor unions wrote to Berkeley about the city manager plan in general and Mr. Edy in particular, and the reply from the unions of that city, where the salaries of the firemen had been cut, was strongly against the manager plan.

The president of the San Diego Trades and Labor Council wrote a letter to the 1930-31 freeholders, denouncing the city manager plan and the comparison of city government with private business:

The city manager plan has a subtle, enticing appeal to the average business man who has no time for politics, believing it eliminates politics in city government . . . The people are told that a city government is simply a business proposition . . . It is rank fallacy . . . Corporations are for the making of dividends. A city government is charged with the welfare and happiness of human beings.

He went on to argue that the city manager could build up a political machine, and that the council was not strong enough as a check on him because it was dependent upon him for information. The labor union representative on the board at first announced that he was unalterably opposed to the city manager plan, and his stand was endorsed by the Trades and Labor Council.

But the political endorsement of organized labor in San Diego had always been ineffective, and its opposition to the city manager plan on a matter of political principle proved no more effective. The main objective of the labor union leaders was to support the firemen's

union in its demands. The demands of the fire department were met; then provisions were inserted in the charter prohibiting alien labor, establishing a maximum working day of eight hours, and requiring a prevailing wage scale on all municipal public works whether by force account or under contract; and, finally, the 1930-31 board omitted the provision of the 1929 charter empowering the city to abrogate certain state laws, a provision which seemed to give them the power to nullify labor legislation. As soon as these concessions were offered, the labor union representative abandoned his protests of principle and promised the support of organized labor. He might not have been able to deliver that support if the unions had not had a candidate for the council who was afraid that further opposition to the charter might hurt his chances.

### *Shipping Interests*

Another special interest appeared to demand a more substantial concession. The Chamber of Commerce and important shipping firms protested against the provision in the 1929 charter that the harbor commission be under the direction of the manager. Their opposition to this provision was important in contributing to the defeat of the charter, although the Chamber of Commerce endorsed the charter in 1929. A representative of the shippers appeared before the board to advise against putting a city manager in control of the harbor. The shippers, he said, were satisfied with the existing commission and were afraid that a manager would bring the harbor into "politics." To meet their demands, the 1930-31 board set up a harbor commission of three members with four-year overlapping terms, a fixed annual appropriation of \$150,000 until the year 1938, and virtually independent control over the harbor, tidelands, and airport of San Diego. (The tidelands are important, including 252 acres of land along the waterfront which the harbor commission may lease to private industry or transportation lines.)

There were other less important groups that played a part in the revision, some of which refused to be conciliated. The 1930-31 board included two women who were perhaps less well informed on municipal problems than their predecessors on the 1929 board but were far more influential politically, for each of them had been a regent of the D.A.R., one was president of the Parent-Teacher Association, and the other was a member of the Republican Committee of California. In general they supported those freeholders who argued for modifications of the city manager plan in order to retain "American principles of government," and their assent to the charter carried considerable political weight.

Some civil service enthusiasts opposed both charters because they feared that a "czar" would weaken the civil service commission, and a leader of the Town Forum disliked the 1931 charter because it did not include a special tax rate for the zoo.

The city adopted the charter of 1931 by a vote of more than four to one, with no groups or sections of importance holding out against it. Because of its compromises, the charter met with no serious opposition. The *Union* and *Tribune* joined with the *Sun* in supporting it. The mistakes made in the former proposal have been corrected, said the *Union*, and the new charter "offers the city a clear-cut manager form of government, a fair system of representation, and a unified scheme of things." The charter advocates claimed that the new charter would "bring about a huge annual saving; will eliminate buck-passing; make the water department self-sustaining; eliminate special funds; and provide for equitable representation on the city council."

### *The Charter*

When all the amendments had been made, the charter proposed included many compromises, but nevertheless provided for a city manager with substantial authority over nearly all the operations of the city government. It proposed a mayor, elected at large for a term of four years, with a salary of \$5,000 and an entertainment fund of \$1,500. He was to be a member of the council and the ceremonial head of the city; he was to have no veto power but was to appoint members of the funds commission, the harbor commission, and civil service commission, subject to confirmation by the council. There were to be six other council members, elected at large but nominated by districts, serving overlapping four-year terms with \$3,000 salaries. The city manager was given full administrative authority to manage the departments, subject to the control of the civil service commission over the appointment and removal of all employees except the heads of departments, and subject to the restrictions already mentioned on his power over the police and fire departments. The new charter did not provide for any special funds, as had the old one, and it prescribed an accounting system to show clearly the cost of the city's water supply.



#### IV. CITY MANAGER GOVERNMENT: 1932-35

THE ORIGINAL leaders in the movement for city manager government, having got a charter, stood by to see how the new machine would work. They had devoted a tremendous amount of time and energy to setting up the new charter, and none of them wished to take a direct hand in its operations. If they had done so, the story of the next few years might have been different. Mr. Maire, one of the councilmen, addressing the board of freeholders in 1930, had remarked that "if we had men like this [i.e., like the freeholders] in our city government, a great deal could be done." But the charter reformers, like the other business and professional men with settled and established careers, were not willing to give their time to serve on the council, although they had been willing to work hard for two years to draft and establish the charter.

The leaders who had been responsible for the charter undertook to organize a Charter League. They decided that it should not take any part in councilmanic campaigns but should be an organization for "educational purposes" to support the form of government as a "last line of defense." Nicholas Martin, the president of the 1931 board of freeholders, became president of the league; Mr. Snyder became its secretary; six of the nine members of its executive committee had served on one or both boards of freeholders.

The charter leaders thought that they were interested solely in the form of government. But to them the city manager plan did not mean the election as the city's governing body of a council which should direct municipal affairs through a city manager. It meant reliance upon a single executive to whom the citizens should appeal out of disgust with their elected representatives. In more specific terms, it meant that the Charter League leaders, by insisting on the prerogatives of the manager, could give the city good government in spite of the councilmen chosen by the electorate. This attitude is clearly illustrated by a letter which the secretary of the Charter League, who was primarily responsible for its policies, wrote to a friend in the East:

It was my thought that the League might well take the position that it was interested solely in the protection of the charter and not in candidates for office . . . I rather hope that the public may be aroused by the time the campaign is over to a point of a lack of confidence in those elected, and that they will then be in a mood to place their hopes in the city manager.

With the civic leaders who had been primarily responsible for the charter abstaining from politics, the field was open. There was no municipal political organization ready to take control; no individual who had been prominent in local partisan politics sought the position of councilman. From 1932 to 1935 no organization or individual gave a unified direction to municipal policy. The trouble that followed was not the result of political control by any powerful machine but of political disintegration from the pulling and hauling of petty pressure groups.

The business of real estate development had gone to the bad by 1932, and the councilmanic salary was attractive to a number of promising young opportunists who had had some dealings with the city government but were inexperienced as politicians or administrators. They were simply average businessmen, with more or less civic spirit, and strong hopes of tiding themselves over on a \$3,000 salary until better times.

The members of the first council under the new charter were four real estate men, one tombstone manufacturer, and one labor union leader. The mayor elected with them was a man of far greater prominence—a title insurance company president, a director of the Chamber of Commerce, a member of the local committee of the California Taxpayers' Association, and a member of the city's most exclusive clubs. After the intensive work of the boards of freeholders, the four-year campaign of public education through newspaper reports of their deliberations, and the general acceptance of the charter, the public hoped that the council would proceed according to the theory of the city manager plan.

### *The Council against the Manager*

The council's choice of a city manager seemed to show that it was willing to do-so. It did not use the position to reward any political supporter. It went to Detroit for its first manager, H. H. Esselstyn, who was introduced enthusiastically to the city by the press as "a vigorous, forcefully-spoken man with a long career of moulding giant industrial works"—the personification of technical progress and dynamic business-like efficiency. After a spectacular engineering career in Detroit, he had been appointed by the mayor of Detroit as the city's "commissioner" (director) of public works, and then became a member of the street railway commission. To explain his own conception of the new job, he told San Diego, "I consider city managership the top in the executive consulting engineering field."

TABLE 3. MAYORS, MANAGERS, AND COUNCILMEN OF SAN DIEGO, 1932-35

*Mayors*

JOHN F. FORWARD, JR. (1932-34). President of Union Title and Insurance Company; member of park board 13 years; director and president of Chamber of Commerce; Mason, Oddfellow, Elk, Cuyamaca Club, San Diego Club, San Diego Press Club. Member of charter advisory committee 1930, and of county committee of California Taxpayers' Association. (Resigned, 1934.)

RUTHERFORD B. IRONES, M.D. (1934-35). Physician, studied medicine in Vienna, Munich, Paris, London; food relief director of eleven Balkan countries under Herbert Hoover during War. (Appointed *vice* FORWARD.)

*City Managers*

H. H. ESSELSTYN (May-July 1932). Well known engineer; former "commissioner" (director) of public works of city of Detroit, Michigan.

A. V. GOEDEL (July 1932-May 1933). Deputy assessor with city, 1921-1924; purchasing agent, 1927-32.

FRED W. LOCKWOOD (May 1933-Sept. 1934). Superintendent of sewers, 1908-15; manager of operations, 1915-19.

GEORGE L. BUCK (Sept. 1934-May 1935). Real estate; florist, city manager of Long Beach, California, 1929-30.

*Councilmen*

J. J. RUSSO (1931-33). Movie projector operator; president of A. F. of L. council. (Defeated for council, 1929, 1933.)

A. W. BENNETT (1931-37). Real estate and insurance; Mason, Sciot, Shriner, American Legion, Veteran of Foreign Wars, San Diego Club. (Appointed *vice* McMULLEN, 1931; elected 1932, 1933.) Member of 1930-31 board of freeholders.

C. E. ANDERSON (1932-35). Former deputy real estate commissioner of California; real estate; insurance. Member of 1929 and 1930-31 boards of freeholders. (Resigned, 1934.)

J. R. BLAKISTONE (1932-33). Real estate; formerly city clerk of East San Diego. (Defeated for council, 1933.)

L. E. GOODBODY (1932-34). Real estate, insurance. (Defeated for council, 1931. Resigned, 1934.)

DAN ROSSI (1932-35). Owner of tombstone manufacturing firm.

HARRY WARBURTON (1933-37). Real estate; former member of park board; director of Chamber of Commerce. (Defeated for council, 1932.)

WAYNE A. HOOD (1933-34). Retired dairy proprietor. (Defeated for council, 1932. Resigned, 1934.)

W. H. CAMERON (1934-35). Real estate. (Appointed *vice* GOODBODY.)

A. S. DAVIS (1934-35). Owner of laundry; director of San Diego Athletic Club. (Appointed *vice* HOOD.)

R. I. SCOLLIN (1934-35). Manager of large hotel. (Appointed *vice* ANDERSON.)

Mr. Esselstyn lasted six weeks, from May to July, 1932. He spent much of his time visiting dams and making speeches. He made little progress in the preparation of the budget, which was already overdue. He disputed with the independent departments over their estimates, and tried to assert his authority to change them; he insisted that the council and the civil service commission agree on the salary schedules before he took further steps to prepare a budget. The council wanted him to make some clear financial recommendations, and resented his spending time in ways that served to make him conspicuous. "The buck," said the *Union*, "is now being passed rapidly from council to manager to civil service to council, and so on."

When the manager hit a Mexican with his automobile and it was charged that he had removed the record of the incident from the police files, the council decided that enough was enough and discharged him, by a vote of four to three. This vote showed a split in the council that was significant. There had developed a group of three members who supported Mr. Esselstyn. This group consisted of the two real estate men who had been on the board of freeholders (and had insisted that the charter should not disqualify the freeholders for the councilmanic salaries) and the tombstone manufacturer. For the next three years they were inclined to work together. (In May, 1933, they were to gain a colleague and become a majority rather than a minority group.) The other four members were not similarly cooperative, but they held together long enough in July, 1932, to appoint as Mr. Esselstyn's successor A. V. Goeddel, the city purchasing agent, who had done much of the work on the budget that Mr. Esselstyn failed to prepare.

The bloc of three were implacable in their opposition to Mr. Goeddel. Their opposition was caused by several motives. Some of them were alleged to be merely personal; for example, the *Union* said that the tombstone manufacturer was against Mr. Goeddel because the manager would not grant his personal demands, such as the construction of a new gate at the cemetery, the provision of a new attendant there, and the personal use of a police automobile.

Another motive was their desire to serve their district constituents. The outlying neighborhoods, which had been a strong influence in the preparation of the charter, helped to prevent the establishment of a unified, impartial administration. The neighborhood clubs of businessmen were the most important groups in the discussion of city politics. For example, the three members of the councilmanic bloc spoke in December, 1932, before the North Park business club to denounce the city manager

and to argue that the newspapers were being unfair to them. In their efforts to serve their neighborhood supporters, the councilmen took to granting them exemptions from some form of municipal regulation. The granting of building permits or zoning exceptions, suggestions to the fire marshal or building inspector to be lenient about hazards—these became devices for aiding supporters. The members of the bloc were not the only councilmen who were inclined to extend such help, but they were the most active. One councilman who did not want to become involved in requests of this kind had to disconnect his telephone in order to sleep without nightly interruptions.

Another motive was the desire of at least one or two of them to control the police department, which Mr. Esselstyn had apparently been willing to leave to their care. The control of this department gave councilmen a chance to gain more political support. Mr. Goeddel would not take the position of manager until the four who elected him promised him a free hand in the management of the police department.

All these motives made the going hard for Mr. Goeddel. His worst difficulty was the police problem, for he had to contend with the mayor, who wanted strict enforcement, as well as with members who wanted leniency—and one of the bloc of three agreed with the mayor in demanding strict enforcement! Mr. Goeddel was harassed because he could get no agreement on policy from the council. No councilman can say publicly in San Diego that he proposes to permit illegal business like gambling and prostitution, and no councilman could be reelected if the whole city took him seriously in an effort to eliminate it altogether. Individual proprietors of illegal establishments are at the mercy of the police department, unless the council or the manager gives the police clear instructions on their policy. Between 1932 and 1935 the council never agreed on a policy.

Mr. Goeddel complained publicly that he was under constant pressure from councilmen on both sides of this question—some of them wanted him to put in a new police chief and stamp sin out completely (they could not have been satisfied, he complained, by “even the great Calvin”); others wanted him to “go easy” in law enforcement against their friends. The manager appealed over the heads of the mayor and councilmen to the voters on this question. “No one has anything on me,” he told the press. “I am under nobody’s power. All I ask is that I be given a fair and unhampered opportunity to manage the city’s affairs as the great mass of citizens and taxpayers want them handled.” He denounced the mayor, in particular, as an interferer. The mayor was demanding strict law

enforcement and was almost ready to vote to discharge Mr. Goeddel because Mr. Goeddel would not discharge the police chief. But the mayor heard that the group of three councilmen, meeting one night in a Chinatown restaurant, had planned to get rid of Mr. Goeddel and appoint as city manager a department head whom they could control, and he decided that Mr. Goeddel was a lesser evil.

The manager was playing a bold and open game. He knew that he could hope for no more than four votes, and on several occasions he sent the police out to bring to the morning meeting of the council a friendly member who had overslept or was otherwise detained. The *Union* commented: "The manager is fighting fire with fire. . . . If he wins out in this argument he will automatically become the biggest man in the city, politically. He can't help it, for a man who lays down the gage of battle to his boss and wins becomes the boss."

In the meantime, the manager was suffering from troubles with the internal organization of the departments. The city attorney's office, the harbor commission, and the police court refused to admit that the manager had authority to compile reports on their expenditures. Some of the councilmen took this opportunity to complain that the monthly statements of the manager were incomplete, and one of the bloc said that he wanted to see either some complete reports or "new faces at the city hall."

These developments dismayed the charter reformers and the newspapers, which had been predicting great things of the new government. "Conditions are making our city manager formula a public laughing-stock," said the *Union*, blaming the deplorable situation on "an important weakness in the city charter [apparently its failure to define exactly the authority of the manager over the budgets of the independent offices] and a costly lack of decision and statesmanship in the men we have chosen to administer it."

The Charter League, which had set up a permanent organization to defend the form of government, intervened in these disputes. By "defending the form of government" it meant defending the manager against the council. It had feared the appointment of a local man, even though the council majority that discharged Mr. Esselstyn and appointed Mr. Goeddel was clearly more public-spirited and unselfish than its opponents within the council. But now that Mr. Goeddel had become embroiled with the council, it leapt to his support; instead of remaining a "last line of defense" it plunged forward to fight over the no man's land of council-manager relations. During 1932 and 1933,

it tried to act as an unofficial municipal supreme court, to interpret the "city manager formula," and to tell the branches of government just what their functions and powers were under the charter.

It issued a public statement, for example, saying that Mr. Goeddel was right in demanding financial control over the independent offices, because the framers of the charter had so intended. It demanded that the council enact an administrative code, as the charter required, in order to define more clearly the prerogatives of the manager and the duties of the departments. Admonitions to the council and various officials to follow the spirit of the charter did little good, and in December, 1932, the league demanded a grand jury investigation, and called for the resignation of those councilmen who were opposing Mr. Goeddel.

The purpose and intent of the charter [the league proclaimed] has been persistently violated by certain members of the council. . . .

These members have persisted in encroaching upon the duties of the city manager by asking favors, by dictating appointments, or by dictating his policies with reference to departments under him and for which he is solely responsible. This condition is now emphasized by the recent ultimatum issued to the manager to fire the head of one of the most important departments—the police chief.

This was the point of view of the more idealistic leaders who had been prominent in the early days of the charter movement. Another group that had worked with them from 1928 through 1931 was the businessmen and property owners who were interested primarily in cutting taxes. This group formed the Taxpayers' Vigilantes Committee, which was headed by the local chairman and the paid secretary of the California Taxpayers' Association, a nonpolitical organization. The Vigilantes supported the anti-Goeddel group and its allies in the 1933 election on their proposal to cut the salaries of municipal employees and to lower taxes. Thus the two groups mainly responsible for the charter were fighting each other over its operation.

Against the councilmanic bloc in this issue was the labor union representative on the council, who was supported by the municipal employees. The support of the employees and the unions had helped to elect the members of the group in 1932, but in 1933, because of the pay-cut issue, the firemen and other employees electioneered actively against the group and its allies, and the firemen boycotted the business of men who advocated the pay cuts. But the temper of the San Diego taxpayers in 1933 was against the municipal jobholder, and the group in the council opposed to Mr. Goeddel gained another member by the election of May, 1933, thereby becoming a majority.

This result led directly to the enforced resignation of Mr. Goeddel and the police chief, and virtually destroyed the political power of the Municipal Employees' Association. This political power had been used for some good ends. The building inspector had needed to use pressure against councilmen if he was to enforce building regulations against their friends; the fire department needed all the influence it could bring to bear in order to get new equipment that it wanted. But the effort to gain political friends did not encourage strict impartiality in their work, and the morale of the departments suffered from councilmanic interference on one hand and private political alliances on the other.

### *The Council in Control*

The new council majority let two former managers of operations, still in city jobs, bid for the position of city manager by making alternate proposals to accept lower salaries. One of them stopped at \$5,000, his salary at that time as a department head; the other, Fred W. Lockwood, went down to \$4,800 and was given the job. Although Mr. Lockwood and his successor, George Buck, held the title of city manager, government under the city manager charter at this point departed entirely from the "city manager formula" (as the *Union* had put it) which the framers of the charter had tried to prescribe.

The appointment of a new city manager was followed immediately by the appointment of a new police chief; the manager appointed him and was then introduced to him. The control of the police department by the council was only a little more direct than their control over other departments, but it brought about a rapid turnover in police chiefs, five of whom were removed during three years (1932-34).

Several members of the councilmanic majority who had enjoyed the respect of the community lost prestige by accepting favors from people who thought they might need influence with the police department—bookmakers, beer-hall proprietors, taxi drivers, and others. They took free beers or free rides or petty loans just like those individual policemen who had enough effrontery to do so.

It is improbable that the councilmen ever did much more than this, their best-informed enemies agree. But the respectable citizenry was not content with such a prosaic explanation of the demoralization of the police department. They came to believe that a well organized underworld had taken command of the city, managing an elaborate system of white slavery and gambling establishments. They were encouraged in this belief by the newspapers, especially the crusading *Sun*. The myth



had it that members of the council were a part of the hierarchy of the underworld, over which presided, like another Dr. Fu Manchu, the "mayor of Chinatown." This malignant genius was alleged to be one Tom Quinn, who ran a restaurant in the small Chinese section of the city where the councilmanic bloc had often met for chop suey and political intrigue. Mr. Quinn's capabilities, according to an old school-mate, were adequate for the restaurant business, but not broad enough to encompass a well organized and ruthless ring.

Whatever the extent of the council's dealings with the police department and organized vice, it is certain that the members of the dominant group did not think of good municipal management as a means of bolstering their political strength. Their appeal to the voters was individual and indirect, or frankly irrelevant to municipal policy, as when they petitioned Congress to enact the Townsend Plan. Their political objectives, after Mr. Goeddel was forced out, made the procedure by which they handled city business, and their relationship with the manager, completely unsystematic.

To facilitate work for their constituents, the council almost always referred a matter that pertained primarily to a single district to the member from that district. For example, it referred to individual members requests for exceptions to the zoning regulations, proposals to exchange certain park areas for school property, and requests for building permits, or the closing of certain streets. These matters were referred to individuals for decision even after official advisory commissions had made recommendations on them. The recommendations of the planning commission on zoning exceptions were overruled more frequently during this period than either before or after.

The council generally ignored the manager and dealt directly with department heads. They asked departmental officials for advice or information without consulting the manager, and in return department heads went to council members to further their purposes regardless of the manager's wishes. Council members and department heads went to the city attorney's office to get ordinances prepared without consulting the manager whenever they had special objectives for which formal action by the council was necessary. The council and the departments were mutually jealous, nevertheless always in search of favors from each other. On one occasion the council changed the pay scale of a whole classification to reward a political henchman. The council had become, as the *Union* said, "a group of co-equal and rival city managers, each eager to have a finger in every pie." Among the plums that went to

each were an individual office, stenographic assistance, and the use of a city automobile.

### *The Council Under Fire*

The Charter League could no longer support the manager against the council after Mr. Goedel's departure. The strength of the leaders in the charter reform movement was then diverted into attempts to reduce the political importance of the council and to increase the strength of the position of manager. The Charter League proposed, as an amendment to the charter, that the compensation of the council members be reduced from a salary of \$3,000 to fees of \$10 per meeting, not to amount in one year to more than \$600. The reason for this proposal, the Charter League told the newspapers, was the "stubborn and persistent refusal" of most councilmen to stay on their side of the line between policy and administration.

The Charter League and the daily newspapers, which advocated the salary-cut amendment, said that they did not intend it as a punishment for the council then in office but as a basis for a new standard of public service—an inducement to public-spirited candidates who would serve merely as a municipal board of directors. The amendment, however, was written so as to go into effect immediately, more than a year before it could induce new candidates to run. Mr. Lockwood, the manager, entered this controversy with a public statement urging the electorate not to cut the salaries of his superiors, arguing that he needed their full-time assistance. In spite of his plea, the amendment was voted on and carried in December, 1933, and not long afterward two of the best members of the council—members at whom the punishment had not been aimed—resigned.

The Charter League proposed, and the city adopted at the same election, a charter amendment to strengthen the manager's position. This amendment was presumably for the benefit of some future occupant who would take advantage of it, since it was not to go into effect for more than a year. It provided that a city manager could be employed or discharged only by a vote of five of the seven members of the council.

More and more people in the community were becoming disgusted with the council, so several of the leaders of the Charter League, with some new recruits, decided to institute recall proceedings against the majority group of four on the council and their associate, the city attorney. They organized a Citizens' Recall Committee, and by tremendous effort got enough signatures on their petitions for recall. But

the city attorney fought the case through to the State Supreme Court, showing that subsequent state legislation had nullified the recall provisions of the charter. By that time the city was ready for the 1935 election.

The more thin-skinned members of the council found all these developments intolerable. The mayor was the first to give up. He had been in poor health, and the denunciations of the city government upset him—on one occasion he went in tears to a newspaper editor's office, asking what his fellow church members would think of him if the paper's criticism continued. He resigned, and the council chose another mayor. Two of the councilmen who were not under recall resigned.

There was no anticlimax to the farce. The council bought the new mayor a \$2,700 official automobile, which the newspapers promptly named the "Royal Coach." He wrecked it within a few days, and spent the end of his term of office in jail on a hit-and-run conviction. The city attorney, while fighting the recall proceedings against the four councilmen and himself, was indicted by the grand jury on thirty-one counts, and convicted of mishandling city money entrusted to him for traveling expenses. But he put a light aspect on his plight by playfully pulling a false alarm while on a nocturnal party and getting arrested for that. When the campaign opened in 1935, the city hall was in even worse repute than when the council had built the dam in the wrong place.

## V. CITY MANAGER GOVERNMENT: 1935-38

THERE WAS plenty of sentiment in favor of a change, but none of the leaders in the movements for charter reform, for the pay cut, or the recall stepped forward to take advantage of it. The direction of the reform movement was given a different turn by two young men, only casual acquaintances, who started a conversation one day on how bad San Diego's government was, and suddenly decided to do something about it.

One of these men was Walter M. Casey, a Ford automobile dealer and a born salesman. He was aiding in the efforts to obtain a Ford building for the San Diego exposition of 1935 and was ashamed of the city government with which his company would have to deal, just as a great many leading citizens disliked to have thousands of visitors to the city hear of the faults of its government. The other was Armistead B. Carter,

the manager of the San Diego office of a bond company. He was the son of a lawyer of an old Virginia family who had become a district attorney in San Diego. His family background had apparently affected his views on local politics, for as a citizen and businessman of San Diego he felt a personal responsibility for the state of the municipal government.

Mr. Carter had taken part in a tremendous number of civic enterprises,<sup>1</sup> and had become especially interested in education through his association with Mrs. Ethel Dummer Mintzer, the head of the Francis Parker School, a progressive school. Messrs. Carter and Casey believed that the support of women's organizations was indispensable, and they called on Mrs. Mintzer for help.

### *The Civic Affairs Conference*

These three originated the first San Diego reform organization that actively entered politics to nominate and elect public officials under the city manager plan. They called their organization the Civic Affairs Conference. The prime movers began by inviting fifteen women officially active in club and civic affairs to meet and discuss their plans for municipal reform. The women voted for direct action, approving the leaders' plans to draft and elect candidates for the council.

The leaders then called a larger meeting, inviting men who had been active in civic affairs and in the movement for charter reform, as well as the women who had been enlisted. About forty persons who became the driving force in the organization attended, and selected a nominating committee to report the names of possible candidates. The committee was instructed to follow four criteria in picking its men: "(1) the candidates must be known for honesty and ability; (2) they must be free of alignments with any special interest connected with politics; (3) they must understand and sympathize with the charter's intent; and (4) they must not be looking for the job." The choices of the nominating committee were ratified by secret ballot a few days later, and the leaders then had to persuade men not "looking for a job" that they owed it to their city to accept the nominations.

<sup>1</sup> A list of them will give an idea of the range of his interests. He has been a director of the Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Museum, the California Pacific International Exposition, the Campfire Girls, the Boy Scouts, and the Red Cross; a member of the Rotary Club, the San Diego Press Club, and the California State Board of Education; the president of the Goodwill Industries of San Diego County; chairman of the board of the Francis Parker School (a private progressive school); trustee of the Spanish American University; and a member of the nominating committee of the Community Chest.

The Civic Affairs Conference deliberately refused to choose or endorse any candidate for mayor, holding that the salary of that position would make their efforts seem less disinterested. They were lucky that a resignation had provided a fourth vacancy, in addition to the mayor's place, to be filled in the 1935 election, for it gave them an opportunity to win a clear majority.

The organization went about the campaign in a thorough manner. It assigned each precinct to a worker, who then recruited several of his friends, gave them the campaign leaflets of the organization and explained its purpose, and assigned to each his part of the precinct's list of voters. The precinct workers then personally canvassed their lists, passing on by word of mouth to every household their story that a group of men who did not want to run had been drafted to give San Diego the type of government that the charter intended.

The candidates whom the Civic Affairs Conference chose, being selected for their disinclination for public office, were not at home on the stump. They made the speeches that they were called on to make, and they were given effective support by the organization that the C.A.C. leaders hastily set up. The daily newspapers backed them enthusiastically. They won all four places, even with Mr. Austin, the former mayor, and several former councilmen against them. They got their support largely from the same neighborhoods that had voted for the charter which was defeated in 1929—the more fashionable residential sections of the city. Only one of them—the candidate from the lower income neighborhoods in the Fifth District—failed to lead the field in the district primary as well as in the final election at large.

The four newly elected members then took control of the council and set about finding a city manager through correspondence with the political science department of the University of California, and with eminent members of the city managers' profession. They chose Robert W. Flack, then city manager of Durham, North Carolina, and induced him to take the job, after some negotiation, by raising their salary offer to \$15,000. The mayor and one other councilman voted with them to employ him.

After its council majority had served for two years, the C.A.C. decided that the work could not be dropped. In the spring of 1937 it again nominated candidates. Its three men ran on the record of the C.A.C. councilmen and their city manager, and their opponents hardly took issue with them on that record. They were elected by comfortable majorities, leading all opponents in the district primaries as well as the

final election. All the councilmen (except the mayor) were then men who had been chosen by the Civic Affairs Conference.

The councilmen elected in this way have been substantial business and professional men completely independent of any interest or pressure group. Their political views range from staunch Republicanism to the single tax theory, but they have in common an intellectual integrity and a spirit of self-sacrificing service that has been in sharp contrast to the attitudes of their predecessors. They have stood and have been elected upon a moral issue. Their political strength and that of their organization will depend upon the city's remembering that issue in the future. Most of them would be glad to surrender their positions to any honest men who would sincerely undertake to follow the principles of the charter. They may therefore seem somewhat colorless to the average voter, as soon as he begins to forget the contrast with their predecessors. The average member of the Elks or the Eagles—lodges to which the colorful mayor belongs—is probably beginning already to think of them a little less as impartial, self-sacrificing public servants, and a little more as silk-stocking representatives of the upper income groups who are not inclined to do favors for their friends.

In 1937, the Civic Affairs Conference had a board of twelve directors, an advisory council of seventy, and three classes of members: executive (those who had helped in the previous campaign), subscribing, and junior (those under twenty-one). Annual dues of one dollar were supposed to be paid, but the organization really relied upon small donations during campaign years to pay for its handbills and other publications. It has never had a paid staff, and has been quiescent between elections. The council members are not members of the executive committee, although they are now influential in determining its policies.

With this informal, amateur organization, the Civic Affairs Conference was obviously not a selfish pressure group. Its success depended upon the enthusiasm and loyalty of a few leaders who willingly gave a great deal of time and work. The death, in the summer of 1938, of Mrs. Mintzer, who had been one of its most able leaders, was a great loss to the Civic Affairs Conference. A few months later, however, it employed a permanent assistant secretary and began preparing for the 1939 election.

### *The Position of the Pressure Groups*

It is the independence and impartiality of the present council members more than their affiliation with the upper classes that have made enemies for them. Leaders in the Chamber of Commerce who had been

TABLE 4. MAYOR, MANAGER, AND COUNCILMEN OF SAN DIEGO, 1935-39

*Mayor*

P. J. BENBOUGH (1935-39). Owner of city's largest undertaking establishment; city council, 1913; formerly fire chief; chief of police, 1931; formerly member of cemetery board; Elk, Eagle, San Diego Club. (Defeated for mayoralty, 1927.)

*City Manager*

R. W. FLACK (1935 to date). Formerly city manager of Springfield, Ohio, and Durham, North Carolina.

*Councilmen*

JOHN S. SIEBERT (1935-39). Formerly professor of architecture and engineering; author of technical books; architect; head of San Diego chapter of American Institute of Architects; Mason, Eagle, Woodman of the World.

R. M. WANSLEY (1935-39). Senior partner in firm of certified public accountants; president of University Club, director of Community Chest.

W. C. WURFEL (1935-37). Retired executive of electrical products firm. (To fill unexpired term.)

B. R. STANNARD (1935-39). Retired Army captain; local business man; State Representative, 1932; past-president of League of California Municipalities in San Diego County.

A. E. HOUSH (1937-41). Retired executive of leading department store; director of University Club.

H. E. FISH (1937-41). Retired Naval officer.

W. C. CRANDALL (1937-41). Formerly teacher in San Diego State College; business agent for E. B. Scripps Estate; director of San Diego Zoological Society, Natural History Society, and Chamber of Commerce; chairman of park commission and safety commission; member of school board, harbor commission, county committee of California Taxpayers' Association; Mason.

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NOTE: For members BENNETT and WARBURTON, who held over during the two years 1935-37, see Table 3.

accustomed to having their wishes on the development of the city plan followed by the council are disgruntled with the present administration. The secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, who had been used to speaking for "business" in municipal affairs, has led a bitter fight to change the plan of the council and manager for the location of a new police headquarters and jail center. The secretary's complaint is that the plan for the jail center does not conform to the Nolen plan. But the chairman of the original committee that employed Mr. Nolen has sided with the council and has said that "the whole matter resolves itself in whether civic matters are to be decided by the council and city man-

ager or by a small group at the Chamber of Commerce."<sup>1</sup> The Civic Affairs Conference had, and still has, the support of prominent businessmen, but the independence and new importance of the council have annoyed some of the leaders in the Chamber of Commerce who have been used to taking credit for civic progress.

Some of the leaders of former reform movements are not completely in sympathy with the Civic Affairs Conference. The chairman of the local branch of the California Taxpayers' Association, who helped in 1933 to elect those candidates who promised to cut taxes, is dissatisfied with the leaders of the Civic Affairs Conference and the present council. He personally disliked the activity of some of the leaders of the Civic Affairs Conference in advocating greater expenditures for education, and he disapproved of the attitude of the council, which has shown interest in a positive program rather than in cutting expenditures to a bare minimum. The leader of the late Recall Committee, who is a member of the Civic Affairs Conference, is not quite happy about the diversion of reform sentiment into positive leadership; like the head of the Taxpayers' group, he was much more at home criticizing the "politician" from the outside.

Labor unions, as usual in San Diego, have been completely split in their views. Two former presidents of the Trades and Labor Council supported the Civic Affairs Conference from the time that it was organized. The group that had become dominant in union circles by 1937, however, thought that the Civic Affairs Conference council did not give labor the representation that it should have; it preferred the Civic Affairs Conference councilmen to their predecessors; or to the candidates who opposed them, but it felt that it had to be critical about them. The average labor union leader, furthermore, still disagreed with the theory of city manager government, and had basic objections to having a city's chief executive appointed by the council rather than elected by the people.

During the past few months, however, the labor unions have come to look with more favor upon the Civic Affairs Conference councilmen and their manager. This change of heart is partly due to the fact that the police and fire departments, with which labor unions have been sympathetic, have been given better equipment than they used to have. A more important cause, however, for labor's favorable attitude is that the Chamber of Commerce is now fighting the council and the manager. In August, 1938, the *San Diego Labor Leader* began an editorial that

<sup>1</sup> Julius Wangenheim, *San Diego Union*, April 9, 1938.



praised the work of the administration as a "miracle" with the following paragraph:

Most laughable thing about the 'pressure groups' who are at loggerheads with the present city administration is the pitiful fact that they and their little clique of disgruntled, self-styled city fathers who seek control of city politics cannot find a single phase of the city's government worthy of HONEST condemnation.

The Municipal Employees' Association has become merely a social organization, without political significance. The employees' groups were politically active partly to protect their work against the interference of councilmen, or to demand expansion of their departments. The fire department often exerted influence to get new equipment. The departments know now that the council members are not inclined to interfere with them and that nothing can be gained by dealing with individual members. They know, too, that the council and manager are interested in giving them a chance to do their work properly. The fire department, for example, no longer cajoles councilmen to get new equipment; the manager and council have set up a five-year program of equipping the department properly, and the firemen are satisfied.

The group that ran the council between 1933 and 1935 got much of its strength from the outlying neighborhoods, to which its members catered by doing special favors. The Civic Affairs Conference councilmen have cut out the special favors, and no longer run errands for constituents, but they have not neglected to keep in mind the different points of view of the various neighborhoods. Mr. Fish, for example, who represents the Fourth District, East San Diego, on the council, tries to give his area a chance to express its wishes, and wants to keep himself informed on the opinion of its leaders. He accordingly calls together representatives of several neighborhood service and commercial clubs as an informal advisory council on matters affecting that district. There are still self-appointed neighborhood leaders who work against the Civic Affairs Conference, especially the editors of several neighborhood weeklies, but they have not managed to carry their districts with them.

The more important proprietors of gambling and vice establishments, who had been accustomed to special favors from the city government, fought against the Civic Affairs Conference in 1935 and 1937. Before the 1935 elections, the leaders of the Civic Affairs Conference refused to accept campaign donations from them or to discuss with them the appointment of a chief of police. But the small fry among the gambling and vice elements understood in 1935 that the Civic Affairs Conference

candidates were not proposing any crusade but were merely trying to break the political hold that disreputable interests had on the city government and its police force. They were tired of being shaken down by individual policemen or councilmen, and preferred the Civic Affairs Conference candidates to the men then in office. Since 1935 there has been fairly steady control over the police department rather than a see-saw between reformers and petty grafters.

*The Union* and *Tribune*, the newspapers with the largest circulations, have been wholeheartedly in support of the present councilmen from the beginning. *The Sun* prefers them to their predecessors but is beginning to be critical of their administration. It feels that the city manager should be more of a public leader, campaigning against vice or for a new system of dams, rather than attending primarily to administrative organization. The little weeklies, which depend on sensational criticism for their circulation, find as much fault with the existing order of things as they can.

### *The Council and the Manager*

Mayor Percy J. Benbough has been the *enfant terrible* of the council since 1935. He became a prosperous undertaker after trying the grocery, haberdashery, and automobile businesses, and has been in municipal politics since 1913. From 1913 to 1915 he was a member of the city commission, in charge of the fire department; from 1915 to 1917 he was a member of the council; he was defeated for the mayoralty in 1927; and for a few months in 1931 he was chief of police. He is a member of the Elks and the Eagles, and was elected mayor in 1935 on a Townsendite platform.

Since the Civic Affairs Conference did not put forward a candidate for mayor, the city had to choose in that election between Mr. Benbough and A. R. Sauer, the publisher of a neighborhood weekly, who as mayor of East San Diego had unsuccessfully opposed the annexation of that municipality to San Diego in 1923. The support of the *Union* and *Tribune* and of most of the Civic Affairs Conference followers went to Mr. Benbough on his promise to vote to employ an eminent professional city manager. Mr. Benbough was a colorful character and a good campaign speaker, and he won by a comfortable majority.

It was soon apparent that the mayor and the other council members could not get along together. His ideas on municipal politics and administration, which held over unchanged from the time when he was a commissioner, were different from theirs. The sharpest conflict has been

over the police department, with which the mayor wanted to deal directly. He has voiced a personal hostility to the police chief and tried to get the manager to discharge him. Failing in that, he has tried to get the alliance of individual policemen in an attack on the merit system and has publicly accused the police department of accepting graft from vice interests.

The mayor now openly advocates the discharge of the police chief and the city manager, whom he calls a "czar" (he is too old-fashioned to adopt the epithets "Hitler" or "Mussolini"), and he freely admits his preference for the commission form of government. He is usually disregarded as much as possible by the other six members of the council.

The six councilmen went into office with a clear agreement on the scope of their work. "Loyalty to the letter and intent of the charter" was their prescription for good government. "By adopting the charter," one of them promised in a public statement approved by the Civic Affairs Conference's leaders, "the people have given a clear definition of what they want a councilman to do—and I think much of the trouble at the city hall in the past has been due to individuals accustomed to evading or ignoring the specifications."

The specifications in the charter are that (1) all legislative powers of the city are vested in the council, (2) all legislative action shall be by ordinance, and (3) ordinances shall be introduced in the council only in written or printed form. The councilmen have followed these specifications.

Their campaign promise was to avoid interfering with the manager and his administration. They have fulfilled it. They have given up some of the office space that councilmen had used before, accepted one secretary instead of several, and discontinued the minor perquisites (such as automobile transportation) that their predecessors had enjoyed. (The "Royal Coach" now comes out only for occasions of state.) Such self-denial indicated their intention to avoid ostentation and not to undertake work that they were employing the manager to do.

They have found, however, that the prescription of refraining from interference with the management of the departments did not completely cover the case. The councilmen, especially those who have served on advisory commissions, have been called on for a great deal of hard work. One of them says of such work:

The pay cut was a mistake.<sup>1</sup> It's all wrong to think that a council has nothing to do but act as a board of directors. We don't do

<sup>1</sup> This is probably not the point of view of a majority of the councilmen.

errands for constituents in this council, but if we are going to keep check on the manager and know what the policy of the government is, we have to do a lot of hard work. I spend nearly half my time at it, and get nothing for it.

To keep well enough informed on the administration to protect it from political attack is a considerable job, which the councilmen have undertaken pretty conscientiously in spite of their distaste for politics. Several of them make occasional speeches before service clubs and other organizations, explaining the methods and objectives of the administration.

R. W. Flack is one of the few city managers with a legal education and experience. He received the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence at the University of Chicago in 1913, and from 1918 to 1922 he was city attorney of Springfield, Ohio. He then became attorney and trust officer for the National Bank of Springfield. He was city manager of Springfield from 1924 to 1929, and of Durham, North Carolina, from 1929 to 1935.

He is a tactful executive, with a sense of humor and proportion. He is not dogmatic in his conception of his job. He takes a long view of the contribution that a city manager can make.

A manager's work, [he says], should be measured by comparing the administration before he arrives with the administration *after he leaves*, rather than by comparing the previous administration with his own. To make a really permanent contribution, he has to move slowly, take account of political realities without being too pliable, and watch his personal relationships carefully. A great many managers have ruined themselves and their work by rushing in and grabbing a lot of red-hot pokers.

The manager has tried to avoid taking an important place in the eyes of the public. He has almost a fixed rule against making speeches, although he participates freely in the discussion of matters in public council meetings.

He does not have a legalistic view of his position. He does not assume that the charter or the administrative code provide a fixed formula for his relationship with the council or the departments. He is glad to have the council's help in any matters in which they can be useful, and he takes the lead inconspicuously in the most important matters of policy.

The manager welcomes memoranda from councilmen on matters in their districts that need attention, since the councilmen never press him to comply with their suggestions. He informally lets the council know about even petty details that are unusual and, if a matter is of any importance, gets council approval, which is virtually never refused. An

expenditure of \$30 for incidental expenses of a library extension project of the WPA, for example, which the budget officer considered too small a matter to put before the council, was referred by the manager to the council for approval. The formula seems to be to get the approval of the council on any matter that is likely to involve its members in public controversy in defense of the manager.

The procedure of handling public improvements has been altogether changed since 1935. When petitions for specific types of patent paving or for specific types of street lighting fixtures are received, as they still are occasionally, the council now merely orders open specifications. It determines whether the pavement to be laid in each subdivision shall be expensive or cheap, heavy or light. After it makes these decisions, the manager does the rest.

In matters of broad policy, the manager makes recommendations, and the council undertakes to put them into effect. The greatest municipal issue of 1938 was whether the city should build a jail and police headquarters on a separate site, recommended by the manager, or adjacent to the new city-county building, as proposed by others. The manager's proposal was fought by the mayor, the Chamber of Commerce, and various business interests, but ably defended by the councilmen. The manager has been willing to make far-reaching recommendations; he supports them with plenty of data; and the council has generally accepted them and defended them publicly. There is little or no complaint in San Diego that the council interferes with the administration or, on the other hand, that it is subservient to the manager; opponents seeking to find fault with the relation between the council and manager fall back on the criticism that the manager always proposes what he knows will please the council! There was so much public distrust of the council during 1933 and 1934 that there is still some suspicion of a manager who works in harmony with his legislative superiors.

The manager's presentation of information has been the key to his excellent relationship with his council. He controls the sources of information, so that he can adapt one aspect of policy to another, and present to the council a well rounded program. He will not permit a department head to come forward independently with a recommendation and supporting data that do not fit into his plans. He brought to an end the practice in the legal department of drafting an ordinance for any councilman or department head who wanted to make an independent proposal; now the legal department will draft no ordinance unless it is ordered by the council as a whole or transmitted by the

manager, and it returns each draft through the manager.<sup>1</sup> The council refers matters on which it wants advice through the manager to department heads or advisory commissions; each detailed report from a department or commission is later returned to the council by the manager, with a brief statement explaining it, and making his recommendation on the matter. The manager submits with the detailed budget a brief summary in a budget message, including a tabulation of changes from the previous budget. This summary, which points to the issues of policy involved, is the basis of the council's discussion of the budget. The council has refused to accept some of the changes recommended, and adopted others. The councilmen feel that the manager's ability to summarize information and make clear recommendations is his strongest quality.

The city clerk prepares the agenda for each meeting on the previous day, and has it mimeographed for distribution. It is the council's rule that no item not on the agenda may be taken up, except by unanimous consent. Such consent is invariably granted if the manager has a routine matter to discuss, but the rule is useful to safeguard the council against sudden demands by pressure groups. Controversial matters are discussed by the council in informal closed sessions before the public meetings. The sessions are less frequent now, but during 1935 and 1936 they were held regularly on the afternoon before the open meeting.

The council uses advisory commissions as buffers against the public, referring to them almost all petitions and requests. Councilmen and department heads serve on three of the fifteen standing advisory commissions, and often sit on *ad hoc* investigating commissions. The reports of these commissions are almost invariably adopted.

The intimate relationship between Mr. Flack and the six councilmen nominated by the Civic Affairs Conference has been made necessary by the presence on the council, ever since the manager was employed, of at least one opponent looking for an excuse to discharge him. Two hold-over councilmen between 1935 and 1937, and Mayor Benbough ever since 1935, have forced the manager to be careful to get the assent of the council on any matter that might later be challenged, and have forced the councilmen who were responsible for him to support him actively.

<sup>1</sup> See also Mr. Flack's control of departmental proposals to the council by the work order, described in Section VI.

## VI. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION SINCE 1932

THE ORGANIZATION of the city government was drastically changed by the adoption of the city manager charter in 1931. This new basic law of the city completely realigned the departments and divisions, changed the powers and duties of many officers, introduced a new official called the city manager, with more supervisory authority than any previous officer, and prescribed a separation of the administrative from the legislative functions.

Not all of the charter provisions for reorganizing the administrative branch have been put into practice, for there is now (1938) no safety bureau and no water department, although these are called for by the charter; nor have the functions of the council and the manager always been distinguished, as prescribed by the charter. But the changes that were put into practice brought about a new arrangement of the departments, as Table 5 shows.

### *Reorganization under the Charter*

Most of the supervisory duties formerly performed by the mayor, council, and boards were given to the city manager. Beyond the manager's control are the city attorney, the auditor-comptroller, the civil service commission, and the harbor commission. Thus the framers of the charter failed to give the manager authority over three important service tools or staff agencies. The auditor-comptroller, who is the chief accountant; the city attorney, who is the legal advisor; and the civil service commission, which is the personnel department, play important roles in managerial operations.

The only line function or operating department that is not under the manager's control is the harbor department. The charter did not alter its position in the city government for its operation is subject to the harbor commission, which is appointed by the mayor, subject to the approval of the council. This commission keeps its own books and has a minimum income made mandatory by the charter and by a subsequent vote of the people; but all its employees, even the port director, are on the classified list under civil service rules, and the commission purchases through the city purchasing agent, who is under the manager.

Under the city manager charter, the city engineer continues to act as a staff or service employee rather than as a line officer in charge of the

TABLE 5. ORGANIZATION OF SAN DIEGO, 1932-38

*Elected Officials*

MAYOR. At large, for four-year term; has vote on council, but no veto power.  
 COUNCILMEN (6). One from each council district. Nonpartisan district primaries nominate two candidates, one of whom is elected at large in general election; four-year overlapping terms.

CITY ATTORNEY. Four-year term.

JUDGE OF MUNICIPAL COURT. Four-year term.

*Appointed by Council*

MANAGER. Appointed and removed by not less than five votes.

CITY CLERK.

AUDITOR-COMPTROLLER. Chief accounting officer.

*Appointed by Mayor and Confirmed by Council*

HARBOR COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>1</sup> Four-year overlapping terms; removed by five votes of council. Appropriation of \$150,000 yearly from council, made mandatory by charter. Operate harbor and airport.

FUNDS COMMISSIONERS (5).<sup>1</sup> Four-year terms; city attorney and treasurer are ex-officio members. In charge of certain trust funds.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS (3).<sup>1</sup> Five-year overlapping terms. Appoint director of personnel. In charge of recruitment, discharge, salary scale, working conditions, etc., of most of employees.

*Appointed by Council and Manager*

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS. Council appoints 3 and manager 4 members for four-year terms. City engineer and city attorney are ex-officio members.

*Advisory Commissions: Appointed by Manager<sup>2</sup>*

WATER ADVISORY COMMISSIONERS (3).

SOCIAL WELFARE COMMISSIONERS (5).

HEALTH COMMISSIONERS (5).

LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS (3).

PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION COMMISSIONERS (5). Two appointed by the manager, two by the school board, and one by the park commission.

PARK COMMISSIONERS (3).

*Appointed and Supervised by Manager*

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE. Supervises dance halls, contributions for charities, studies crime and social conditions, etc. (Not a public welfare or relief agency.)

HYDRAULIC ENGINEER. Supervises water development and conservation.

SUPERINTENDENT OF WATER DISTRIBUTION. Maintains system, meter reading, billing, and collecting.

POLICE CHIEF.<sup>3</sup>

FIRE CHIEF.<sup>3</sup>

CHIEF INSPECTOR. Building, electrical, boilers, signs, zoning.

HEALTH OFFICER. Appointed jointly by manager and county board of



TABLE 5. (continued)

- supervisors to supervise a joint city-county health department. Supervises health work, clinics, plumbing inspections, vital statistics, etc.
- DIRECTOR OF PARKS.** Maintains cemeteries, streets, trees, and parks.
- SUPERINTENDENT OF PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION.** Supervises joint city and school recreation program.
- LIBRARIAN.**
- DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.** Supervises maintenance of streets, sewers, buildings, shops, and collection and disposal of garbage and refuse, street cleaning, street lights, radio broadcasting station, traffic signs, etc.
- BUDGET OFFICER.** Acts as assistant to manager; prepares and controls budget, and supervises record system for department of public works.
- CITY ENGINEER.** A staff officer.
- PURCHASING AGENT.** A staff officer in charge of print shop and storeroom.
- TREASURER.**<sup>3</sup>

*Other Boards and Commissions*

- BOARD OF EDUCATION (5).**<sup>1</sup> Elected at large for four-year terms from San Diego school district, which is not coterminous with city.
- BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF FIREMEN'S RELIEF AND PENSION FUND.**<sup>1</sup> Fire chief, city treasurer, and one fireman selected by the firemen.
- BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF POLICE RELIEF AND PENSION FUND.**<sup>1</sup> Police chief, city treasurer, and one policeman selected by the policemen.
- BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION OF RETIREMENT FUND (7).**<sup>1</sup> City auditor-comptroller, city treasurer, three employees selected by the membership, an insurance officer, and a banker selected by the council.
- MAJOR DISASTER ORGANIZATION.** City, county, school, state, Federal governments, and private agencies participating. City manager in charge.

NOTE: Assessing and tax collecting done by the county on contract basis. Welfare and relief provided by the county, state, and Federal governments. Members of all boards and commissions serve without pay, except city council and school board.

<sup>1</sup> Operating boards.

<sup>2</sup> Eight advisory commissions that do not deal directly with administration (e.g., the Veterans' Anti-Racketeering Committee) are omitted.

<sup>3</sup> Confirmed by council.

public works department. This arrangement is the same as before 1932, except that the engineer is appointed and supervised by the manager. The purchasing department remains about the same as before, except that it is now under the manager instead of the council. There has been little change in civil service, except for advances in the art of personnel administration.

One department was set up for the first time by the charter. It is the social welfare department, which supervises dance halls, inquires into the legitimacy of solicitations for charitable purposes, and looks after the general moral level of commercial amusement or entertainment places. It is not a welfare or relief agency, as its name might suggest.

The health officer, under the new charter, continues in a dual capacity, serving both the city and the county. The city manager, instead of the mayor, is his supervisor for the municipal part of the health program. Likewise, the director of recreation continues to be jointly employed by the city and schools, and the manager rather than the mayor is now his superior officer.

Eleven directors of line or operating departments report to the manager under the present plan. These are the heads of the producing departments; they provide services and protection for the citizens. They are the first eleven enumerated in Table 5 under the manager. Four staff officers also report to the manager. They are the city engineer, purchasing agent, treasurer, and budget officer. Altogether, fifteen persons come under the direct supervision of the manager.

The manager form of government reduced the number of operating boards from seven to two, leaving the harbor and civil service commissions unchanged. The charter provided that advisory boards might be created for any department, to advise but not to supervise. These boards were to be appointed by the manager. Fifteen have been set up; the more important ones are listed in Table 5.

In 1937 there was added to the organization a major disaster relief organization, bringing together under the generalship of the city manager all governmental and private agencies in the area in the event of an earthquake, conflagration, or other catastrophe.

### *The First Four Managers*

The first four managers, Messrs. Esselstyn, Goeddel, Lockwood, and Buck, never had a chance to gather the departments together into a smoothly running organization. In spite of the intent of the charter to give the manager authority over the administration, none of them was given this authority. The interference by the mayor and councilmen in administrative matters not only disregarded the charter provisions for the separation of functions between legislative and executive, but placed the managers in a most exasperating position. Asking the manager to be the chief executive while the council issues instructions to his subordinates, is like asking a cabinet maker to hold a board while the customer who orders a Williamsburg reproduction does the chiseling. As a consequence, the city manager charter failed completely to bring about the kind of government that the original leaders of the charter movement had thought of as city manager government. Administrative methods under the first four city managers were little different from those during

the period when mayor and councilmen squabbled over the control of the departments.

A change was brought about by the success of the political organization, the Civic Affairs Conference, which won a majority of the councilmanic seats in 1935 and consolidated its position in 1937. The councilmen that it elected wanted to entrust the management of the departments to the city manager. The rest of this section will be a description of the administration since that time when the present city manager, R. W. Flack, was appointed. Some of the methods and techniques now in use were well established when he took office, but the additions that he has made have been extremely significant.

### *The Present Manager*

Robert W. Flack, in coming to the West coast for the first time in 1935, faced traditions and attitudes quite different from any he had previously experienced. He found in San Diego a disjointed municipal organization, apathetic employees, and a community that was tired of wrangling and constant change. It was soon apparent that he intended to stabilize affairs by making as few changes as possible and assuring employees and citizens alike that peace and quiet would be the new rule. He let the organization remain unchanged. He put up with a departmental arrangement which he did not consider ideal. He realized that it would not be wise to disturb the organization until employees recovered from the "jitters" that the political chaos of the first three years of manager government had produced. (Even now, after three years, Mr. Flack is not satisfied with the scheme of organization. There have been two obstacles to rearranging the departments. One has been the lack of office space, and the other the attitude of some of the older department heads. The lack of office space is being corrected by the new city-county building, where most of the city departments now scattered in six buildings from one to ten blocks apart will be brought together. Mr. Flack suggested some of the reorganization that he hopes eventually to effect when he mentioned before a meeting of department heads the possibility of establishing a central collection office, a central accounting office, a stenographic pool, a central filing system, and a mimeographing, duplicating, and mailing division.)

Mr. Flack faced a difficult job of winning the support and cooperation of the department heads. He had a harder job as fifth manager in gaining the good will of his subordinates than the first manager would have had. Among his principal subordinates were two former managers of

operations, of whom one had been city manager and the other had nearly held the post. Both were in a position to resent the newcomer and to feel that they had been demoted by him. Nearly all heads of departments and divisions were older than Mr. Flack, who was then about forty-seven, and many of them had been on the city's payroll for years. After three and one-half years of headless, topsy-turvy government, most employees had come to look upon the manager form as no better, and perhaps worse, than the previous mayor-council form. They had seen the Municipal Employees' Association, their main defense mechanism, politically crippled. Mr. Flack found himself between the upper and the nether millstones. On the one hand was a disappointed public which had become disillusioned about the manager plan, and on the other were "oldsters" on the payroll, apt to be jealous of a new manager with a salary two and one-half times larger than that of his highest subordinate.

It was first necessary to get the departmental officials accustomed to observing a regular, formal procedure in their relationship with the council. There was no difficulty in getting the council to conform to a new system. On the other hand, the manager had to protect the council members from the department heads, who had grown accustomed to going directly to councilmen to get city business done. Employees had to be taught the new procedure of dealing only with the manager, who could at his discretion handle any problem himself or refer it to the council.

One way in which the manager formalized procedure was by the "work order." All jobs, especially those that require labor and materials, must now be estimated and described on a special work order. They cannot be started until the work order has the manager's approval. This procedure has brought to an end an occurrence frequent before 1935: departments would ask the approval of the council for specific public improvements; the council would give its approval for fear of losing political friends; and the work would be stopped later because there was not enough money appropriated to complete it.

The manager did not find his lack of formal authority over the auditor-comptroller, the civil service commission, and the city attorney an insurmountable handicap to successful management. He might have been in a more comfortable position if he could have used them as freely as he could the purchasing and the engineering departments, which are staff or service agencies directly under his control. But the significant fact is that he gets along with the three independent offices.

In order to have financial records available and to control expenditures,

the manager has the budget officer, who is his assistant, keep a set of records that duplicate some of those of the auditor-comptroller. Instead of opposing the civil service commission, as some of the earlier managers tried to do, Mr. Flack has worked harmoniously with the personnel director and has made the best of a disjointed arrangement. Their relationship has been so satisfactory that the personnel director would even prefer to be directly under the manager's authority. The manager at first tried to alter the budget of the office of the elected city attorney, and thereby nearly got into the position that had embarrassed Mr. Goeddel. But he withdrew gracefully, conceded the independence of the attorney's office, and has gotten along well with it ever since.

### *The Executive Assistant*

One of Mr. Flack's first moves was to look for someone already in city employment who could help him get a quick and comprehensive grasp of the city's organization and work. He needed one who could be trusted, who had made no enemies among the other employees, and who was young enough to have a fresh point of view about municipal government. John Colquhoun had these qualifications. He had already had eight years experience with the city. He started as rear chainman and advanced by civil service examinations through four departments to the position of senior account clerk in the public works office. Mr. Goeddel had made him assistant to the budget officer in 1932.

Mr. Flack began dropping into Mr. Colquhoun's office, which was adjacent to his, to talk over various matters, particularly public works activities. From these early conversations, the manager came to respect Mr. Colquhoun's suggestions and his knowledge of the internal affairs of the city. When Mr. Flack had an opportunity, within six months after taking office, he gave Mr. Colquhoun his eighth promotion and made him budget officer. This position is in the unclassified service, but he retains his civil service status. Although without the title, he came to be the manager's executive assistant and to have an influential place in the city organization, controlling and coordinating many of the departmental activities.

Mr. Colquhoun has a medley of jobs and two superiors. In addition to being an assistant to the manager, he is the budget officer for the city and the cost accountant for the department of public works. As the budget officer, he prepares the preliminary budget for the manager and, after its adoption by the council, controls it during the year to prevent the expenditure of more than the amounts appropriated. Mr. Colquhoun

passes upon all requisitions, and accompanies the manager on many of his visits to other departments. As cost accountant in the public works department, he supervises all the paper work needed to control and record the activities of street maintenance, street cleaning, sewers, automobile maintenance, and the like. His position is a new one. There was nothing comparable to it before Mr. Flack came to San Diego.

The manager would like to have a second executive assistant, for Mr. Colquhoun has to do a great deal of overtime work on papers and instructions that he receives during the day. But it is difficult to fit young assistants into the organization because of the feelings of departmental employees who dislike the rapid promotion of their juniors, and resent getting instructions from them. Although Mr. Colquhoun has been with the city since 1927 and worked up from the bottom of the ladder, a few of the older employees resent his prominence and ridicule his companionship with the manager.

#### *Methods of Coordination*

There is no way now of learning how coordination was brought about in earlier periods, since the art of coordination—of bringing people and equipment together at appropriate times—is one dependent on current situations. The best that can be done is to see how the present city manager exercises it in meeting present-day problems. Coordination is such a dynamic process and such a personal one that a study of ways and means of bringing it about does not lend itself to a historical treatment. Written records are not made of it, and former managers were unable to tell how they did it.

Mr. Flack, the present manager, uses a number of methods to bring about coordination. In the first place, he tries to keep informed of new developments in every department under his supervision. To keep informed, he spends half or more of his time visiting city offices. He has no schedule of tours but drops in unannounced, often with nothing in particular to talk about except the job upon which an employee may be working. He attended staff meetings of the department of public works at the shops twice during the two weeks' period that the authors observed San Diego. He was seen to make trips to the police department, the city engineer's office, the purchasing department, and other departments.

He often takes Mr. Colquhoun with him on his tours of the departments. By picking up information from the various offices, he is able to suggest to one an opportunity of cooperating with another, and to have Mr. Colquhoun take care of the office work that is necessary to effect such

cooperation. For example, the manager discovered at one place that the plasterers there at work would soon be needing another job, so he arranged for them to work in the library building where a situation requiring immediate attention had developed. But to pay for it, excess funds in the sewer division had to be transferred to the building maintenance division. Mr. Colquhoun carried out the instructions.

Because he makes so many tours of inspection, he does not require department heads to come to his office very often. But he is always accessible to employees, and does not hide behind closed doors and a battery of secretaries. A dozen employees testified that it was easy to see the manager whenever necessary. The police chief and the inspectors in the building department, who were formerly handicapped by uncertainties and delays, now know that they can get a decision from the manager on any problem in short order and that it is unnecessary to consult anyone else. They have found the change since 1935 pleasant.

The librarian finds it easy to get a conference with the manager, but usually deals with his subordinates whenever she can. She states that the manager has never been in the library and shows little interest in library problems.

The manager has no cabinet or staff meetings, and seldom if ever brings all his department heads together. He depends instead on his personal visits, and occasional special conferences of department heads concerned with certain problems. He calls the heads of the independent departments into conferences of this kind and discusses matters with them in the same way as the department heads over whom he has authority.

Directors of departments do not hesitate to hold staff meetings of their division heads. Meetings of the staffs of some of the departments are held regularly. The director of public works brings his superintendents together each morning at seven o'clock for informal discussion of the day's work before the men leave the shops. Here the men clear mutual problems and receive job orders which originate in the city hall. Complaint letters and slips are distributed at this meeting. The director of public works signs requisitions and other papers necessary for the orderly progress of the work. If a departmental truck driver violates a traffic rule, he is brought before this staff meeting to defend himself and to be punished if found guilty. He may be demoted or transferred to another job.

A department head is free to call others to discuss particular problems. In 1937, for example, the chief of police brought together the city

attorney, the district attorney, the county sheriff, the captain of the state highway patrol, and the police captain in charge of traffic to map out a plan to deal with offenders who violated traffic laws at school intersections. The fire chief has called several department heads together to deal with the problem of fire hazards in dance halls.

Mr. Flack has been successful in winning the admiration of the department heads and their cooperation in his effort to coordinate their departments. The fire chief, for example, whose department stubbornly fought the first city manager charter, now thinks that Mr. Flack is a fine executive because he gives prompt decisions on matters which the department heads present to him. The health officer likes Mr. Flack for being more sympathetic with public health work than former managers and for upholding him in disagreements with state officials.

The mayor, who feels himself thwarted by the manager and the council, says that the manager is lazy and doesn't earn his salary. It is true that Mr. Flack seems always ready to give time to visitors; his desk is clear of work and he seldom sits at it; he rides and strolls casually about the city; and he does not say "no" on the pretext of being too busy. But the job of a manager is to manage, and that is what Mr. Flack does. He delegates duties and responsibilities to others and leaves his own time free for attention to the larger problems of the city. His executive assistant plays an important part by handling much of the detailed work.

### *Examples of Coordination*

Many interesting examples of coordination <sup>1</sup> may be observed in the present functioning of the city government under Mr. Flack's management. They may be distinguished under five categories, even though the manager, who works in a very practical way, does not think in terms of such categories. They include: (1) mutual aid among employees, (2) the transfer or joint use of equipment, (3) the exchange of information, (4) the planning of the sequence in which a project or program is to be carried out, and (5) the use of service agencies.

A frequent pitfall for the observer is to ascribe the introduction of current coordinating techniques to the present supervisors. Although the examples that follow are taken from the work of the last two years, some of them would be equally characteristic of the period before the manager plan and their introduction cannot be justly credited to it.

<sup>1</sup> Coordination as used here is an all-inclusive term. It refers to the frictionless meshing together of all units of government at points of contact. It refers to both inter- and intradepartment relationships.



These practices tend to grow with the years and to be modified by new circumstances until even those who participate in them cannot recall just when and by whom a certain procedure was begun.

### *Mutual Aid*

The city engineer and the fire chief together make a tour of the fire stations listing and planning needed repairs. After the manager has approved the work program, it is given to the building maintenance division to be carried out. The stations are in much better condition today than ever before, in the fire chief's opinion. Prior to the manager plan, the firemen maintained their own buildings, whereas today they make only minor repairs.

In 1936 a special drive was made to reduce the fire hazards in the numerous popular dance halls. The fire department on its own initiative brought the police, health, building, and electric departments together to make joint inspections of these amusement places. Many hazardous conditions were corrected which the fire department had tried unsuccessfully to eliminate years earlier. Today new dance halls are not given a license unless approved by the police, building, health, and fire departments.

In the first year of the manager plan, an electrical engineer was employed to maintain street lights and traffic signals. Although he is in the public works department, he has gradually come to serve as traffic engineer for the police and to make the radios used by the police and fire departments.

Men are transferred from division to division within the public works department to take care of varying work loads. Record is kept of these transfers so that the division receiving the men will be charged and the division giving the men will be credited. Regular forms are used to record these temporary transfers. Some transfer of men is done for other city departments, particularly for the water development and the parks. A record of the transfers is kept so that appropriate charges and credits are made.

Two detectives are assigned to the fire department when an arson case is to be investigated. The city attorney, although an elected official not under the control of the manager, helps the health and fire departments in prosecuting violators of ordinances. Neither the health officer nor the fire chief found fault with the present plan. The police aid the firemen at the scene of fires by roping off the streets, keeping spectators back, protecting fire hose, and rendering such other aid as they can.

*Joint Use of Equipment*

Under the former government, the fire department isolated itself from other departments so that the first managers had some difficulty in gaining its cooperation. This department resisted joining with the police department in an alarm and signal system, but today they are working together. Both systems are housed in one building with firemen in charge. The police chief has no fault to find with this arrangement. The new fire-alarm station houses the police radio, which serves both police and fire departments and is maintained by the superintendent of street lighting. Officials boasted in 1938 of having one of the nation's largest fleets of police and fire cars, which are equipped with two-way radio.

The purchasing department keeps a register or a list of all city-owned equipment. The 1936 annual report of this department says that "often a requisition for a typewriter, a desk, or some file is filled by the transfer of salvaged or unneeded equipment or material from another department without making any purchase." Automobiles no longer fit for police service are transferred by the purchasing agent to the park department or elsewhere where they can be of further use.

Fire hose no longer useful to the fire department is given to the sewer and street-cleaning divisions. This practice has been followed for years. An oil filter was installed about 1936 for rectifying all oil drained from crank cases. This filter is located at the main shop but is used by all departments with independent garages. The reports of the purchasing and public works departments mention many dollars saved by selling obsolete equipment. This procedure was started long ago.

There are three automobile repair shops. The largest, which is unusually well equipped, is a unit of the public works department and is considered to be the main shop. The police, fire, and harbor departments have separate repair garages but occasionally send work to the main shop when jobs are too large or work too difficult for their own mechanics. There is only one radio repair shop.

The fire department does not rely upon the photographic equipment of the police but has its own.

*Exchange of Information*

When inspectors from the fire department discover electrical hazards and unsafe buildings, notices are sent to the electrical and building inspectors, who attend promptly to matters called to their attention. The building inspectors send plans of any large new buildings to the fire department for its criticism and suggestions toward increasing safety.

The fire department is particularly interested in the correct design of fire escapes, stand pipes, exits, and location of fire doors, which may not be properly planned. This exchange of information has been going on for years.

Members of the fire department give occasional lectures to policemen telling how to turn in an alarm, recognize fire hazards, direct traffic away from fires, and keep automobiles off fire hose. The fire department is given an opportunity to suggest the locations of hydrants before street plans are completed. The city engineer, who makes the design, sees to it that the fire chief is informed of the proposed street work.

### *Planning and Research*

Planning the sequence of steps by which a project is to be carried out by the city is an important part of the work of any chief executive. There could have been little or no scheduling of the proper sequence of operations for activities of the city under the old mayor-council government as no one was responsible for doing it. It is evident from the chaotic condition of the city from 1932 to 1935 that the first four managers did not succeed in planning or programming the city's work, in some instances because of councilmanic interference.

Mr. Flack has no formula or system for planning undertakings other than to issue instructions as problems arise. His executive assistant does some of the planning when preparing the budget. Directors of departments make their own plans to the extent that they sometimes cause conflicts with other departments.

A recent instance of lack of administrative planning was the delay in arranging office space needed by the different departments in the new city-county building. Not until the structure was nearly complete, and not until the council asked the manager to aid in making the space allocations, did Mr. Flack make any attempt to plan this, the future home of the government. Then he proposed a stenographic pool, a centralized mimeographing and mailing division, and a central collection office for all city revenue. It takes study and planning of the procedures and methods of operating these proposed divisions to determine how much space each may need; yet no one was making such a study. The manager said that city officials believed the difficulties of getting the city, county, and Public Works Administration together on a joint undertaking would be insurmountable, and for that reason he gave no attention to the project. Perhaps a further explanation is that the manager's advice was probably not asked and that he avoided any appearance

of meddling in a three-cornered problem fraught with political complications.

On the other hand, plans for the new police and court building show many evidences of thoughtful planning. Prisoners will be carried through an orderly series of steps from the time of arrival to the time of trial, without opportunity of escape and without transfer from one place to another. The plans give one the impression of an "assembly line" in which the prisoners pass quickly through registration, fingerprinting, photographing, and other means of identification before going to court.

The manager took the lead in setting up a major disaster relief organization to cope with any physical calamities that might arise. The first practice mobilization was in November, 1937. The city manager is commander-in-chief of all the forces which the organization brings together. These include the city, county, and school governments, Red Cross, private utilities, medical society, public and private hospitals, American Legion, National Guard, Boy Scouts, and other groups.

The pavements in San Diego have numerous scars from cuts made to repair or lay utilities underneath. The extensiveness of paving cuts might indicate either lack of planning of the sequence of construction work or inability to forecast the rapid growth of the city with sufficient accuracy to permit a schedule of construction. No answer can be given as the records of paving cuts are so incomplete that an analysis of them is impossible.

Mr. Flack wants to have another executive assistant to do some of the planning of operations and research work. The manager did not seek the aid of the city planning engineer to any significant extent until 1938 for fear of being urged to increase the already heavy capital improvement program. Early in 1938, however, he called upon the planning engineer to compile and edit a "Long Term Program of Capital Expenditures" for the council.

### *Service Agencies*

A number of operations previously conducted by departments of the city have been withdrawn and grouped together in a single service agency. Centralized purchasing in one division, which has been the practice for years in San Diego, is an example of a service agency. Automobile repairing, printing, and other housekeeping functions have also been established in this way. But to make service agencies serve and not overshadow and boss the main producing departments of the city requires considerable skill on the part of the chief executive.

There is some reason to believe that the shops have an aggressive sponsor, for few cities the size of San Diego can boast of half the equipment and space which has been allotted to mechanical work since the manager plan came in. In addition, the fire, police, and harbor departments have independent repair units, and the park department does its own tool-dressing. The main shops are principally a service agency to the public works department, but will aid any others. The main shops are located in a large new plant with more than 16,000 square feet of space. The equipment consists of shapers, lathes, boring mills, a thirty-five-ton hydraulic press, a cam-grinding piston machine, a bending brake, a wheel-aligning machine, a brake-drum finishing machine, a paint-spray booth, cylinder grinding machines, forges, and other tools. More than thirty-four mechanics are employed in manufacturing radio sets and street traffic signals, rebuilding tractors, upholstering automobiles and trucks, building rubbish-truck bodies, making springs for trucks, rods for cleaning sewers, and servicing automobiles and trucks. Mr. Flack is particularly proud of this shop. A print shop with three small presses makes many of the forms used by the city; mimeographing and photostating are not done here but are decentralized in several departments. Mention was made earlier of the engineering department as a service agency.

### *Finance*

The financial history of San Diego is a paradox. The records of the city before and after the manager plan (to 1936) were so poor that citizens had practically no accurate and understandable information of the amounts of money collected and spent by the city. This was one of the reasons why the local branch of the California Taxpayers' Association asked the parent organization to make a financial survey of the city in 1927. Even the city officials were mystified, for several mentioned a mistake of between \$400,000 and \$1,000,000 but were unable to identify the year in which it was made. At least a half-dozen officials now express two opinions: first, that the city's books are often incorrect and untrustworthy, and, secondly, that there has been much more money available for the manager government than for the preceding mayor-council government; but there is no way to verify either of these statements without an extensive audit. Financing improvements by special assessments was the rule up to the depression. So heavy were some of the assessments and so large the delinquencies that the Chamber of Commerce called meetings to find a way to get the districts out of trouble so that this means

of finance could again be used to permit more districts and more improvements. Special assessments began to reappear in 1936, and the bookkeeping system of the city was revised in that year.

This financial setting from the early days to 1936 is the kind in which one would expect to find deficits, bond defaults, and other disasters. Here is the paradox, for no unhappy financial experiences have occurred other than the special assessment difficulties. San Diego has kept its financial history clean; it has always had year-end surpluses.

This favorable showing does not, of course, answer the question: how much has the government cost? Records available to the public are more numerous and more enlightening since the manager plan was adopted. What has not been done is to issue to the public simple, understandable reports that show the financial condition of the city, where the money comes from, and where it goes.

### *Divided Financial Responsibility*

The administration of San Diego's finances is one of the few municipal activities not under the manager. The charter drafters gave this responsibility to the auditor-comptroller, who is appointed by the council and is independent of the manager's supervision. Except for the accounts of the harbor department, which keeps its own, and a few trust-fund accounts kept by the treasurer, all bookkeeping is centralized under the auditor-comptroller. Another finance officer, the treasurer, appointed by the manager, is the custodian of the city's money and has little importance in the management of the city's finances.

An independent accounting office has proved a handicap to the manager. As he makes his tours about the city, discussing the work with various employees, he is continually asked what the next job is to be or whether such-and-such work should not be started. Before replying, the manager turns to Mr. Colquhoun, the budget officer, and asks if money is available. One reason for requiring work orders is to prevent starting a job for which there are no funds. Countless administrative decisions are based on the answer to this question: Do we have the money to pay for it? An answer to the question must be had at once or delays result. At first, Mr. Flack had difficulty in getting answers from the auditor-comptroller, who kept the accounts and had the financial information. The accounting office is located two blocks from the city hall; monthly reports on appropriations were slow in reaching the manager, and the accounts frequently did not give the proper information. To remove these hindrances, a set of books, partly duplicating those kept by the

auditor, are now kept by the budget officer, who has a daily record of the amount of money available in each appropriation item. His office is twenty feet from the manager's. No longer are administrative decisions delayed for lack of information about the availability of money.

A second remedy to the chaotic record system was a plan initiated by the manager in 1936 to have it overhauled and modernized. The council agreed and employed a local certified public accountant to do the work. Although the new system primarily changed the books and procedure in the office of the auditor-comptroller, it also tied together and harmonized all records in every department of the government. Now monthly statements of the status of the budget are sent to each department head by the auditor-comptroller and to the manager. Thus the two changes brought about by Mr. Flack—the control of the budget by an executive assistant, and the revision of the accounting system—have helped to remove the handicap of an independent accounting office.

### *Budget*

Under the charter the auditor-comptroller has nothing to do with the making of next year's budget. This duty is assigned to the budget officer, who must have fairly complete financial information in his own records to forecast future financial resources.

Prior to the manager plan the city had no budget. The one prepared by Mr. Flack is simple yet fairly complete. His budget summary and message, however, are unusual, and they become the basis of discussion by the council, which pays little attention to the details in the main document. This summary is a work of art, containing beautifully prepared tables and charts showing the significant changes and proposed activities. It is typewritten and separate from the main budget document, and is distributed only to councilmen, whereas the budget is mimeographed and available to the public.

A new procedure adopted when the accounting system was changed in 1936 is the periodic audit made by the auditor-comptroller. For example, receipts from licenses collected by the building inspector are checked monthly. Numbered receipt books with two carbon copies, one of which goes to the accounting office, are now used to reduce the chances of error and misuse of money. All branches of the city government which handle money are audited twice a year by the auditor-comptroller.

The auditor-comptroller maintains no cost accounts. His records do not purport to aid the management in determining the least expensive

way of conducting the city's business. Such cost records as exist have been designed and are kept by departments sufficiently interested to go to the trouble of keeping their own. Many cost accounts, some of which have been carried on for several years, are kept in the public works department. A recent venture is the cost record of automobiles and trucks kept by the budget control officer. It is said that complete costs are compiled of articles manufactured in the shops, except that they omit a few overhead items such as insurance, rent, and the proportionate share of supervision expense. Even when these are estimated and included, the costs are reported to be lower than prices which the city would have to pay on the open market.

### *Personnel*

The manager plan has had little effect upon the personnel system. The civil service commission, through its secretary and his six assistants, has continued its work, making improvements from time to time as conditions have permitted, and there is little evidence that the manager plan has sped up advances in personnel procedures. Methods of recruitment, promotion, service ratings, discharges, and payroll certification are on about the same level as in 1932.

The police department has revised its own service rating system, which the civil service commission is powerless to touch. Messrs. Flack and Colquhoun, after a survey, made recommendations about rates of pay which the civil service commission passed on to the council as its own proposal. The council consequently made the scale of salaries more equitable, as well as raising them 10 per cent. Periodic physical examination of employees is now required to protect the pension fund from having the unfit thrust upon it, to reduce the amount of lost time caused by sickness, and to minimize the city's liability for accidents caused by those physically deficient.

The one notable improvement is the establishment of a safety commission, the need for which no manager previous to Mr. Flack would recognize. Examination showed many accidents to employees causing not only painful disabilities to individuals but large monetary losses to the city through claims, workmen's compensation, and payments to the injured during time off. The safety commission was given the job of reducing these losses, and after two years reported a marked improvement.

The civil service commission has never been fully integrated with the administrative organization of the manager. It carried over its inde-



pendence when the manager plan was adopted, an independence recognized by its own members, the council, the manager, the employees, and the public. That it has served well in recruiting employees and in gradually reducing the political activities of the employees there is no question, but it has never become a personnel department closely knit in with the organization under the manager. The secretary of the commission feels the handicap of this remoteness from the employees, for to deal with them directly in perfecting working conditions, adjusting the misfits, building morale, and a dozen other activities, may raise questions of relationship with the manager, who has no direct connection with the civil service commission. The secretary sees considerable advantage in coming directly under the manager's supervision, which would give him status among the employees with whom he must work. As it is, the charter prevents the commission from participating in the service rating or merit system for police and firemen, who must devise their own, if one is established.

### *Public Reporting*

The public reporting of the San Diego government has been more frequently designed to attract tourists and new residents than to inform the citizens. The promotional advertising fund which is appropriated each year merely subsidizes the work of the Chamber of Commerce. It pays for the advertising of the San Diego-California Club, for display board advertising in Los Angeles and Arizona, for the entertainment of visiting celebrities, and for advertising special occasions such as the exposition. The harbor commission publishes pamphlets to describe the port facilities to prospective business.

The annual report, *San Diego Affairs, 1936-37* (the first published report of the city government since 1910), is designed to advertise the city as well as to report to the citizens. It is a brief, interesting description of the work of the government, exceptionally well illustrated with photographs and bound with a patented wire binding. It carries the Chamber of Commerce touch. It gives little indication of the character of municipal administration and not much detail about the city's services. The chart showing the organization of the departments of the city is a popularized diagram that does not show the real nature of the organization. Mr. Flack reasoned that a heavier report would not be read and that a large number of the reports would be circulated outside the city.

The annual report which the charter requires the manager to make to the council has usually consisted of a collection of department reports.

Department reports are sometimes available to persons who have enough interest to procure them. They may be printed, mimeographed, or typewritten. The printed reports of the city auditor seem clear and informative, although some years ago an accounting error of between \$400,000 and \$1,000,000 went undetected for many months. The public works department prints an excellent, detailed report. Reports from the library, purchasing agent, water department, recreation commission, and other departments are sometimes available to the public. Every two years the council publishes a volume containing all city ordinances.

The city planning engineer has recently cooperated with the Works Progress Administration curriculum project in writing an interesting and valuable history of zoning and planning in San Diego which will be used in the city's schools. The inspection department has published several handbooks containing city ordinances. "Electric Ordinances," "Building Requirements to Withstand Earthquakes," and "Sign and Billboard Ordinances" are widely distributed and used by the construction and business interests of the city. Committees of citizens have helped in the drafting of these codes.

The San Diego members of the California Taxpayers' Association, wishing more complete financial data on the city, got their association's research staff to make a survey of the city government, which was published in May, 1928.

### *The Newspapers*

The city government's policy of giving out news has been informal and haphazard. Newspaper reporters frequent the offices of the manager, the councilmen, and the mayor, and the department heads. The manager has seldom checked department heads beyond cautioning them to be careful about controversial subjects. Reporters have found their most interesting stories in the political troubles of the council and the manager. They have reported in great detail the difficulties of the police department and editorialized on its inferiority. They have been quick to recognize in political incidents (some hardly worth the epithets) the "spoils system, big as life," "corrupt politics," and "underworld control of government."

Newspapers have picked up the day-to-day news, particularly the stories of political strife. This emphasis has tended to obscure the long term developments and steady functioning of much of the city government. San Diego's citizens have come to associate government with conflict and inefficiency. They have been inclined to think of the police

problem as one which the city has not been able to handle, but seldom think of giving the government credit for the development of the parks.

## VII. CONCLUSION

**S**AN DIEGO has never had the corrupt machine politics that has characterized the government of many American cities. There was never any organization or clique powerful enough to control the city government. Elections were nonpartisan long before the city manager plan was proposed, and no political machine or faction put up full slates of candidates for the council.

The trouble with municipal politics was not machine or organization control, but the lack of prestige of public office, the lack of a coherent municipal policy, and the absence of effective leadership. The city government was pulled and hauled about by many diverse interests and pressure groups. The mayor and the council had never been given very much freedom in determining policies, organizing the municipal departments, and directing the administration. Instead, the various pressure groups placed much of their faith in legal formulas, and wrote into the charter provisions setting up the structure of government and determining fundamental municipal policies. They induced the city to adopt 125 charter amendments between 1889 and 1931, and changed the basic form of the government three times between 1905 and 1915. The importance of the council was often over-shadowed by the political strength of some municipal department. To get favors, pressure groups frequently by-passed the council and went directly to the departments.

The city was fortunate in its mayors. The councilmen, often opportunists of mediocre ability, were not the most conspicuous leaders in the community. They could not agree on public policies or a coherent program of municipal development; they mishandled the development of the water supply, and they failed to ward off the pressure for favors that was brought on the departments.

Perhaps the most influential group in municipal affairs was that composed of the city employees. Some of their influence was used to protect their own interests, some to enable them to do good work.

The administration of the city under mayor-council government was in many respects good. There was a "manager of operations" who had charge of the engineering staff and public works. There was a civil

service system, and substantial continuity in personnel. No financial scandals marred the city's history. The mayor was not in a strong enough position to supervise and coordinate all the city's forces, but some departments voluntarily cooperated with each other. The failure of the government to follow a consistent policy on the regulation of gambling and vice caused a grave internal problem in the police department, where chief succeeded chief and the morale and efficiency were at low ebb. Constant bickering over schemes for developing the water system reduced public opinion of the government to a low level. The city did not have a budget and its financial records were so muddled and incomplete that even public officials could not determine where the city stood financially.

In spite of the traditional ineffectiveness of the council, the leaders of the city manager movement in 1929 thought that the council was likely to exercise too much power. They thought that by giving a city manager definite powers in the charter they could put the administrative affairs of the city beyond the reach of a meddling and bungling council, and thus obviate the need for political leadership. They virtually disregarded a fundamental principle of the city manager plan: the complete political responsibility of the council. In their faith in the charter and the city manager they ignored the simple fact that the council could hire and fire the manager.

The first move for a manager charter ended in a defeat. Municipal employees joined with several factions who thought themselves threatened by the charter provisions to force compromise after compromise in the drafting of a second charter. After its passage in 1931, the leaders who had steered the course for a new charter for three years declined to run for the new council. They stayed out of "politics," and the councilmanic positions under the new charter were filled by less public spirited persons. The result was that no improvement was made in the way municipal business was handled. The charter drafters stood on the sidelines shouting warnings to the council to let the manager alone. The futility of this effort became apparent during 1933 and 1934 when managers were appointed who did not want to be protected against the councils that chose them.

Under the first three years of manager government, the departments were not managed as a unified organization by the manager because a majority of council members actively interfered with his administrative work, and at least twice they appointed men who did not manage effectively even when left alone. The lack of improvement and the

quarrels over administration made the "city manager formula," as one newspaper put it, "a public laughingstock" in San Diego.

Under the previous forms of government it had never been clear just who was responsible for the city's affairs. The mayor, council, and department heads dodged the responsibility. After three unsuccessful years under the manager plan, however, the situation was different. It was obvious that a strong manager was needed and that the only way to get him was to elect another council. So a few civic leaders who had taken little part in the charter reform movement broke away from the political habits of the city and decided to take direct, coordinated political action. They organized the Civic Affairs Conference and started a successful movement to elect a different kind of council. Since then there has been no need for any organization to protect the manager against the council, for council and manager have worked together in an intimate relationship. The result has been the establishment of a municipal government more able to deal independently with pressure groups in formulating a well rounded municipal policy than any other administration within the memory of San Diego citizens.

Substantial administrative improvement has been made since 1935 under the continuous administration of a competent manager with adequate authority, supported by a council which was elected by a responsible political group and has functioned with unity and purposefulness. The occasional voluntary cooperation that existed among some departments prior to 1935 has been extended to continuous effective coordination of all departments under the manager. New budgetary and accounting systems have been installed, and new methods of giving municipal services have increased the city's effectiveness. The manager has not made many changes in personnel, and has deferred to the council on the policy of enforcement of vice and gambling laws. His willingness to follow the guidance of his council on such questions has enabled him to achieve administrative reforms quietly that would probably have aroused bitter political opposition only a few years ago, but has not handicapped him in recommending to the council well planned programs of municipal policy.

The city manager form of government has not been attacked by any important political faction in San Diego since its adoption. Although the city manager has carefully referred all controversial matters to the council since 1935, and the council has actively and publicly sought to take responsibility for its decisions on them, those individuals or groups who have been refused special favors have persisted in blaming the city

manager. The opponents of the councilmen have made the city manager an issue, and the supporters of the councilmen have undertaken to defend him. It is significant that the city employees are no longer one of the groups urging various policies upon the government.

Since 1935, when the city manager plan was first invigorated with positive political leadership, San Diego has had something that it had never had before: a government with a sincere political purpose and a well managed administration.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE  
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- The Administration of Canadian Conditional Grants: A Study in Dominion-Provincial Relationships, by Luella Gettys, 1938
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