

with the broad problem of poverty and maldistribution.

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The Food Stamp Plan began as an experimental approach to the relief of agricultural maladjustment during depression. It has demonstrated its usefulness

as a method of attacking the joint problem of underconsumption and inadequate returns to producers in the food field. Its success here suggests that it is a potential means of promoting desirable adjustments in a wide variety of social and economic problem areas.

Changing Relationships of State and Municipal Government in New England

By THORSTEN V. KALIJARVI

THE world is aware that the United States has changed its national governmental philosophy and has evolved different institutions under the title of the "New Deal." Few people, however, are conscious of less spectacular, but equally important changes which are being contemplated or which are taking place in the relationships between the states and municipalities.

Of recent years a number of municipal leagues and associations have appeared. Their purpose is to improve local and state governments. The National Municipal League and the National Municipal Association are examples. Several of these organizations have headquarters in Chicago at 1313 East 60th Street. Research organizations, of which the Brookings Institute is one, are agencies for conducting investigations of governments and for recommending improvements wherever necessary. Private consultants and firms of "experts" such as the Griffenhagen Associates have created a profession of investigations, reporting, and recommending changes. At the same time local municipal associations, taxpayers' associations, the Council of State Governments, the Civil Service Reform League, and bureaus of government research are also flourishing. This host of experts, investigators and reporters mean only one thing, namely, that the

old relationships have been found inadequate and new ones are being worked out in state and local governments.

It is well to bear in mind that under the American system of state and local government, the state is paramount and assigns or grants to the local governments all functions, powers, and rights which they possess. In New England the original municipal units were the towns. Sometimes these began as villages; sometimes outlying parts were divided into villages; but whatever the organization may have been, the town meeting and the town officers were the government. As communities grew cities appeared, and for the most part took over the functions which the towns performed. In addition to this municipal organization the New England states were divided into counties which cared for larger less sparsely populated areas in welfare, criminal, and judicial matters. This is still the pattern of New England government to-day, and considerable difference of opinion exists over the need for its change.

The most consistent and repeated attacks are directed at county governments. The trend towards centralization in the prosecution of criminals has resulted in increased supervision by the state attorneys-general over the county solicitors. The new state police forces have made inroads upon the duties of the sheriffs who are daily becoming more fully officers of the court and less cus-

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todians of law and order. The social security activities, the welfare expansion, and the relief program of the Federal government have been co-ordinated with new state programs dwarfing the county work to the point of insignificance or integrating it with the new state and Federal order. In registering of deeds and other functions the same tendency is to be seen. Study groups such as the National Consumers Tax Commission and the League of Women Voters have devoted much time to this problem. Several suggestions have been made ranging from the elimination of county government entirely dividing its powers between the state and municipal agencies, to the establishment of a county manager whose duties would be similar to those of city and town managers. The chief stumbling block in the way of reform however, is the county officer himself who has built up strong political support which comes to his aid at every suggestion of change. How long this situation will be allowed to exist is impossible to state.

As for town governments with their town meetings and local officers, the increased tempo of the present industrial civilization has shown the old forms to be slow and cumbersome upon certain occasions. The small agrarian community still seems to prosper democratically as in the past, but the manufacturing town is confronted with a slowness of operation, which is sometimes exasperating. Here too several remedies have been suggested, the most interesting of which is the town manager. Every one of the New England states has passed enabling legislation permitting towns to adopt a manager form of organization. Perhaps Vermont with twenty years of experience in this field has had the most instructive experience, but there has been no rush to adopt the plan anywhere. The explanation is that New England has grown up about the loosely organized and decentralized town and refuses to abandon it. Furthermore most of New England's towns are financially sound and the urge to correct an irritating economic ill is

not present. Add to these the conservatism of New England and the reasons why town government still flourishes are apparent.

In Connecticut and Maine, Municipal Associations have been organized to provide municipalities with information, advice on municipal problems, manuals and skilled direction. In all states the tax assessors, selectmen, town clerks, and other officers have joined into voluntary associations with periodic meetings for self-improvement, information, contacts, and advice. But these must not be construed as reform organizations, for they would have existed under any form of government.

The voice of reform and reorganization is most insistently and persistently heard in the cities. The explanation is that the economic and relief crisis after 1929 taxed the city machinery to its utmost, revealing many weaknesses not excluding graft and corruption. These conditions were directly responsible for the appearance of taxpayers' associations and for movements for reform. It was in the cities that the idea of the manager type of government originated and was subsequently modified to apply to towns and counties. The underlying thought was that business had worked out to a refined degree the principles of industrial and commercial administration in private enterprise. Government in many of its aspects was said to be merely a form of business. Apply the same methods as are practised in private enterprise in these fields and government will improve. Thus, the letting of contracts, purchasing, and most non-policy forming functions were to be turned over to a manager. In this matter as in that of town managers the New England states have enacted enabling legislation. An example of a city operating on this basis is Portland, Maine. The most recent drive in New England for city reform has occurred in Massachusetts, where during the last fall elections Cambridge adopted the so-called "Plan E" manager type of government for which it agitated during a previous period of more than two years.

Other Massachusetts towns promise to pursue the same course.

These brief paragraphs can only indicate some of the major trends in a field of changing state and municipal relationships. Thus, for example, very little can be said of the highly important centralization in the states of many functions which formerly were regarded as exclusively local. For example, every state highway department is taking over an ever larger number of roads both for construction and maintenance purposes. Formerly, only a few main trunk lines were handled by the state. To-day most main roads have been subjected to state control with the result that certain clear standards and procedures are being evolved which even local communities must follow.

This is also true of taxation. The real property tax has been and still is the backbone of state tax structures. Formerly, its administration was left to the local communities with little, if any, supervision by the central government. Now, there exists in every New England state a central tax commission or commissioner of taxation whose function it is to supervise and to administer the state tax program. These officers have devised standards of assessment and collection, have been assigned auditing duties for both municipal and county taxes, and have kept abreast of improved taxation techniques to the advantage of the state as a whole. Naturally it has been impossible to expand these functions without impinging upon local autonomy. Indeed, as conflicting tax jurisdictions have arisen and new taxes have been devised, taxation administration has become a specialized function, which the local town officer does not have the time nor opportunity to master.

The recent advent of old age insurance, unemployment compensation, aid to the blind, assistance to children, and aid for dependent mothers has had the effect of transferring these local functions wholesale to centralized state welfare boards, unemployment compensation bureaus, and other officers. The Federal govern-

ment has made contributions to the state programs and this inducement has worked in two ways: (1) It has allowed federal supervision over the operation of the state agencies to which it has made contributions. For example, Merit Service standards have been set up by Washington which have required the employees of the controlled agencies to meet certain tests and qualifications in order to hold or to be appointed to positions. (2) It has acted as a spur to the states to take over duties, which hitherto it has left entirely to the local communities.

The financial structure has experienced the same reorganization. Central auditing is now common and so is central purchasing. Both of these functions are being expanded. In other ways the state control over the local finances is taking new expression. By way of illustration, in New Hampshire when a county (such as Coos) finds itself in financial difficulties, the state appoints a "fiscal agent" to administer the county until solvency is attained.

No single recent development has received more publicity than the Maine Deorganizing Act. It illustrates with such nicety the absolute power of the state over local autonomy and the present trends that its explanation may be of interest. As in Canada, so in Maine, many of the local communities (especially in the north) have built their economies about lumbering. The denuding of forests has deprived these towns of livelihood so that people have moved away, real property has depreciated in value, roads have deteriorated into a state of corroded disrepair, and general poverty has set in. These shells of a once active community seem to have gone through the formalities of town government and representation in the State government until the depression of 1929 when their impossible conditions were revealed. As a consequence the Deorganizing Act was passed.

The administration was placed in the hands of the State Tax Assessor, whose position can be compared with that of

the Commissioner of Corporation and Taxation in Massachusetts and with that of the Tax Commission in New Hampshire. The provisions of the act state the conditions under which existing towns may be "liquidated" as political entities. The area covered by the defunct town becomes state land thus placing on the state the responsibility for the care of the local population, which may be left. It then becomes the duty of the Assessor to arrange for the schooling, protection, and governmental needs of the people. Sometimes these are divided among neighboring towns; sometimes people have been moved to more favorable and populous locations.

Granted, this experiment is not startling, nevertheless it reveals clearly that New England is confronted not only with the urbanization of some areas, but with the very opposite of others. The Deorganizing Act is a clear example of the responsibility of the state to protect and preserve a community when local government breaks down. Like the establishment of fiscal agents for fin-

ancially unsound counties in New Hampshire, it shows that New England is awake to this duty. Indeed there are many who interpret the extensive assumption of powers by the state governments as indicative of a breakdown in local and municipal government. To others this interpretation has not been proved.

In conclusion it should be observed that only the more apparent aspects of the problem have been treated. They all indicate changing relationships between State and local governments. But this must not be construed as a concerted movement for either general or specific reform. It is much safer to observe that a general readjustment is being undertaken in the functions of municipal government to bring it into step with rapidly changing times, with new functions and with new social, economic, and governmental needs. The underlying governmental structure remains intact having demonstrated its inherent worth throughout the critical period since 1919.

Safe Working Conditions in War Industry

By KINGSLEY KAY

GREAT BRITAIN as well as Canada knows from the experience of the last war how important it is to keep up an efficient control of labor conditions in war time.

In Great Britain where a comprehensive system of factory inspection had been operated for many decades a temporary relaxation of the control was proclaimed at the outbreak of the war in 1914 due to the extreme need for the manufacture of implements of war. Great Britain at that time had not learned the lesson painfully demonstrated later in the war that healthful working conditions most certainly increased ef-

ficiency of production, quality and quantity of output. Health supervision was forced to the background making production, at any cost, the important goal and by 1915 there was no doubt but that the large increase in production of war materials and the accompanying factors, long working hours and poor working conditions, were leading to tremendous increase in fatigue accidents and occupational disease. Not only was an increase shown in fatigue, ill health and accidents, but it was quite evident that they were contributing to a serious lowering of the efficiency of war production. Labour turnover sky-rocketed and great difficulty was experienced in obtaining sufficient workers to enter the unhealthy trades such as shell filling in view of the

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