

## INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC BUSINESS

**A**CADEMIC orators, reform agitators, religious preachers and teachers and other prompters of civic conscience are constantly urging young men to "go into politics." Because this appeal stirs profound emotions of patriotism and religion, it is always effective for the moment, particularly with the college man whose knowledge of history and literature, science and athletics, makes him susceptible to the argument that personalities enriched by college culture owe a special duty to the state. To many college men success in politics means a place among the governors and justices whose portraits line the capitol's rotunda, or the winning of oratorical triumphs or strategic victories on the stump or in legislative halls, or making the winning play at critical moments in humanity's struggle for self-government. This alluring picture draws many into the vortex of practical politics. Others enter with--less definite anticipation, from love of struggle, the craving for excitement or the desire for diversion. Others, again, sincerely feel in duty bound to go into politics, because they regard themselves and are regarded by their communities as trustees of culture, knowledge, honesty, high motive, and of that "true conception of the spirit of democracy," which the head master of Groton recently defined as working for, rather than working with or through, less favored citizens. If the college man resists the appeal to go into politics, he defends his apparent neglect on the ground that in politics honesty and culture are at a discount. He finds compromise of principles distasteful and the legalized compensation too slight and too precarious. Moreover the public requires from the college man too long a period of apprenticeship before it calls on him to lead, and it is as fickle in continuing its favors as it is chary of granting them.

Academic instruction has been influenced by the college man's picture of politics and by his reasoning about politics. History, like football, is more interesting when the play is "open." Courses in history and in politics have naturally

emphasized leading personalities and dramatic issues, and deductions as to the college man's duty have been drawn from his alleged superiority, especially from his trusteeship of culture.

The after-college relation to politics has been similarly influenced by the tradition and the teachings that regard government as a sequence of personalities rather than a sequence of acts. Personal considerations and the influence of other personalities have kept the great majority of college men out of politics and have rendered the actions of those who enter politics singularly like the actions of less favored men whose only school has been that of machine politics. So desultory and so ineffective have been the attempts of college men to organize their superiority and their consciousness of extra obligation, that one of their leaders ironically suggested a precaution taken by certain mediæval law-makers on the coast of France: "Any one who wishes to pilot a ship into port may do so if employed by shippers; but any pilot who fails to guide his charge safely must forfeit his life." Few college men will deny to-day that American municipalities have received infinitely less help from college men and college instruction than the needs of the city and the opportunities of college and university make desirable. Political coöperation requires team work, not all-star aggregations. The college man's culture has not been negotiable. The intelligence which he has failed to bring and which alone is immediately serviceable in politics is intelligent comprehension of community needs and governmental acts.

The Bureau of Municipal Research has gladly accepted an invitation to give at Columbia University a course in Public Business, because it wishes to test the effect upon college students of emphasizing acts rather than personalities, administration rather than legislation, needs rather than theories and results rather than political speculation. New York City has only one mayor, but it has 70,000 employees. Election comes once a year, administration consists of a million daily acts. To try to understand public business without appreciating the continuity of social needs and of public acts, to regard government as a thing set going once a year or once every few years, is to ignore the real meaning of the old saying: "The king is dead; long live the king."

The time seems ripe for adding to the college curriculum courses in governmental acts and methods, for in all parts of the country citizens are asking for men who can put into operation the ideals of college men. Moreover, ability to do is recognized as never before, and promises to become a close rival to ability to talk about what ought to be done. Efficiency is beginning to win prompt promotion in the national government. Men are working their way into cabinet positions because of ability to see, to understand and to guide acts, not because of college connections, travel or good fellowship. In the consular service, the State Department puts a premium on men who can do definite important acts or cause them to be done, and who can acquire and record definite information about things and acts. The defects of the civil service are due not to the application of tests to determine efficiency but to failure to apply relevant tests and to provide for a continuous comparison of requirement with accomplishment in order to prove continuing fitness. Even in the selection of a president stress is laid to-day on the fact that one candidate can point to efficient administration of many posts, while another, as he himself laments, has not been given opportunity to prove his ability to cope with conditions and to attain results.

If academic instruction is to increase the fitness of college men for public service it must exchange the injunction, "go into politics," for "participate in government." Government is a matter of conditions, methods, acts and results, not a mere matter of theories. Conditions are objective; they can be seen, analyzed, understood, directed, changed. To adjust and control conditions requires knowledge of their component parts and interrelations. This knowledge requires that the college man shall learn: (1) how to study community needs; (2) how to study official acts; (3) how to devise and manage the governmental machinery that is necessary to give effect to the wishes of the community; and (4) how to frame official reports that shall make this machinery intelligible and show in what measure the desired results are being attained. None of these essentials to knowledge can be found in existing texts, because mechanisms do not do what they are designed to do, nor do

records of work done and money spent tell a legible or complete story. Extra-constitutional agencies thwart or pervert constitutional provisions. Descriptions of charters and municipal systems mislead because they do not mirror the actual conduct of official business.

As to the results that may be attained by such university lectures as it is preparing to deliver, the Bureau of Municipal Research confesses to no little optimism, because its own experience, as a non-official fact gatherer, in securing the coöperation of college graduates entrusted with large responsibilities in government, in journalism and in philanthropy seems to prove that individuals and communities will give attention to government in direct proportion as they see clearly the needs, the methods and the results of community coöperation.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau of Municipal Research was organized January 1, 1906, as the Bureau of City Betterment, and was incorporated May 3, 1907, under its present title, with an executive staff of three. From the outset Mr. Henry Bruère has been its director. Its purposes are defined in its charter as follows:

To promote efficient and economical municipal government; to promote the adoption of scientific methods of accounting and of reporting the details of municipal business with a view to facilitating the work of public officials; to secure constructive publicity in matters pertaining to municipal problems; to collect, to classify, to analyze, to correlate, to interpret and to publish facts as to the administration of municipal government.

It has at present (October, 1908), a staff of forty-five, to whose training a score of colleges and universities have contributed; and the work is carried on under the general guidance of a board of trustees composed of seven men who for years have been identified, as students and workers, with local and national efforts to solve municipal problems.

<sup>1</sup> The Bureau is located at 261 Broadway, New York City, and will be pleased to receive suggestions from those in charge of university instruction in the social sciences as to advisable modifications of the tentative outline of lectures which is printed at the close of this article. It will also welcome information as to localities in special need of municipal research.

It may be of interest to reproduce a circular recently sent out by a group of Philadelphia business men, all college graduates, for the purpose of raising funds for research work in that city—work which, it is hoped, will aid in educating the entire community in the problems of government:

1. Money enough is being spent by American cities to secure efficient government.

2. Inefficient government causes more corruption, sickness, dependency and delinquency than any other anti-social factor.

3. Inefficiency of government is primarily due to badness of methods rather than to badness of men.

4. Efforts to correct misgovernment have too frequently failed, or have had only passing success, because men not methods were changed or attacked.

5. Continuing knowledge of acts is infinitely more effective than election excitement.

6. Public interest in so-called good government must be sustained, not by scandal regarding personalities, but by reiteration of facts as to acts committed and community needs not met.

7. City employees and city funds should work with such methods that they will themselves reiterate truth regarding work done and money spent, and work not done that ought to be done.

8. The Bureau of Municipal Research (New York) was organized in 1906 on the foregoing principles, and has accomplished noteworthy results by emphasizing methods not men, acts not personalities.

9. Officials and press have coöperated with the highly trained men of the Bureau of Municipal Research in committing city officials to:

A city budget that tells clearly for what purposes money is voted; a resolution making impossible transfers from purposes mentioned in the budget to other purposes, without special authority; uniform accounting for all departments; adequate service records to describe work done when it is done, with periodic summaries; reorganization from top to bottom of the department of finance so that expenditures, revenues and service rendered shall be currently audited and controlled; removal of one borough president; investigation by the commissioners of accounts that may cause the removal of another borough president; initiative by private individuals leading to the resignation of a third borough president; important changes of method in all boroughs; reorganization of the

commissioners of accounts office, previously a whitewashing body, until it is equipped to provide efficient continuing audit and examination of all departments; public transactions being forced into the light, "good motives" are strengthened and "bad motives" are weakened, thus making the informed sentiment of even the minority effective in preventing inefficiency and corruption.

10. Other cities are asking the Bureau of Municipal Research to coöperate in making similar efforts to improve their methods of government. A permanent foundation is needed for training men and setting up scientific standards for coöperation of citizens and officials.

The Bureau has not attempted in any of its publications to summarize all of its activities and investigations. In its reports, however, it tries not only to state clearly the results of its inquiries, but to show, step by step, the methods used in arriving at those results. It has had in mind, from the first, the probable use of its reports by university lecturers and students, by special students working in public libraries, and more particularly by officials and civic leaders in other cities who desire to study their own municipal governments and to adopt methods by which they may currently inform themselves as to local needs. The complete list of the Bureau's reports has not hitherto been published except on the back covers of the reports themselves, which of course have had a small circulation among a special class. It is thought desirable, therefore, to subjoin a list of these publications, including those that are still in preparation, and to add a brief statement of the results of the studies described.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Bureau cannot offer to send its reports free to instructors or even to libraries. It is glad, however, to send them to all applicants at cost plus postage.

#### REPORTS, JANUARY, 1906, TO SEPTEMBER, 1908.

Some Phases of the Work of the Department of Street Cleaning. This report pointed out that defective organization, not corruption, was the real cause of the troubles encountered.

City Owned Houses. This led to the appointment of a commission to devise a method of abolishing and preventing the recurrence of the unsanitary and illegal conditions found in tenements owned by the city.

Salary Increases not Provided for in Budget. This led to the appointment of a commission to standardize salaries and grades.

During the past autumn, the Bureau of Municipal Research organized, in New York City, a public Budget Exhibit, which attracted much attention not only in New York but throughout the United States. Its purpose was to illustrate the methods pursued by the Bureau, and to bring home to the taxpayers their individual responsibility for the conduct of municipal government. The Exhibit was located in lower Broadway, and was kept open from October 5 to November 2. Daily meetings were held with an average attendance of over 2000. Numerous civic bodies contributed photographs and charts, and several city departments participated by exhibits and by noonday speeches. The last address was given by Governor Hughes, on "The Right to Efficient Government." The intelligent interest taken by taxpayers and the use made by classes in civics from colleges and high schools, as well as by ministers and editors, of the Bureau's graphic presentation of budget alternatives exceeded all anticipations.

If university and college teachers and students become inter-

Inefficiency of Inspection of Combustibles. This led to the dismissal of the superintendent.

The City of New York, the Street Railroad Companies and a Million and a Half Dollars. This led to the establishment of a special bureau in the city's law department to take up and press the claims of the city against street railway companies for paving done at the public's expense between the companies' rails.

How Manhattan is Governed. This led to an investigation by the commissioners of accounts, upon whose findings the City Club submitted to Governor Hughes charges against the borough president and demanded his removal. The president was removed for gross inefficiency, "albeit no proof exists of personal dishonesty." The Board of Aldermen promptly reelected him. The legality of their action is now before the courts. From the point of view of the Bureau it is as important to have doubtful points of law interpreted as to have inefficient officials removed.

Analysis of the Salary Expenditure of the Department of Health of the City of New York for the Year 1906. This led to the adoption by the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of the principle that future budgets shall clearly indicate for what specific purposes moneys appropriated are to be expended, and further, that moneys may not be diverted to other purposes than those advertised, without permission from the Board of Estimate and Apportionment.

Making a Municipal Budget: Functional Accounts and Records for the Department of Health. This led to important changes in the administrative methods of the Health Department and to entirely new forms of record and report, intended to emphasize work not done and needs not met.

A Department of Municipal Audit and Examination: Report on the Office of Com-

ested in the movement, it will secure the permanent support of coming generations of college-bred men. With the aid of the universities and colleges, and of their graduates, it should be possible to establish such an endowment of municipal research as to ensure the maintenance of the highest standards of governmental efficiency. With this end in view, the Bureau looks forward with high anticipation to the coming conferences between its officers and the students of Columbia University. It hopes to learn how an endowed bureau of municipal research may most efficiently coöperate with universities and colleges in preparing college men for the double rôle of efficient citizen and efficient leader. Municipal research will need scores, probably hundreds of trained men within a few years. The Bureau is anxious to learn how its experience may best be recorded for investigators and teachers, so that they can use the results for lectures and for class-room and reference work. It is in the hope that advice and suggestions may be elicited, that the following syllabus of lectures is appended.

missioners of Accounts. As a result of this report the office was reorganized by the commissioner, with the approval of the mayor, and has since become one of the chief educational agencies of the city.

The Park Question, Part II: Critical Study and Constructive Suggestions Pertaining to Revenue and Deposits of the Department of Parks, Manhattan and Richmond. This study, recently published, shows how revenue not collected is intimately related to unnecessary taxes and concealed inefficiency.

Memorandum of Matters relating to New York City's Debt that Suggest the Necessity either for Judicial Ruling or for Legislation. Just published: a valuable handbook for the study of other cities.

A Bureau of Child Hygiene: Coöperative Studies and Experiments by the Department of Health of the City of New York and the Bureau of Municipal Research. Foreword by Hon. Thomas Darlington, Commissioner of Health. This has led to entire reorganization of work for the physical welfare of school children and summer care of babies.

#### REPORTS IN PROGRESS, OCTOBER, 1908

The Park Question, Part I: Critical Study and Constructive Suggestions pertaining to Administrative and Accounting Methods of the Department of Parks, Manhattan and Richmond.

Control of Water Revenues.

Administration of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity.

Real Estate Transactions, Department of Finance.

Tenement House Administration.

Bureau of Supplies and Repairs, Department of Police.



THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC BUSINESS<sup>1</sup>

## PART I: PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

- I. The problem of effective administration is the problem of effective control.
  - (a) A general statement of the problem of administration.
  - (b) The meaning of control.
  - (c) Elements common to both public and private business.
  - (d) Points of difference.
- II. Forms of control provided by corporate organization.
  - (a) Forms of electoral control: petition, ballot, initiative, referendum, recall, citizen inquiry.
  - (b) Forms of representative control: legislative, financial, inquisitorial.
  - (c) Forms of administrative control: appointment, removal, administrative direction.
- III. The exercise of effective control depends on intelligence.
  - (a) Democratic government is essentially one of voluntary coöperation.
  - (b) Intelligent coöperation is possible only when citizenship is informed.
  - (c) The exercise of intelligent judgment concerning any concrete problem presumes exact knowledge.
- IV. The function and possibilities of electoral control and the information necessary to make it effective.
  - (a) What the citizen may do when informed.
  - (b) What information is necessary to make petition effective.
  - (c) What information is necessary to make the ballot effective.
  - (d) What information is necessary to make the initiative effective.
  - (e) What information is necessary to make the referendum effective.
  - (f) What information is necessary to make the recall effective.
  - (g) What records are necessary to make citizen inquiry effective.
- V. The function and possibilities of representative control and the information necessary to make it effective.
  - (a) What representatives may do, if informed.

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-eight lectures, to be given at Columbia University, in the spring of 1909, by Henry Bruère, Director, Frederick A. Cleveland, Technical Director, and William H. Allen, Secretary of the Bureau of Municipal Research. Part I is to be given by Mr. Cleveland; Part II, by Mr. Allen; Part III, by Mr. Bruère.

- (b) What information is necessary to make the legislative powers effective.
  - (c) What information is necessary to make the financial powers of representatives effective.
  - (d) What records are necessary to make inquisitorial powers effective.
  - (e) Who is responsible if such information is not available.
- VI. The function and possibilities of administrative control and the information necessary to make it effective.
- (a) What administrative officers may do if informed.
  - (b) What information is necessary to make the power of appointment effective.
  - (c) What information is necessary to make the power of suspension and removal effective.
  - (d) What information is necessary to make official direction effective.
  - (e) Who is responsible if such information is not available.
- VII. The means of obtaining the information required for purposes of control.
- (a) The function of inspection.
  - (b) The function of accounting.
  - (c) The function of audit.
  - (d) The development and use of operative service records.
  - (e) The development and use of reports.
- VIII. Technique and mechanical devices to secure efficiency, economy and directness of administrative control.

PART II: SPECIAL AGENCIES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, DEVELOPED TO  
PROMOTE THE APPLICATION OF BUSINESS PRINCIPLES TO  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

I. National public agencies.

- (a) The Keep Commission.
- (b) The Association of Treasury Department Employees.
- (c) The National Census Bureau.
- (d) The League of American Municipalities.
- (e) The National Association of Comptrollers.

II. National private agencies.

- (a) The Bureau of Municipal Research.
- (b) The National Conference of Charities and Corrections.
- (c) The National Municipal League.
- (d) The National Prison Congress.

## III. State agencies, public and private.

- (a) To promote uniform accounts.
- (b) Legislative commissions.
- (c) Public-service commissions.
- (d) Private agencies.

## IV. Public municipal agencies.

- (a) Boston's finance commission.
- (b) New York's commissioners of accounts.
- (c) Municipal bureaus of statistics.

## V. Non-official influence upon municipal business.

- (a) Agencies attempting to influence public policy.
  - (1) Political parties.
  - (2) Taxpayers' associations.
  - (3) Boards of trade.
  - (4) Charitable and religious bodies, including social settlements, child-labor committees, *etc.*
  - (5) County, state and national conferences of non-official bodies.
  - (6) County, state and national conferences of municipal officials.
  - (7) The press.
- (b) Dangers when volunteer agencies are uninformed.
- (c) Importance of records and reports for informing non-official bodies.
- (d) Advantage of records and reports that show whether non-official bodies urge or oppose acts that further or injure the interests of the whole community.

## VI. Significance of citizens' rights to inspect all public records.

- (a) History of this right.
- (b) Its legal limitations.
- (c) Its educational and political possibilities.
- (d) Its relation to adequate business methods.
- (e) The responsibilities which it imposes.

PART III. URGENT MUNICIPAL PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED BY THE  
APPLICATION OF BUSINESS METHODS

## I. Shall business be centralized or decentralized?

- (a) Central administration of contracts and purchases.
  - (1) Purchasing agency.
  - (2) Real estate bureau.
  - (3) Inspection.

- (4) Bureau of standards.
  - (5) Price current bureau.
  - (6) Contract bureau.
  - (7) Depository of supplies.
  - (b) Central administration of fiscal and financial relations.
    - (1) Revenue collections, licenses, concessions.
    - (2) Disbursements.
  - (c) Operative functions not usually centralized.
    - (1) Construction.
    - (2) Supervision of public buildings.
    - (3) Control of streets.
    - (4) Repair shops.
    - (5) Hospital service.
    - (6) School administration.
  - (d) Centralization of professional services.
    - (1) Legal.
    - (2) Medical.
    - (3) Chemical.
    - (4) Engineering.
    - (5) Accounting and auditing control, as through New York City's commissioners of accounts.
  - (e) Bureau of statistics.
- II. Municipal industry.
- (a) Conditions necessary to success.
  - (b) Facts essential to truthful statement of results.
  - (c) Dangers peculiar to municipal corporations.
- III. Constructive and protective policies that depend upon efficient accounting of public debt.
- (a) Debt limit.
  - (b) Sinking fund.
  - (c) Use of long term bonds.
  - (d) Use of short term loans.
  - (e) Interest of bondholders in business methods.
  - (f) Registration of municipal bonds.
- IV. Charter making in its relation to municipal business.
- (a) Function of charter.
  - (b) Fallacy of basing each charter on other charters.
  - (c) Importance of basing each charter on community needs.
  - (d) Efficient business methods show community needs.
  - (e) How functions, needs and organization may be charted.
  - (f) Superiority of the simple charter, defining powers, to be sup-

plemented by the municipal code showing how powers are to be exercised.

- (g) Minimum provisions regarding business methods.
- (h) Recent tendencies.
  - (1) Recognition of expert service.
  - (2) Substitution of small executive commissions for large legislative-executive bodies.
  - (3) Recall, referendum, initiative.
  - (4) Long terms for leading officials.
  - (5) Increase in local autonomy.
- (i) Danger of exaggerating possibility of efficient public business without intelligence on the part of the public as to methods, acts, results and needs.

V. Civil service.

- (a) Obstructions to efficiency.
- (b) Modifications necessary.
- (c) Importance of service records to establish evidence of inefficiency.

VI. Making an annual budget.

- (a) To enable the community to determine governmental policies.
- (b) To enable fiscal authorities to control finances.
- (c) Importance of classifying appropriations according to operative functions.
- (d) Importance of segregating appropriations according to operative functions.
- (e) Importance of publicity of requested transfer from one budget appropriation to another.
- (f) Importance of public hearing of citizens on final budget in addition to public hearings upon budget estimates.

As has been said already, this outline of a subject not previously treated, or at least not treated from a similar point of view, in academic instruction in the United States, is necessarily tentative, and the Bureau will welcome suggestions for its improvement.

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## FEDERAL QUARANTINE LAWS

**A**MONG the contributions which America has made to the science of jurisprudence is the idea of a dual or federal organization of government, in which both the general and the local governments act directly on the individual. It has embodied this idea in an actual system, and, though the workings of this system have not always been above criticism, it has in many ways served a useful purpose. Had the theory of the indivisibility of sovereignty possessed supreme sway, it is practically certain that no general government of substantial powers could have been created; for in the then prevalent confusion of sovereignty with government, such a government would have seemed sovereign, and so great was the prejudice against sovereignty at a distance that the people would not have consented to the creation of a governmental system in which the states themselves could not be regarded as sharers. They believed, and believed thoroughly, in government "close home." And hence, in what they conceived to be their most vital interests, they insisted that the major portion of political power be left to the local governments.

It is therefore not surprising that, at the beginning, the states should have believed and acted upon the belief that the protection of public health was entrusted to them; that whatever quarantine laws there might be must be state laws. The steps in the movement away from this position constitute a very interesting chapter in the evolution of our ideas of constitutional interpretation. They mark a slowly changing conception of the relative importance which should be attached to theory as compared with expediency in determining the spheres of federal and state activity. Theoretical notions have gradually been forced to give way before the logic of facts.

The development of federal control over quarantine has been very gradual. Briefly stated, the stages in the process have been as follows: (1) exclusive state control; (2) moral support by