

which it was called—and the smug platitudes of Governor Cox's resolution committee's report tell better than anything else how little was really accomplished—it did serve to show the mayors of America that there may be a possibility for concerted action on their part. In this particular conference they were overshadowed by the governors. All of the brief time allowed for floor discussion was practically absorbed by the state representatives. But those few mayors who managed to get the floor pretty

effectively showed that they were more alive to the real problems of the people they represent than were the less responsible governors of the states, and that they had opinions based on observed facts which never come to the attention of the governors. It seems possible that following the preliminary organization effected at the conference the mayors will get together free from the restricting federal influence or the deadening gubernatorial oratory and helpfully work toward a solution of the problems which jointly vex them.

IDAHO SETS ITS HOUSE IN ORDER

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New York tried to departmentalize its state administration in 1915, Illinois did it in 1917 with striking success, Delaware is headed in that direction and Idaho has just done it. :: :: :: ::

A VERY thorough-going reorganization of the civil administration of the state was undertaken by the Idaho state legislature at its session this year, when a measure abolishing some forty-six boards, commissions, and offices was enacted into law. The proposal was championed by Governor Davis, and became law on March 31 of this year.

The measure is the outcome of a number of years of intense dissatisfaction arising from the methods employed by state administrators. Criminal proceedings, wide-spread criticism of the state land board—one of the most important boards in the state—lack of uniformity of accounting, absence of a budget, and equally unbusiness-like methods have characterized the state administration for some time back. In fact, there have been many rumors that the financial condition of the state

is in a far more serious condition than people generally were aware of. Expert accountants have been on the state books for over two years and those conversant with the situation contend that the whole matter of state finance is in a hopeless muddle.

The present step is an outgrowth of all of these factors. It was not preceded by a widespread campaign of a specific character for consolidation of state offices and a shorter ballot. In fact the voters last fall rejected very decidedly a proposed constitutional amendment designed to abolish the office of state superintendent of public instruction, and this in spite of the fact that the incumbent of that office vigorously supported the movement, as did her predecessor, and as did the state board of education, which made a very positive statement to the effect

that unnecessary duplication of functions existed. The suggestion of Governor Davis, therefore, came as something of a surprise to many people in the state.

The measure, known as senate bill No. 19, by the state affairs committee, completely reorganizes the state civil administration so far as it is not definitely prescribed by the constitution. The only old board that is continued is the state board of education. No attempt has ever been made to effect any thoroughgoing reorganization of the constitutional provisions, and the voters in 1918 rejected a proposal to hold a constitutional convention for the purpose of revising that document. In so far, therefore, as that instrument provides for a considerable number of elective officials as well as for numerous ex-officio boards (which of course still exist, though their usefulness is a matter of question) the new plan lacks something of the completeness it might otherwise possess. Since, however, even the elective officials are in considerable measure dependent upon state statute for their power, the limitations of the new plan may not prove to be as serious as they at first appear.

The act is designed to vitalize "Article IV, section 5, of the constitution of the state by conferring upon the governor the power and responsibility of conducting the principal departments of the state government." It provides for a cabinet—or commission—form of government, with the governor at the head, assisted by nine departmental heads, some of whom are elected by the people of the state to specific offices, but all of whom must be appointed to the head of any department mentioned in the statute. These nine departments are those of Agriculture; Commerce and Industry; Finance; Immigration, Labor, and Statistics; Law Enforcement; Public Investment; Pub-

lic Welfare; Public Works; Reclamation. Each department has as its head an officer known as the commissioner, who is appointed by the governor and, except "those under the constitution who are appointed for specific terms," may be removed by him at his discretion. Each commissioner receives a salary of \$3,600 per annum. The statute also provides that in certain of the departments certain designated offices shall be created, but these are comparatively few in number, and on the whole the organization within each department is within the control of the commissioner. However, within the department of agriculture there must be a director of markets, a director of animal husbandry, a director of plant industry and a director of fairs; within the department of commerce and industry there must be an assistant commissioner, a director of banking, a director of insurance, and a manager of state industrial insurance; the office of fish and game warden is created within the department of law enforcement; a public health adviser must be appointed within the department of public welfare; a director of highways within the department of public works; and a director of water resources within the department of reclamation. In addition to these, the law creates a board of agricultural advisers, which is "advisory and non-executive" consisting of nine persons, who serve without salary, and whose duty it is to assist the commissioner of agriculture in the performance of his duties. All of these officials are to be appointed by the governor.

This latter feature is interesting. It was probably incorporated in order to center still further the administrative power and responsibility in the hands of the governor, which it undoubtedly does, but though the act provides that each subordinate officer shall "be

under the direction, supervision, and control of the commissioner of the respective department to which he is assigned" the situation may easily arise where the official will look more to the wish of the person from whom he received his appointment than to his immediate head. If the actual appointments are to be made upon the recommendation of the Commissioners, of course this danger is minimized.

The organization of each department, with the exceptions noted are left wholly to the discretion of the head. He employs whatever employees he deems necessary, and fixes their compensation, except where previously determined by law. He may require an official bond of any assistant, should he choose to do so. No employee of any department is permitted to be paid for any extra service performed, and the gross amount of money received by any department from any and all sources must be turned over to the state treasury without any delay or deductions.

As would be expected, special quali-

fications are required of some of the cabinet members. Thus, neither the commissioner of commerce and industry nor any director in his department shall be financially interested in any bank or insurance corporation coming under his control, and must have had five years experience in banking or have served for that length of time in the banking department of some state. Neither the commissioner of law enforcement, nor any of his assistants shall be licensed to exercise or practice any trade or profession regulated by that department. The director of highways must be a civil engineer of not less than five years' experience in road building. Other qualifications of a similar character are required of other commissioners.

Another notable advance for the state is provided among the duties of the commissioner of finance, who is required to prescribe and require the installation of a uniform system of bookkeeping, accounting and reporting and to supervise the preparation of the state budget.