all the city managers in the country. This plan is being carried out, with Mr. Waite's office in Dayton as the distributing center.

The officers elected for the ensuing year are: President, Gaylord C. Cummin, Grand Rapids, Mich.; vice-president, Clarence A. Bingham, Norwood, Mass.;¹ secretary-treasurer, Harrison G. Otis, Auburn, Maine.² To the new president was left the task of deciding the date and place of the 1918 convention, which will probably be held, as heretofore, in conjunction with the National Municipal League and its allied associations.

CONSOLIDATION PROBLEMS IN CALIFORNIA

BY GEORGE C. SIKES¹

Chicago

SUCH familiarity as I may have with the situation in California is due to the fact that I was asked by the taxpayers' association of California to go to that state last spring to give advice with reference to a report then in contemplation on "City and County Consolidation for Los Angeles." My advice was sought because of my part in helping to prepare the report on "Unification of Local Governments in Chicago," issued in January last by the Chicago bureau of public efficiency.

CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

Let me say at the outset that the movement for city and county consolidation should not be considered by itself as a separate problem. It is a part of the larger problem of governmental reorganization on the basis of unity, simplicity, and the short ballot. We Americans are too much given to looking upon plans as panaceas. Too often we discuss the city-manager plan, the short ballot, consolidation, etc., as mere mechanical devices for insuring good government, when they should be considered as features of plans for fundamental reorganization calculated, not to guarantee good government, but to facilitate the efforts of local communities to function more effectively. Some communities—notably San Francisco, St. Louis and Denver—have consolidated their city and county governments. But they did not at the same time undertake to deal with other important phases of the question of reorganization. Galveston, Des Moines, Dayton, and other cities adopting either the commission or the manager plans of government are living under county governments

¹ Becomes manager of Waltham, Mass., April 1, 1918.

² Appointed manager, Auburn, Me., January 25, 1918.

³ Mr. Sikes is connected with the Chicago Bureau of Public Efficiency, working especially on problems of reorganization of local government in Chicago.

much the same as they were before. City and county consolidation and fundamental reorganization of the government on right lines should go hand in hand.

In the movement for city and county consolidation, California has been a leader. San Francisco was one of the first communities in the country to merge its city and county governments, that merger having been effected in 1856. While the San Francisco venture was entirely beneficial in so far as it made for unification, unfortunately it did not go far enough in the direction of simplification. City and county governments were merged into one corporate entity, to be sure, with a single legislative body, and one assessor instead of two, and one auditor, one treasurer, etc. There are still two law departments, however, for the one government, with an elective district attorney as the head of one and an elective city attorney as head of the other—an illogical and absurd situation. There is both a sheriff and a city police department. The ballot is long, many purely administrative officials being chosen by popular election. One conspicuous absurdity is furnished by the system of school management. The superintendent of schools is elective, while the board of education is appointed by the mayor. Wrangling and friction are inevitable under such circumstances. Board-headed departments are numerous in San Francisco, whereas administrative departments should be single-headed. While San Francisco has merged its city and county governments, with important resulting benefits, it has by no means eliminated all possible duplication. It lacks thoroughgoing unification, the short ballot, and a simple plan of governmental organization designed to promote efficiency and economy.

In Los Angeles county and in Alameda county especially much propaganda work has already been done in behalf of city and county consolidation. The constitution of the state has been amended with the view of removing barriers to such consolidation, in which respect California is far ahead of most other states of the union, though still further modifications of the constitution may be necessary to authorize complete consolidation on satisfactory lines.

THE ALAMEDA COUNTY PLAN²

In Alameda county, across the bay from San Francisco, much good propaganda work has been done on the subject of governmental reorganization. The idea is to combine Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda and other municipalities with the county of Alameda. However, the plan embodied in the draft of a charter for city and county consolidation, proposed by the executive committee of the city and county government association, is really one for federation rather than consolidation. There are to be municipal entities within the city and county of Alameda with

² See NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, Vol. vi, p. 105.

assured independence in certain lines, under the name of boroughs. The governing authorities for the city and county are to be a council of 21 members chosen by districts, an elective mayor with the veto power and some appointing powers, and a manager.

While the Alameda plan is admirable in many ways, and represents much painstaking and public-spirited work, I must take issue with two of its features. It seems to me illogical and unwise to provide for an elective mayor, with veto and appointing powers, in connection with what is professedly a manager plan of government. There should be no other executive and policy-making head of the city to divide authority and responsibility which under the manager plan is supposed to be centered in the council, and its executive agent, the manager.

It seems to me, too, that the rigid system of independent boroughs for which the Alameda plan makes provision is likely to prove unworkable in practice.

BOROUGH GOVERNMENT

The problem of borough government is as yet an unsolved one. Some great cities—New York, for example—have divisions called boroughs. But the New York plan is not one for general imitation. It cannot be said that any city has so far worked out a satisfactory solution of the problem. The matter is one calling for experimentation, as well as serious thought and study. The thing to be avoided, therefore, is stratification in the constitution of the state, so as to render needed changes and readjustments impossible. Matters should be left so that changes can be made as experience shall show them to be necessary. It would be most unfortunate if the basic law should outline a borough system so rigid that modifications clearly in the interest of the public could not be effected without the consent of a small group that might be induced to withhold consent through unworthy prejudices or for narrowly selfish reasons. The benefits of complete unification are so great that all parts should join in promoting the project, even at some sacrifice of local pride. On the other hand, the welfare of the larger community, as well as that of the localities themselves, will be advanced by the preservation of local names. Municipalities joining with the larger central city to form a consolidated city and county should be recognized in some way as governmental units of the new system. For one thing, each such former municipality, or the larger ones among them at least, should constitute an administrative improvement district. There should be some way of enabling the citizens of such a district to give expression to public opinion upon matters of local concern to the district for the information and guidance of the governmental authorities.

American city governments have been made unworkable largely through the efforts of constitution makers and charter framers to prescribe with

rigid exactness the processes for dealing with future conditions that cannot be foreseen. There is danger that the provisions about borough government may be of this character.

It is far more important that the central government of the consolidated city and county have full power to satisfy the needs of the different localities comprising the greater entity than it is that such localities have special iron-clad guarantees against possible abuse of power at the hands of the authorities of the consolidated government. The problem is one for the charter framers to work out.

Oakland largely takes the leadership in the movement for city and county consolidation in Alameda county. Municipalities like Berkeley hesitate to join in a merger that may mean loss of identity and of independence to them. Oakland, likewise, is averse to an extension of the limits of San Francisco city and county to absorb the municipalities in Alameda county. It seems to me, however, that the municipalities around San Francisco bay constitute one natural metropolitan community and that the policy of city and county consolidation calls for the merger under one government of all the bay cities.

THE LOS ANGELES REPORT

In Los Angeles, the area between the mountains and the sea clearly constitutes a single natural metropolitan area, with many interests in common. The area, with nearly 1,000,000 population, contains 38 municipalities, the largest of which is the city of Los Angeles. It also contains many school districts and other taxing bodies of various sorts. The sentiment for consolidation appears to be strong in Los Angeles. There, as elsewhere, however, suburban communities like Pasadena constitute obstacles to the merger policy.

The taxpayers' association of California, in its report on "City and County Consolidation for Los Angeles," appearing under date of October, 1917, urges the complete consolidation, under the manager form of government, of all the local governing agencies in Los Angeles county. The minimum annual savings to taxpayers from such unification are estimated at \$2,688,519. The gains in efficiency should be of far greater importance than the money savings. Under the plan proposed for Los Angeles by the taxpayers' association of California, the consolidated city and county would have a city council of from 17 to 21 members, elected by districts for a four-year term subject to recall. The council would choose the chief executive, under the title of mayor, but he would be in fact the manager. The mayor would hold office under indefinite tenure, and would have the power to appoint and remove at will all heads of departments, except the comptroller and city clerk, who would be selected by the city council.