The second medium was the establishment of travelling Municipal Libraries. Upon the suggestion of the League this was done by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, on lines similar to the travelling libraries so generally maintained throughout the State. It was found that the Public Library could not purchase the books that were useful for the consideration of specific municipal questions. For instance, an agitation in a given city for the ownership of some public utility demanded a literature more comprehensive than is generally found in the local library. The League has four (4) travelling libraries, passing from city to city. The libraries are composed of about fifty (50) volumes, covering those questions which are likely to arise in the smaller cities. The call for these libraries has been more gratifying than its promoters had reason to hope for. The library is left in a city about two weeks unless there are special conditions which would make it desirable for it to be assigned for a longer period.

In regard to the Annual Conferences, it has been the policy of the League to bring before the city officers men whose training entitled them to speak with authority upon those questions of general and technical interest. The result has been to stimulate the city officers to inquire more carefully into such questions and to rely more upon the advice of men of special training. Probably the greatest benefit which can be directly traced to the work of the League is the development of an active interest on the part of the city officials in the work for which they have been selected. The Conferences draw together the more progressive city officials who are desirous of familiarizing themselves with their work. The League has been in existence only a few years, but during this time has developed such strength as to make it a positive factor in legislation, and in civic improvement in general. It is making reformers of city officials without so classifying them.

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MUNICIPAL PROBLEMS IN MICHIGAN

Though the League of Michigan Municipalities was organized nearly five years ago, and has held five meetings in as many cities, its work thus far has attracted comparatively little attention in the State. But this year the League has departed from precedents and allied itself with the Michigan Political Science Association in the hope of getting the municipal problems of Michigan cities fairly before the public. Dr. John A. Fairlie, of the University of Michigan, is secretary of both organizations. He arranged for a joint conference, which was held at Ann Arbor in February, and which marks a new era in organized effort in Michigan to improve municipal conditions.

Michigan is, in many respects, a peculiar State. At the last census it had twenty-six cities with a population of more than 8,000 each, together comprising a little over 30 per cent. of the population of the State. Michigan is far enough west to indulge in the luxury of small cities. The total number of those incorporated within this State is 80, ranging in population from 513 to 285,708. Of these, 37 are incorporated under general laws governing

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cities of the fourth class. All the rest have special charters. The legislature of Michigan, evidently thinking it would be easier to begin with smaller cities in an attempt to enact general legislation, established the fourth class without having any first, second, or third.

The constitution of Michigan was adopted in 1850 when Detroit had only 21,000 population. There has never been any prohibition of special legislation for cities in Michigan. The power of the legislature over the municipality has been practically unlimited, except by certain rights of local self-government which the State courts have made clear. In fact, the legal doctrine of local self-government has been carried farther in Michigan than in most other States. Judge Cooley as a member of the Supreme Court held, in a series of famous cases, that the right of local self-government existed prior to the constitution of 1850 and lay back of it as one of the conditions by which that document was to be interpreted. Practically, this secured to every city the right to choose its own local officers and levy its own taxes for local purposes. This did not, however, preclude the legislature from imposing burdens upon the cities for such semi-State functions as education, police, and health, so that after all the legislature has not been tied down very closely in dealing with the municipalities.

Michigan is a rather conservative State. The farmers are strong in the legislature, and while they are disposed to pass any special acts which a city's representatives agree upon, they are not disposed to grant such a measure of home rule as to deprive themselves of the ultimate control of the cities. Another element in the legislature opposed to municipal autonomy is the representatives from the Upper Peninsula, where the control of the railroads and the mining corporations is particularly strong. These are the gentlemen "with only one constituent." They are naturally opposed to giving cities full power to control public utilities.

Under these conditions municipal affairs in Michigan have drifted along in a conservative way with only occasional interruptions such as Mr. Pingree's upheaving influence in Detroit. We have an antiquated constitution, an endless mess of local charter legislation, and no modern charters at all. Municipal and county accounts are kept in an indifferent manner, with no uniformity and little real publicity. Grand Rapids, the second city of the State, has a water problem that is a standing invitation to promoters and boodlers. This and the Detroit street railway problem are about the only municipal matters that have become of interest to the State at large.

It is hoped that the conference at Ann Arbor will open the way for a united effort on the part of the cities of Michigan and the students of municipal problems to carry through some programme of legislation calculated to bring order out of chaos, and better protect the interests of the citizens of Michigan cities than they can be protected under the old-fashioned patchwork legislation. It is impossible to outline a programme at this time, for none has been agreed upon. Yet it is safe to say that the most important propositions to be discussed will be municipal home rule, uniform accounting, and the merit system.

As "home rule" is a rather indefinite term, it may be well to analyze it

with reference to the Michigan situation. There are four principal phases of complete local self-government. They are:

First, the local choice of local officers, which is already pretty well guaranteed in Michigan;

Second, the right of cities to frame their own charters, which is unknown in Michigan;

Third, the right of cities to determine the scope of their municipal functions, which is seriously limited by the constitution of the State, and, aside from that, wholly within the jurisdiction of the legislature; and

Fourth, the right of cities to raise revenue and borrow money for the purpose of carrying out their municipal projects, which also is entirely within legislative control subject to the constitutional requirement that *ad valorem* taxes shall be levied according to a uniform rule.

Of course, the League of Michigan Municipalities does not confine itself to legislative problems. It is designed to be for its members a clearing-house of information and an organized centre of municipal fellowship.

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