

quotes the same city as an example of concentrated power in the mayor. The best that is said for council government is that no defects have shown themselves in the many foreign countries where it is in practical operation.

This want of definition of council government has led both the contestants into a false and most ridiculous line of argument. The advocates of the affirmative lay great stress upon the statement that city governments are primarily business corporations, and they proceed to advocate a plan of government which is not to be found in any business corporation in the world. And on the other hand the advocates of council government maintain that a city government is not a business corporation but a body politic, and forthwith to proceed to recommend the method universally adopted by business corporations. It should never be forgotten that the principles of the two systems are entirely different. In one the power is divided between mayor and council. In the other there is division of neither power nor responsibility. The usual excuses are made for the failures of municipal institutions in the United States, such as rapid growth, the immigration of a heterogeneous population, the indifference of the better class of citizens, the transitory character of the population, and the influence of saloons. But the advocates seem to forget that English cities have saloons and an ignorant population, and have grown with quite as much rapidity as the cities of America. So far from foreign immigration being obstructive to good government, it should not be forgotten that the English, German, and Norwegian immigrants come from cities which are well governed, and Mr. A. Shaw states from personal experience that there is no substantial difference in the conditions of all great cities nor in the general character of their citizens. We strongly advise the Wisconsin students of municipal government to revise their notions of council government and its relation to the conduct of business corporations. We may then expect that the triumph of council government will be established as the only representative of democratic institutions.

Mayor vs. Council¹

AT THE Twenty-seventh Annual Joint Debate of the University of Wisconsin, the question discussed was, "Should a system of municipal government, concentrating all executive and administrative powers in the mayor, be adopted in the cities of the United States?"

In this debate the contestants spent a whole year in careful preparation, they visited all the cities under the centralized system and made a personal investigation of its practical workings, and after a most exhaustive discussion the decision of the judges was against the proposition.

It is a great misfortune that the contestants did not clearly settle what the discussion was about; for whilst the affirmative was embodied in a very clear statement of the concentrated power of the mayor, neither party seems to have possessed any very clear conception of what council government really is. The consequence is that the advocates of concentrated power have never once attempted to attack the principles of council government; nor have the advocates of council government been able to bring forward a single example in the cities of the United States. One side quotes Cincinnati as a city governed on the plan of divided responsibility, which is said to be the principal cause of unsuccessful council government and the other side

¹Mayor vs. Council. The Twenty-seventh Annual Joint Debate of the University of Wisconsin. Theo. W. Brazeeau: Madison, Wisconsin: 1897.