mission form of government was first instituted. Several hundred cities have since undertaken this method, and as a step forward in the betterment of conditions it is to be highly approved. While not all cities or towns had so wide a margin as Galveston, between corruption and extravagance on the one hand and honest administration on the other, upon which to work, and while therefore the changes made elsewhere have not indicated the same tremendous improvement, it is unquestionably true that there has been a general and decided tendency towards a higher standard in municipal government. That the commission form of government is not in itself a panacea for all ills of municipalities has been ascertained and is admitted, but the method permits of more opportunities for improvement, and offers a better basis upon which to promote the interest of taxpayers, who may be likened to stockholders in a corporation, except that they secure dividends through savings rather than from profits.

"In our own city, the new government had a small field for accomplishment, as the previous ones had been economic and conservative—possibly a little too conservative. It was the result of the infliction on the city of too many commissions, though the establishment of these was due to a desire for the abolition of harmful politics, and was attributable to an effort in the direction of better things. The form as we now have it was intended to simplify and improve. This it has done, but there is more to be accomplished. We should advance further by making our council more of a legislative and less of an executive body, and by consolidating departmental management under one responsible head, following the method forced by experience on all commercial corporations. The appointment of a city manager, having charge of executive and administrative work, subject to the legislative control of the council, would, in my judgment, unify the work of the government, promote harmony of operation, secure economy and effectiveness (which is practically the same thing), and, while not interfering with the right of the people to select their own rulers, would secure management which would approve itself in lower taxes, higher efficiency, less deference to selfish interests. Several cities are trying out the manager plan, already successful in other countries, and it is more than probable that all will adopt it eventually."

J. Allan Taylor, Esq., one of our most eminent publicists and logicians, whose experience as an alderman of the city of Wilmington in former years increases the weight of his excellent opinion, has expressed to me his view of municipal government in the following words:

"Among the expedients tried for the betterment of city government is the commission form, but the principle of this form of administration is only indifferently understood and worse applied. The principle proceeds upon the true conception of municipal government—that the nearer government comes to the control of the citizen in both life and property the more closely it should approach industrial corporate management, and the expedient has proved successful just in the degree that its true conception has been appreciated and its true principle applied. The political element is so ever-present and persistent that capable administration can obtain only under conditions of civic pride and sense of property responsibility, and when it is remembered that of our municipal electorate only about four per cent represent real property owners, the difficulty of administering city government on a business basis would seem an all but insoluble problem.

"In regard to our local government, we have never had the commission form except in name, and the opportunity for giving the theory a practical test was lost when political pressure proved strong enough to dictate the terms of legislative enactment, so that the present system is distinguishable from our old form of aldermanic government only as respects the payment of salary to councilmen and the shearing of the mayor of all magisterial power. Ward lines still mark the political influence that shaped the system, a condition thoroughly inconsistent with the choosing of councilmen with the single idea of fitness, and this is the rock on which our experiment has been wrecked. With ward lines abolished, there is reason to believe that it would be possible to elect men at large qualified to administer the government on business principles, provided the duties of councilmen were made directorial and the salary eliminated.

"The ability of the city to pay salaries commensurate with the undivided services of capable men is obviously impossible, and the only practical alternative is the making of the office of councilman an honorarium. The commission form of government thrives just in proportion as the politician is absent and the business man present."