

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

ROOM 139, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION/500 WEST TEMPLE/LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012/625-3611, Ext. 64605

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, October 29, 1969
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Hall of Administration, Room 739

Robert Mitchell,
Chairman

Raymond Arbuthnot
Dr. John C. Bollens
Davis Brabant
John D. Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Dr. Warren S. Jones
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan G. Loud
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
Irvin Mazzei
L. E. McKee
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith
William Torrence
Gus A. Walker
Burke Roche,
Executive Secretary

Members Present:

Robert Mitchell, Chairman
Dr. John Bollens
Davis Brabant
John Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan Loud
Irvin Mazzei
L. E. McKee
George Shellenberger
William Torrence
Gus Walker

Members Absent:

Raymond Arbuthnot
Roc Cutri
Dr. Warren S. Jones
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith

GUEST SPEAKER - Mr. William R. MacDougall,
General Counsel and Manager of the County
Supervisors' Association of California

Mr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. He introduced the committee members to Mr. MacDougall. He said that the committee should feel free to ask questions, keeping in mind, however, that it is still in a learning period and not yet ready to draw any conclusions. He then asked Dr. Bollens, as Chairman of the Charter Study Task Force, to introduce Mr. MacDougall.

Dr. Bollens said that the County Supervisors' Association is ranked first by many people among state associations of counties. He said that it was first to have a research staff among county associations, and that it has been a pioneering organization which has had great influence throughout California. He said that he was sure the committee would find Mr. MacDougall to be a person of great knowledge in the field of county government.

Mr. MacDougall thanked Dr. Bollens for his remarks. He also complimented the committee for the things that it had done. Referring to the recommendation to consolidate the Marshal's office under the Sheriff, he said that only an affluent society could afford such waste, and that we may be at the end of that line in California. He emphasized the value of the home rule tradition in California. He was glad that the committee was looking at the County Charter because although it had been a beacon for all counties when it was established in 1913, it isn't quite able to do the job it has to do now.

Mr. MacDougall said that Los Angeles had been a leader in developing the Lakewood Plan, and it is unfortunate that other counties have not followed that leadership as extensively as they should. However, while Los Angeles County retains a leadership position in California county government, its position is precarious because of the big issues confronting county government in 1970 and the years beyond.

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One of these issues is tax reform. Another issue is the partnership arrangement between the counties and the State. There are ten or fifteen partnership programs, and in almost none of them has the State kept its financial commitments. This failure has contributed to the counties financial dilemma. The biggest of these programs is welfare. The result is that the counties face a survival situation. Money is the first problem. The second is excellence of administration. Counties should not be permitted to survive into the twenty-first century as an arm of the State government unless the counties develop an excellence of administration that is equal to, or better than, the State government itself.

Mr. MacDougall argued strongly against the proposal for an elected chief executive for California counties. Reviewing the types of organization in California counties, he said that some counties do not have an administrative officer at all. He was happy to see that that list is down to fifteen or less now. He said the next type of organization is the administrator system. About forty of the fifty-eight counties use this system. The third system is the true county manager. Three counties operate under this system--Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara.

Finally, the fourth type of system is the elected county executive. This system was used in San Mateo County about twenty-five years ago. San Mateo County abolished the system after giving it a long and horrendous trial. The system resulted in a continuing feud between the Board of Supervisors and the County Manager.

Mr. MacDougall said that Los Angeles County may be ready for the county manager approach. An amended charter could require that some department heads be appointed by the Board of Supervisors and other less sensitive department head positions be appointed by the chief administrative officer. The chief administrative officer, in turn, would be appointed at the pleasure of the board of supervisors without civil service tenure.

Taking up the problem of 56 departments and 100 boards and commissions, Mr. MacDougall said that perhaps Los Angeles County may be ready to adopt the agency system now used in the State government. He said the merits of such a system are so obvious that it is hard to be against it. He advocated five to ten agencies logically grouped with appointive heads of these agencies serving without tenure. He said this system has worked well in the State, and that there is now co-ordination and understanding between departments which did not exist before.

On the question of civil service status of department heads, Mr. MacDougall said that true department heads should not have, and should not want, civil service status. He said that in the large departments the chief deputy position should also be examined. If it involves policy making, it should also be exempt from civil service.

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Mr. MacDougall then discussed whether the Board of Supervisors should be expanded to seven members. He said that, except for San Francisco, the other 57 counties in the State all have five supervisors. He said that there was no real difference between a board of five and a board of seven members.

On the question of representation, he said that the next biggest county in California is Orange County with a population of 1,300,000. Los Angeles County would have to have a 23 member board of supervisors to equal the representation in Orange County. The board would also have to increase, as the population increased, from 25 to 30, and so on.

In conclusion he said that the committee, in its study of the County Charter, should be guided by two major principles. First there should be no insulation of the board of supervisors from the people. Second, to enforce that responsibility to the people, it is essential that control of the government should remain with the board of supervisors. This control can be maintained by the board through an administrative officer of its choosing to serve at its pleasure.

Mr. Mitchell asked Dr. Bollens to preside over the question period.

To the question by Dr. Bollens whether department heads should be appointed through an examination, Mr. MacDougall replied that whether the candidate is examined through civil service procedures or not, what matters is that there be an appointment under a merit concept. Currently, counties that have a civil service system modify their examination techniques for their top positions to make them less academic and more sensitive to the policy making requirements of the position. It is also important, he pointed out, that there be a swinging back door that is occasionally used. You don't have to fire very many people--maybe none--but the fact that it can happen is a stimulus.

Dr. Bollens asked if department heads are exempted from civil service how do you counteract the claim that this leads to the building of a spoils system. Mr. MacDougall said that 98% of the career people deserve civil service protection, but when they are appointed to a top policy making position they had better be able to perform on the basis of merit. He said also that the Board of Supervisors must be held responsible for the performance of these people. He said people who talk spoils system in this day and age are saying the public does not know how to choose a supervisor or a city councilman or a governor.

Mr. Mazzei asked if consideration should be given to increasing the representation for voters by expanding the Board to seven members, even though such expansion made little difference in the internal operation of the government.

Mr. MacDougall said he felt that the present supervisors had built up effective representation through the use of field offices and field deputies. He said the seven member board may be desirable, but it isn't going to make the supervisor any more available to the man in the street than he is today.

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Dr. Bollens asked what control or supervision should the agency head have over the department managers in applying the agency concept.

Mr. MacDougall said that in the state government the agency heads had gradually expanded their authority and control. They have increased their staffs to 20 and 30 employees, but this hasn't increased the state budget because the staff personnel have come from the departments.

With the conclusion of the questions, Mr. Mitchell thanked Mr. MacDougall for his excellent assistance to the committee's deliberations. He announced that the next meeting of the committee would be on Wednesday, November 12th, at 2 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.