

TECHNICAL SERVICES FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN THEIR
RELATIONS WITH THE STATES, PROVINCES, DEPARTMENTS OR MU-
NICIPALITIES.

By Dr. Carlos M. Morán

(A synthetic opinion expressed to a group of experts meeting at San Juan, Puerto Rico at the end of the Fifth Meeting of the Inter-American Congress of Municipalities regarding a plan under consideration of technical assistance in public administration to the Governments of America; at the kind invitation of Mr. Herbert Emmerich, Director of the Public Administration Clearing House).

"No one may practice law without being admitted to the bar. No one may practice medicine or dentistry without preliminary training and certification. Nor may one hold himself out as a certified public accountant until he has spent years in study and passed a rigid test as to his qualifications. Even the compounding of prescriptions is forbidden without due license. But in respect to banking, anyone may hold himself out as a banker, and without experience or training become a teller or bookkeeper or even an official, if he can get himself so appointed or elected. And any business man who qualifies as to stock ownership and can command the necessary votes may become a bank director and by that token a banker. Banking is therefore open to all, old and young.

It is in the interest of the public good that men are not permitted to practice in the professions mentioned without proper training and examination. And it would be in the interest of the public if men were not permitted to practice banking without first qualifying. That the care and safeguarding of the funds of the public is of as much importance as the safeguarding of health and property and property rights cannot be denied. While it is essential that the novice shall not be allowed to experiment with health and bodily well-being; and that the untrained man shall not handle matters involving law, it is equally essential that the untrained and inexperienced shall not be allowed to handle other people's money."

Thus does William H. Kniffin state in his book "The Practical Work of a Bank", 9th ed. The Bankers Publishing Co., Cambridge, Mass., 1948.

The same affirmation can very properly be applied to public administration.

The process is also the same.

The trend toward the application of certain principles, standards and experiences that have proved valuable in private affairs, to public affairs started a very short time ago.

The need to bring about certain results demanded with considerable force by the people in different aspects, arises with greater strength after the First World War and demands, in lieu of other means for the time being, the taking over of that which is known to be good in private business in order to achieve the purpose of producing practical results.

It is not that the principles of good administration did not exist many years ago;

it is that as in the process referred to by Kniffin which we have mentioned at the start of this paper, in the government of nations, the ignorance or indifference of the rulers and the carelessness of the people voluntarily came together to give rise to an administration -if we can call it that- without great complications nor preoccupations for the future.

This situation has brought about two effects at least, that are noteworthy in making things worse: the dominance of public affairs by the small group of the so-called politicians and the centralization of those affairs with the natural consequence of the withdrawal from that field of large groups of real values and the weakening of the fundamental cells of the government, such as the municipality is.

One of the lessons learned from history with regard to this process is that the countries in which objectives to be sought have been wisely established and the public administration, with the proper participation of the people, has been governed by practical principles and rules oriented toward those objectives, have stayed or have placed themselves at the head of the world while the other countries have remained in the category of under developed countries.

Throughout the years that the Pan-American Commission on Intermunicipal Cooperation has been struggling with the scarce means at its disposal for the improvement of the local governments and for the enhancement of certain aspects of the administrative and public service in the communities of America, naturally some observations have been made and certain experience has been gathered with regard to the causes that intervene in some of the existing problems as well to the slight differences between the different countries of our hemisphere which, although very similar among themselves, nevertheless have some personal aspects with certain special characteristics.

There is a fact that stands out as a generalized evil that is found throughout the hemisphere and specially in the lands which are occupied by the Latin-American countries that there exists an extraordinary governmental centralization in the capitals of the nations and in one or more towns of great importance, while the remainder of the towns of the country, whether included in one or another type of administrative or political decentralization are absolutely left to themselves or suffer a serious lack of attention which causes the impression upon visitors, even to those who are less aware of these things, that each country is solely and exclusively what its capital city represents in matters of politics and progress and thereafter, as a corollary some localities disseminated throughout the country wherein are found the agricultural, mineral or industrial activities that provide for its economic sustenance.

This situation leads to the existence in all municipalities of a real interest in obtaining greater autonomy in their government or greater attention from the higher levels of government in order to come forth from that abandonment in which they find themselves and to share in the human gifts they are entitled to from the progress and development achieved by the capital cities.

However, it has also been noted that even in the capital cities themselves there are many aspects that, according to the level of the progress of many other countries, are also somewhat backward or that have not received all the necessary attention from the Government.

Naturally, that concentration referred to has caused -following the proverb that "he who seeks too much gathers but little"- a loss of efforts of all kinds, an erroneous vision of the picture, erroneously guided activities, possible mistakes in the priority in carrying out projects, the lack of proper means to execute them and many other consequences which in turn lead to worse evils; the harmful enthusiasm caused by insignificant achievement which this whole artificial situation causes to appear gi-

gantic, and mortal carelessness from the belief that no possible solution exists.

There are different theories in different countries which one realizes as one comes into contact with persons of varied culture or with persons of different levels or ways of living, regarding what are the principal causes of this situation of fact that is so easily noted. Naturally, in each opinion, in each criterion, there is some truth and some fundamental reason to explain what occurs.

Notwithstanding the fact that the whole blame, in its greatest proportion, lies on the economic question, it is also true that it is necessary to place a great deal of that blame on the somewhat reactionary criteria of certain preponderant social strata or on the indifference of a large number of capable persons who lack the civic interest necessary to take action against this apparent stagnation in which a large part of the communities of a given country stand.

The type of politics reigning in our countries, according to the antecedents that have been mentioned, that is the very personal leadership or "caciquismo" as it is known, bring as a consequence an inclination which is almost general, to the tendency that expects everything from what this or that person who aspires to lead the national destinies may do. It is not very often observed, specially in Latin America, that among the political parties involved in an electoral contest there be platforms that involve projects or ideas with respect to how to orient the matters of a national character of a different nature toward pre-established goals. It is usual for the platforms of the parties to gather from the universal sphere a series of common topics regarding the economy, politics, the form of government or the international relations and so on, and no matter how these are worded, it is noted that in the last analysis all the platforms are more or less the same, the result therefore being that the only difference is found in the persons who apparently are to develop that platform, should they be elected. There is a recent example in our Continent in which an attempt has been made to remedy this evil and this is the case of our sister republic Uruguay, where a trial is being made of a system of a collective national executive precisely for the purpose of avoiding that exclusive dependence on the opinions and attitudes of a single person and to depend more on the projections of a party. Up to the present time we cannot say categorically that the trial has fully solved the problem but we can say that one level of government has been practically abolished: the provincial or state government; that the departamental municipalities have sufficient autonomy and are working with considerable independence for the progress of their respective territories and towns and that there is a closer relation between the communities and the national executive.

Naturally, in considering all these matters we must bear in mind how little industrialized the countries of Latin America are; the little or no attention that has been paid to civic instruction; the great percentage of illiteracy in many of said countries and at the same time, the fundamental racial differences and the lack of adjustment of large nuclei of population to certain standards of living.

These are factors that have served to maintain in the so called elite or privilege groups a certain disregard for the masses of the population displaced by their own ostracism or because of their lack of preparation or the enormous distance from the other higher branches of the national population.

The Pan-American Commission on Intermunicipal Cooperation since its organization in Chicago in November 1939, placed among its objectives (see its first By-laws, "Boletín -The Municipal Digest of the Americas", Year I, March-June 1940, Nos. 3, 4, and 6) several activities leading to endeavor that at least attention be again placed in the municipalities, that the administration be improved, that there be a central body capable of serving the purposes of a better decentralized government with a more ef-

fective action in bringing about the general welfare.

Logically it was first necessary to awaken the interest in each country and to establish examples in each of them, by creating the national associations of municipalities through which different factors that might develop a cooperation for many purposes might be put in motion, among which purposes is that of elevating the prestige of the municipal administration through a more effective action which will allow it properly to render the public services under its jurisdiction by reason of its local autonomy or its status of agency of territorial decentralization of the national or state government.

We have found in our experience considerable difficulty to reach the basic point of our campaign during these first years of our existence, that is, the establishment of national associations of municipalities to carry on the struggle within each country for municipal autonomy, for the enactment of legal provisions and the establishment of administrative methods and systems which will allow greater development of the local government to the benefit of the town under their jurisdiction, as we have just suggested.

This difficulty cannot be entirely attributed to indifference or carelessness on the part of the municipalities, however, inasmuch as a task of this kind, the task of a pioneer with the above mentioned situations, requires a direct and constant attention which we, in reality, have not been able to carry on for lack of funds. We have only been able to keep our contacts by mail when there is such great need for personal contact, specially in view of the changes that so often take place, and in spite of this, with our thought placed on all of this, we can categorically state that the success achieved has been very noteworthy, in view of the means we have been able to count upon.

If the national associations of municipalities, even those properly established, do not fully carry on the function for which they have been created, that is also due to the fact that those who set up those associations are none other than the very human beings, natives of the respective country, who in general terms follow the ruling tendencies of their countries the worst of which among these is that of an excessive administrative centralization, a political centralization and a centralization of progress, in the national capitals.

In the report which the Secretariat of the Pan-American Commission on Intermunicipal Cooperation has rendered to the Fifth Meeting of the Inter-American Congress of Municipalities that has just been held, it has been possible to see how from 1939 to date, and in spite of the intervals of almost total paralization which we have had in connection with our initial work and the Second World War, the step has been accelerated little by little and at the present time our Latin America has a large number of national associations of municipalities, even though all are not in full activity, that are really preoccupied with the basic problems of the improvement of the conditions of the citizens and of the local governments in our hemisphere.

These associations might serve as a guide to the municipal authorities and as intermediaries with the higher levels of government in order to bring about a more scientific and convenient decentralization and to improve the relations between the authorities and officials of the different levels of government. However, it must be admitted that the process is a slow one unless our Organization receives more effective assistance from all sources that should be interested in the good results that are to be expected from the experience in some countries.

Reference has been made to the possibility that perhaps the task of the Inter-American Municipal Organization would be more effective and quicker in its results if

it were possible to interest the national governments directly in obtaining technical assistance in public administration to bring about this progress and improvement in local governments and in conditions of every order in the municipalities.

There is no doubt whatever that another of the fundamental reasons why this state of abandonment or indifference of the communities of each country and that excessive and overwhelming centralization in the capital cities is noted is due, in a great measure, as we said at the start of this paper, to the fact that not even the national governments have sufficient technical and really trained personnel, with a practical spirit, on all the different problems that at present affect the local governments, to go to their aid or assistance or to establish more advantageous relations.

That the need for that service exists is evident and proof of this is also borne out by the different departments -unfortunately in most cases improperly guided, poorly organized and worse equipped- established at the Ministries or Departments of the Interior of several countries to aid the municipalities and the use that is already being made of the several services that are offered in public administration by public and private, international and national, institutions. To this much has been contributed by the activity of our Organization, by the meetings of its Congress, its publications and by the contacts it has brought about.

And therefore it may be that the idea of interesting the national governments in that kind of technical assistance in public administration is not unwisely founded and that that way of looking at the question might bring about a more effective and rapid result. Nevertheless we believe that the desire that exists in the different municipalities of America of having an autonomous government -because in his inner being every resident of each locality is truly a democrat at heart- will not be solved by this technical assistance to the national governments, if through it, the former or the latter are to believe that it is no longer necessary to give more autonomy to the local governments or to grant to the already given autonomy all the efficacy that it should have, because just as has been done in matters of health, agriculture, etc., it will suffice for the national government to have local units in the hand of technicians or experts or the technical assistance directed from the capital city so that said services be properly rendered and in this way imperceptibly fall into a full suppression of municipal life from a politico-administrative point of view, with the consequences of a totalitarian type that such a situation might bring with it. Unless it be that we reach the conclusion that as a step in evolution, the municipality should disappear as a governmental cell.

We always admit that everything is possible in life and that we cannot foresee what changes are to take place, nor that what is not good to-day is to be good to-morrow, but nevertheless, it seems to us that it would be somewhat risky for our democratic principles in any way to stimulate the already more than incipient tendency of a few, of fully suppressing municipal life as a means of exercising a more absolute control, even though it be affirmed as a palliative that this is done exclusively in order that the government be more efficient and the citizens obtain a greater direct benefit.

An endeavor should be made in taking up this new aspect, and naturally within the limits of what may be deemed convenient, that it not be interpreted in an equivocal manner and that provision be made only for what is really found to be necessary with respect to the manner in which the national government can technically assist the local governments, maintaining the municipal authority as well as the regional governments with all their vigor and strength, in order that said autonomy may offer the full practical benefit that is required by and necessary to the towns.

The radio, aviation and television on the one hand, and the new methods of public u

ty and propaganda based on psychological principles, on the other, are forcing progress to increase by the minute through the creation of new tempting necessities that are already being felt even by the illiterate and more humble classes.

In order to provide work and welfare for so many who require a better standard of living, it is necessary to look to the sources of production, the natural resources and even those that are fictitious, putting them to work in order to bring about industrialization which naturally carries with it a knowledge of the present internal consumption and its future possibilities, the internal and exterior trade, etc.

This process causes the upsurging of numerous centers of population which formerly were unimportant, urges the need of means of communication, which in turn partly aggravates the problem of an exodus from the country toward the city and at the same time that this requires a greater decentralization it requires a series of new public services or the improvement of those existing in said localities.

All this series of very complicated factors which at the present time affect almost all the countries, without losing sight of the possible dispersion of the human groups and the changes in the type of dwelling that a disintegration of the atom might advise, naturally brings with it:

1. A larger number of matters which must be attended to by the governing authorities;
2. A larger number of subjects involved in those matters.
3. A greater difficulty for the handling of all of them by normal human beings.
4. A larger number of places in each country requiring special attention.
5. Greater demands by the citizens.
6. The need of more rapid action and more effective results on the part of the governing authorities.

We are mentioning only some of the consequences which in summary imply: a greater demand for ability, knowledge, specialization, distribution of work, decentralization, and delegation of functions.

It is interesting to note that specially in Latin America, in spite of the fact that the principle of administrative decentralization in the State or province, and more especially in the municipality, is admitted in the constitutions, and with regard to the municipality at the same time that its autonomy is recognized, it is considered as an agency of the national government, the same constitutions or other legal provisions curtail that autonomy and the delegation of the central power becomes inoperative in administrative practice; the former, with restrictions of a legal type specially with regard to revenue and budgets and the latter due to the setting up of districts, sections or units in said territories, depending directly on some Ministry or Department of the national government to render certain services in the region or locality or by the creation of autonomous institutions with agencies in different parts of the country.

This seems to indicate that in view of the lack of proper means for maintaining the constitutional principles mentioned at the start, in all their vigor through a well organized and fiscalized decentralization of agencies, of functions and of services, legal instruments of an almost automatic activity are applied, thus improperly and detrimentally substituting the adequate organization of said decentralization.

The lack of available persons who are cognizant with the science of the administration to establish, develop and maintain in force practical principles and methods of local government and of administrative decentralization and of useful and active re-

lations among the levels of government might be the cause of that contradiction heretofore referred to which on many occasions causes the fortunately transitory violations of the postulates of a true democracy, as it is cherished deeply in the hearts of the peoples of our America.

In fact, the political and administrative life of nations is not in accord with either the provisions of the laws nor with what is observed from afar.

The governmental function in the majority of cases lacks a definite orientation in the administrative task necessary for each country. There is no unity of action nor an adequate delegation of authority, with the deplorable effect that the administrative activities are brought about by impulses of greater or lesser power, in an intermittent manner and to a limited extent, absolutely lacking in continuity and without any other purpose in mind than to serve the political interests of the strong man of the moment.

The rapidity in progress of which we have referred to heretofore, specially in physical progress, and the multiplicity of complications created by the incentives of all kinds that arise by reason thereof which fall as a flood upon unprepared towns and governments reduced to petty politics and very small spheres of action, have very seriously aggravated this situation that we are considering.

Even though we are referring to America and specially to Latin America, with honorable exceptions of course, almost everyone is suffering or has undergone the same difficulties. We should nevertheless admit that this suffering has been less in certain countries, due in a great measure to a great civic spirit and of association which so wisely was set up by Tocqueville against the tendency of other countries of entrusting everything to the State and expecting everything from it.

We uphold the belief that the solution of these ills that we are sensing day by day must be brought about by centrifugal and centripetal actions, that is from the government toward its citizens or its governmental divisions and in turn from the citizens toward the local, regional or central governments. Technical assistance to the governments and a cooperation among their different levels is convenient and necessary, but it is essential intensively to develop civic education in action, to awaken interest in the study of administrative disciplines and organize the teaching and spreading thereof on practical bases.

This process is now developing and the efforts of the United Nations, Unesco, the Government of the United States of America, of different foundations, institutions and universities of that country, of the Organization of American States and other entities, in the above mentioned direction are praise worthy even though this proceeds slowly, in an incoherent manner and lacking concerted action and not taking in all the aspects that they should comprise.

When countries that are receiving technical assistance from national, international, public or private, organizations or institutions are visited, and one talks to different people, they, in considerable numbers, in a confidential tone, make commentaries of this kind: 1) Thanks to the report or to the study of the technicians whom we called or who came from such a place, the situation is improving or such and such problem has been solved. 2) There are certain individuals investigating and working on the solution of this or that problem, but no one knows what the results will be because the experts that have come here either do not know the language or the country or our laws or our idiosyncrasy, or our economic possibilities. 3) The report or finding of this or that expert or of the committee of technicians on such a thing is magnificent, but it is too bad that it has cost so much, that it is written in a for-

sign language, that it does not follow our reality and that we have to wait for action by the legislature to amend a series of laws so that it can be adapted to our environment and be really useful. 4) They are aiding us in the study and solution of such and such a problem but the technicians that have been sent to us rather give the impression of tourists enjoying their vacation than of persons who can become interested in our affairs and on the merits of the matter under consideration.

There are naturally differences of opinion in everything and there are many subjective, temporary and circumstantial reasons that might influence such opinions; but the types of evaluations that we have cited as an example show what is not unknown to anyone present here: the importance and great value of technical assistance and the difficulties or defects that are still encountered in rendering the same in an organized and truly efficient manner.

By way of more illustration we will cite a few of these difficulties and defects:

a) Insufficient funds and the not always proper distribution thereof. In most cases the international organizations, the institutions interested in giving technical assistance and the public and private entities fit to do so, lack sufficient funds with which to carry on in an adequate manner a task of this kind which weights upon them or which is included in the great aspirations or plans under consideration. There are difficulties in obtaining fixed and certain sources for the regular provision of funds in the ever growing amount required and this naturally causes a somewhat anarchistic distribution thereof, without exact agreement with the needs and with a waste of energy produced by activities on the jump or amidst obstacles.

That is to say that there is a lack of security and of coordination in obtaining sufficient funds as well as in their distribution, which makes it almost impossible to follow an equitable method in the distribution of appropriations in connection with so many needs and the variety thereof as to subject matter and costs.

b) A lack of sufficient properly trained personnel. The organization of a permanent and efficient service of technical assistance, as we have said in a paper presented to the consideration of the meeting of the Inter-American Congress of Municipalities that has just closed its sessions, requires a somewhat uncommon type of personnel that exists in a very small proportion to the demand therefor.

A person properly prepared successfully to render the service of technical assistance, specially of the kind we are dealing with, that is, to the government on the subject of public administration, must have a series of exceptional conditions. In addition to the fundamental technical and practical knowledge of public administration in general and of the subject matter thereunder in a special way, he should have a frank and clearly international mentality and vision, a great power of rapid assimilation and adaptation to the medium, customs and persons of a most diverse kind; an attractive and affable personality which will inspire trust and confidence, a great understanding and lack of prejudice, an altruistic spirit, the quality of a teacher, a command of two languages at least, and an actual experience not due to occasional briefing no matter how good it may be regarding the place where such person is sent on his mission.

A person having these qualifications almost has to be created.

c) Excessive objectivity and a disdain toward traditions, customs, persons, etc. In rendering technical assistance services, sticking close to what is objective is apt to occur, a quality that even though quite plausible from a scientific viewpoint makes it necessary for us not to forget the postulate which is applicable here by analogy, to the effect that "there is really no sickness itself but sick people".

This excessive objectivity in cases in which the results of the technical assistance cannot be seen at once, very often produces the effect that it is not easily understood, leading to a possible and harmful abandonment of failing to do what has been recommended.

Likewise this carries with it a lack of preoccupation or disregard toward persons and local circumstances which brings about a very justified and harmful antagonism among genuine native values who are not very well known either due to excessive modesty or to their conformity with certain unjust circumstances and who are nevertheless asked to assist the technicians and at times do their work without being given any public recognition and without ever having been paid and without being paid when their services are used, a salary anywhere near that received by the technicians who make use of their services.

And with regard to local circumstances of different kinds which, the more deplorable they may be the more discretion and more respect they should deserve manifest contempt thereof and an outright reference thereto wounds susceptibilities with very bad results.

This suggests the convenience of discovering, considering, recruiting, preparing, mobilizing and using whatever is found to be good in each place, in connection with this new undertaking that is being considered.

d) Political or economic background contrary to the popular interest, the national or local interest, or to both. Either because the services of technical assistance are rendered without discrimination to the government that requests them, or because they are offered with a somewhat hidden purpose in some cases, the fact is that on many occasions they are self-defeating and expense and energy is wasted, because they are never used nor do they produce a beneficial effect when the people believe at times instigated by some of their leaders, that to make use of the same means the stimulation of certain local tendency that has made use of that service or offer as a means for propaganda, giving the sensation that it has been requested to serve fundamental problems when this is not so, or because through such services the intention is to cause the reigning idea which is contrary to the government, its men or its methods to disappear or because through such services an attempt is made to justify an operation of any kind that, right or wrong, is generally believed to be detrimental to the country.

e) Lack of unity, of uniformity, of coordination and of correlation. There are many organizations that offer technical services but there is not an outstanding organization which sets general patterns or principles. The services that are offered are of many kinds and when rendered, the technicians, even those that are used in each specialization, do not have the same background or preparation and the services they render without uniformity as to each kind, lack coordination due to the nonexistence of an office serving as a guiding center for such services. Likewise there is no correlation, because the services are rendered -save in a case like that of the "Report on Cuba" of the Truslow Committee, which takes in the fundamental principles from a specific viewpoint which in this instance was the economic viewpoint- to some extent, in the manner that merchandise is sold in commercial establishments. One buys cloth for a suit and the clerk knows that the buyer needs thread, linings, buttons, etc., to make his suit, but it might be that the store does not sell those articles or that the buyer does not ask for them, so that if the buyer is somewhat slow witted, he will either be without a suit or will have to make further purchases. The seller sells what he has. In this way many services are rendered which in almost all cases are known to be incomplete but that is what has been requested or what can be given for what has been paid, or due to the capacity, knowledge and experience of the technicians

that have been used and in most cases one has to be satisfied with the kind suggestion of the convenience of having other studies made or that technical assistance in other related aspects should be obtained.

Up to this point we have been referring to the services to governments and public entities related to the centrifugal action which we mentioned some time back, that is, from the middle to the outer edge.

Action taken with the citizens so that their improvement be revealed by the way the country is governed is still lacking in technical service and the services of this kind that are started have the same or similar defects as those that have been referred to.

Everything that we have said in a brief manner makes us have great hopes in view of the decision of the Economic and Social Council of the Organization of American States of engaging in direct relations with a non-political and specialized organization in public administration, with some experience in Latin-America such as is the "Public Administration Clearing House" of Chicago, Illinois, United States of America, to undertake a preliminary research on the needs of the governments for technical assistance in the subject of public administration, giving special emphasis to problems of administrative decentralization.

This hope is based on the possibility that in this way many of the defects that are noted, some of which we have referred to above, may be eliminated and a more effective work may be carried on, well oriented, more human, with a unity of direction, uniformity of personnel and of methods; coordination in the work and a specialization in aspects almost untouched up to the present by other services. Furthermore, the rendering of such services through the medium of the Organization of American States would of itself contribute to the elimination of many of the antagonisms and obstacles we have referred to.

And this condition is almost essential with regard to technical services related to aspects of public administration itself because it, better than any of the other specialized services that arise therefrom, represents, we might say, the nerve center of the political organization and its almost unseen fillets reach everywhere and are everywhere susceptible of gathering impressions and to cause the most varied and subtle sensations.

Technical services on health, agriculture, forestry, etc., may be established at times almost independently of one another and by the application of universally admitted scientific principles, but technical services on public administration require a much greater refinement for many reasons, among which we can cite the following:

- a) The still slight acceptance there is of the individuality of public administration as a subject of great usefulness and future.
- b) Its implications with the ruling politics, with all the factors of influence and with all the people;
- c) Its inclusion of all public services;
- d) Its decisive influence upon the progress and stagnation of the people;
- e) Its effect upon the political and economic ideas in formation, due to the palpable objectivity of its acts.

We do not know in detail the results of the preliminary work that is being carried on by Mr. John D. Blandford, Jr., assisted by Mr. Aranguren of the Pan American Union, but at the outset we wish to stop here to express our great appreciation to "The Public

Administration Clearing House" and to Mr. John Blandford, for the honor of his recent visit to our offices in Havana for the purpose of exchanging viewpoints with regard to the matters that were being planned, before starting on his trip throughout the whole of Central and South America. We are daring to believe that on his return Mr. Blandford will agree with us on many of the points we have brought up in this paper.

It is also a matter worthy of praise that, for the first time, practical thought is being given from the high place of those who have started this work, to the technical assistance to national governments in relation to the attention required by the municipalities and which they are worthy of since they are the fundamental basis of organized political life and of the democratic principle, but we insist, if a decentralization with municipal autonomy is to be encouraged and advised and not a decentralization still subject to further control by the central governments, that will involuntarily contribute to the absolute destruction of democracy in Latin America.

If a scientific and practical administrative decentralization is to be promoted in each country, as would not otherwise be done by an institution as serious as "The Public Administration Clearing House" and the Organization of American States are, and of such a great historical background, charity must begin at home.

The pioneer task undertaken by the Pan-American Commission on Intermunicipal Cooperation, the directive organ of the Inter-American Municipal Organization in the improvement of legislation, in the creation of national municipal associations, in encouraging the public spirit with regard to these matters, in making contacts among local authorities, those of higher levels and the experts and technicians in each country and among all those of Latin America through regional and inter American congresses that have been held, in awakening an interest in the study of public administration and many other similar accomplishments is well known. All of this and a great deal more that is not being described, almost without money, with the intrinsic strength of the values and principles being defended and with the enthusiasm of a few who are convinced of the usefulness and excellence of that work that has also so effectively tightened the personal relations between men of our countries and the relations between countries of our hemisphere. (Note for instance the case of Canada, always active in our Organization and now possibly becoming a member of the Organization of American States).

The Pan-American Commission on Intermunicipal Cooperation is considered by the Organization of American States as being a semi-official organization and it is closely connected with The Public Administration Clearing House of Chicago which practically gave it life and with which it has worked, shoulder to shoulder, in producing these small results that have nevertheless received the evident respect it is worthy of.

And therefore, is there any other inter American organization in our hemisphere specialized in municipal affairs of this kind that has merited this general reputation?

It seems to us that the responsibility and the honor of the action to be taken, in so far as it is related to municipal affairs, in that first decentralization that should be expected from the project of technical services in public administration rendered by the Organization of American States to the member States, should be vested in it.

It will not be difficult for the Organization of American States with the assistance of institutions such as The Public Administration Clearing House, the United Nations, the existing foundations and the Governments of America, to provide the Inter-American Municipal Organization with sufficient funds with which to put into action its goodwill in that direction, its relations with all the municipalities, its specialized library, its publications, its spirit and its knowledge, its specialization in that field,

and to complete and make effective the preaching and example of so many years, used in an isolated manner and with only sporadic advantages to date, the widespread benefits of which are already being felt.

A technical assistance to governments on administrative decentralization, permanent and well organized, with the flavor and essence of municipalism would bring about the most wonderful practical democratic effects and would greatly hasten progress in every country and thus, in all of our hemisphere.

Naturally our Inter-American Municipal Organization would wish to act in that way with the best possibilities referred to and would do so with the same advantage in its action that the Organization of American States has, that is, that it is an organization that inspires confidence, that it is not exclusively engaged in the service of technical assistance and that it can carry this work on with less complications and more efficiency, because it will not render this service as if a medicine were being given or an article being sold, dryly and objectively, but as a table is served for the family, without forgetting the scientific dietetical principles nor the rules of etiquette, nor the different shadings of tastes and needs: palatably and subjectively.

In conclusion: The need of having the national governments delegate the rendering of local services to the regional, State and municipal administrations becomes more evident as time goes by.

When this decentralization occurs many new problems of delegation of powers and duties, of supervision and intergovernmental relations arise in every country.

There is an increasing need for an Inter-American center not only for the exchange of information about modern methods in organizing these decentralized services and problems relative to the relationship between the national governments, the states or provinces and the municipalities but also for rendering every type of technical assistance in matters of public administration in an organized and permanent manner, and very specially to awaken the municipalities to that fact and to spread through all of them the benefits of human progress and the advantages of good government.

It would be preferable for this center to be non-governmental, that is, independent and impartial, and the record of its activities, its prestige, its influence in municipal sectors, with the instruments and relations within its reach and the strengthening of its means that could be obtained, shows that the Pan-American Commission on Intermunicipal Cooperation, an already existing organization, would be very recommendable for organizing and taking care of the activities of such a center.

The national governments are showing a growing interest in having at their command possibilities of technical assistance, and from that interest based on their requirements, are born the specialized divisions and sections that are created by the international organizations required to meet such demands.

It does not seem as if it would be difficult to obtain moral and material support from the national governments and even from international organizations and from private foundations and institutions, if such a center were not merely one more organization, but the well planned, well organized and practically useful development of an already existing and respected organization that does not conflict or compete with any other organization on the subject of public administration, specially from a municipal standpoint.

- - - - -