

**THE REORGANIZATION OF
STATE GOVERNMENT IN
NEBRASKA, BULLETIN NO.
11**

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The Reorganization of State Government in Nebraska, Bulletin No. 11 by Luella Gettys

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LUELLA GETTYS



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

In pursuance of the requirements of the law which provides that the Legislative Reference Bureau "shall publish information upon subjects of legislation and administration," it has been the custom of the bureau to secure for publication carefully prepared, scholarly monographs on subjects of public interest. Among these have been bulletins on the direct primary, guaranty of bank deposits, the Torrens land transfer act, the exercise of the veto power, reform in legislative procedure, and other topics.

As an addition to this series of bulletins, the bureau has been able to secure for publication the thesis on "Reorganization of State Government in Nebraska," submitted by Miss Luella Gettys in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts. This manuscript has been revised and brought to date. The subject is one of especial interest at this time. The Bulletin is published in the belief that Nebraska citizens desire the impartial information it contains.

EDNA D. BULLOCK, Director,
Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This study of Nebraska's administrative system was originally made during the fall of the year 1920 and the spring of the year 1921. It was presented to the faculty of the University of Nebraska in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts. Since that time it has been revised and brought to date for publication by the Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau.

"American state government, with but few modifications, is conducted at the present time on the basis of the organization and the fundamental principles adopted in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. . . . The remarkable developments during the last fifty years in political, economic, and social conditions have not altered the main characteristics of state government as devised a century ago. While a striking evolution has taken place in the federal government, and while city government has been undergoing radical reconstruction as a result of a continuous reform movement, state governments have been until quite recently conducted along lines established decades ago. . . . In order to adjust a form of government planned for the more primitive conditions of many years ago, so as to perform the multitudinous functions which have devolved upon state government, it has been found necessary to establish numerous boards, commissions, and commissioners. Owing to the fact that these boards and bureaus were created one at a time, as occasion arose, and were constituted as independent agencies with specially designated powers, state administration has lacked in the necessary unity and correlation to secure economical and efficient public service. . . . Owing to the conviction that state government is both costly and inefficient, there is now a widespread demand for reform. Thus the movement for reform, which has transformed city governments and which has brought noteworthy improvements in the federal administration, has entered the domain of state government."¹

¹Haines, C. G. The Movement for the Reorganization of State Administration. University of Texas Bulletin, August 25, 1918. pp. 5 ff.

The movement for administrative reform in Nebraska is but a part of the tendency prevalent throughout the United States. It is the purpose of this study to trace the development of the reorganization movement in general and to tell to what extent the underlying principles and purposes have been adopted by Nebraska.

JUNE, 1922.

LUELLA GETTYS.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL SURVEY OF STATE ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION

NECESSITY OF REORGANIZATION

The social, economic, and industrial development in the various states during the past seventy years has made the fact quite apparent that the frame-work of government, dependent upon the state constitutions and existing laws, was inadequate to meet the growing complexities of state administration. When a new activity arose in the state government, a new board had to be created. Consequently, a vast number of unrelated boards and commissions, having varying degrees of responsibility and management, were created to enforce the regulations pertaining, for example, to public health and sanitation, public utilities, banks and insurance, industrial and mercantile affairs, charities and correction, education, public property and natural resources, and assessment and taxation. These agencies were established from time to time, each with its own sphere of duty, independent of those already existing. No uniform method of choosing the members of these boards and commissions was followed. In some instances their appointment was conferred upon the governor alone, or subject to confirmation by the legislature. In other instances, boards and commissions were chosen by popular vote. Removals were made by the governor alone, subject to the consent of one or both houses of the legislature, by impeachment, by legislative resolution and by recall. With the multiplication of independent agencies, there resulted a clumsy and disintegrated administrative organization, with an absence of definite responsibility causing inefficiency in the administration of state affairs and waste of public funds. The governor, constitutionally vested with the supreme executive power of the state, was, by being limited in his power of appointment and removal, deprived of effective control over