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A STUDY OF DISSENSION AND CONFLICT OVER COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON, AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THAT DISSENSION AND CONFLICT ON GOVERNMENTAL DECISION-MAKING IN POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................. 1

The Nature of the Problem
Method and Approach to Study
The Setting: Tacoma, Washington
Tacoma Politics and Government
Organization of the Study

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY POLITICAL REFORM IN THE CITY OF TACOMA ........................................... 26

Tacoma and Mayor-Council Government
Tacoma's Second Reform: The Introduction of Commission
Conclusions

III. SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL REFORM IN TACOMA: EVENTS LEADING UP TO COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT ............. 59

Counter-Reform and the Recall of Angelo Fawcett
The First Campaign for Council-Manager Government
Tacoma's Economy and the Impact of the Military: 1942-1952
The Issues of Vice and Corruption
The Election of James Kerr as Safety Commissioner

IV. THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT IN TACOMA: THE FREEHOLDERS, THE CHARTER ELECTION THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST MAYOR ........................................... 104

The Freeholders' Commission of 1952
The Political Campaign For and Against the Charter
The New City Council, the New Mayor and the New City Manager

V. THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL FACTIONALISM IN TACOMA LEADING TO AN ANTI-MANAGER LEADERSHIP CLIQUE ........................................... 155

Frank Backstrom—Tacoma's First City Manager
Counter-Reform and the Strong-Mayor Charter
The Anti-Reform Freeholders and the Strong-Mayor Charter
The Election Aftermath and the Resignation of Backstrom
Summary and Conclusions
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

VI. THE CHANGING NATURE OF TACOMA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM
PRAGMATISM AND THE ROWLANDS' APPROACH

David Rowlands--Tacoma's Second City Manager
The Changing Nature of the Tacoma City Council 1956-1958
The Strategy of the Anti-Manager Leadership Clique and
The Election of 1958
Summary and Conclusions

VII. THE SUCCESS OF COUNTER-REFORM: NEW POLICIES, CHANGES IN
THE CHARTER AND THE RESPONSE OF THE CITY MANAGER

New Politics in Tacoma: The City Council of 1958
The Charter Amendments of 1958
Summary and Conclusion

VIII. THE FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL ALLIANCE
THE ELECTED MAYOR AND THE APPOINTED CITY MANAGER

The Changing Nature of the City Council and the Elections
of 1960
The Council in Conflict and Turmoil (1960-62)
The Reform Slate for the City Council (1962)
Summary and Conclusions

IX. RESURGENCE OF REFORM INTERESTS, THE SOCIAL ISSUE AND
POLITICAL REACTION: TACOMA GOVERNMENT 1962-1967

The Tacoma City Council, 1962-67
The Tacoma Municipal Election Campaign of 1967
Summary and Conclusions

X. THE RASMUSSEN ERA: THE COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT AND
THE POLITICS OF REACTION

David Rowlands and the City Council of 1967
The 1968 Campaign Over the Question of Retaining Council-
Manager Government in Tacoma
The Council Elections of 1969

XI. CONCLUSIONS

The Basis for Group Opposition
Efforts to Influence the Decision Process
The Exclusion of Important Groups--Summary Findings
The Formation and Strategy of an Anti-Manager Faction
Summary and Findings to the Second Query
The Use of Issues with High Emotional Content During Period
Of Major Political Conflict
The Relationship of the Manager, Council and Mayor
Some Concluding Comments
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter XII. | AN EPILOGUE: COMMENTS ON CURRENT THEORY AND FUTURE ASSUMPTIONS | 432 |
| APPENDIX | | 446 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | 453 |
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Difference Between Winning and Losing Candidates for Mayor 1890-1910</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A Comparison of Populist, Democratic and Republican Votes in the Council Elections of 1894</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comparison of Voter Turnout in the Mayoralty Election Of 1894 and 1896</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vote for the Commission Charter</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Results of Councilmanic Elections Held Between 1892-1910</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A Comparison of Elections 1894-1910</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Results of the Recall Election April 19, 1911</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Average Yearly Monies Expended by Military Establishments 1940-1950 (Millions of Dollars)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Charter Election Results by Legislative Districts November 4, 1952</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Background Data on the Tacoma City Council 1953</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. A Comparison of the 1955 and 1956 Votes in Favor of the Council-Manager Charter</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Swing Vote in Favor of Council-Management Government</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The Charter Amendment Election of 1958</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Background Data on the Tacoma City Council--1962</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Election Results of the 1967 Mayoral Campaign by State Legislative District</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Council Types on the Tacoma City Council: 1953-70</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of the Problem

This study will focus on the following two areas: First, there will be an analysis of the basic causes of dissension and conflict over the question of council-manager government for the city of Tacoma, Washington. The period covered will be the years 1952 to 1969. Second, there will be an evaluation of the impact of the conflict on governmental decision-making by the city councilmen and city managers who held positions in the government during the period.

There is ample evidence to indicate the extent of the intensity of conflict over Tacoma's form of government. Since 1952, when the city's voters narrowly approved a change from the commission form, there have been four elections on the issue of retaining the council-manager charter. Although these campaigns failed to change the basic system of governance, other efforts to change the charter in a modified sense, succeeded. For example, in 1958, Tacoma voters approved three amendments to the charter which had a significant impact on the electoral process and resulted in a redistribution of authority among certain city offices.

These repeated attempts to change the system signify discontent in the community. The essential purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the root causes and the results of these feelings. While the political situation in Tacoma is unique in this regard, it undoubtedly is similar in many ways to that of other large American cities. It is useful, therefore,
to look at other studies that relate to the study at hand.

A number of studies of political conflict have centered on communities that have embraced council-manager government. For example, Kammerer, Farris, DeGrove and Clubok reviewed the nature of conflict in eight Florida cities with manager plans. They found the following:

... conflict over the destiny of a city—what we have called a regime conflict—is basic to all other serious divisions in a community. It reveals the principal group alignments because these groups develop around various alternatives open to the community as paths to future growth.¹

The authors seem to be saying that a basic clash of values in a conflict-ridden city comes about when major political interests in that city perceive community goals differently. In the case of a reform movement aimed at bringing council-manager government to a community, groups within a community might view that new system as representing some sort of basic change in a city's destiny. Thus, certain political interest groups in a community may oppose council-manager government on that basis. Opposition emerges despite the fact that the manager plan is based essentially on the positive values of economy and efficiency. Its symbols, in this regard, are the business corporation and the manager. These values are difficult to attack or challenge directly. Don K. Price, who has studied the manager system in some depth, suggests that reformers who have tried to bring a council-manager charter to a city have, on many occasions, used other values to sell the plan to the public. Price notes:

... the local campaigns for the adoption of the city manager plan usually put their greatest emphasis on the accomplishment of some specific objective—such as the enforcement of moral regulations... --that was quite distinct from the proposal to change the structure of the government.²


Price indicates that many reform campaigns center on correcting some fundamental problem in the city. Thus, in several cases, the arguments of the reformers take on the form of advocating a clean-up of the city or the enforcement of police policies. The political targets become those politicians in office and the system of governance they represent. With the coming of the new system, the reformer argue that new politicians will assume positions of leadership [i.e., the most capable and public spirited citizens representing the city at-large] and new policies will emerge from the city's legislative body. In this regard, Price writes:

As the arguments and discussion of the average campaign clearly indicated, the voters wanted to take one group of leaders out of power and put another group in, and were more interested in doing so than in the details of the charter for which they were voting.¹

Price argues that this strategy clouds the positive aspects of the plan and ties the structure of government itself to other political issues. The history of reform campaigns has shown, according to Price, that the advocates of council-manager government have made extravagant claims that the system would mean cheaper government before discovering "whether or not a business-like investigation would show a need for an increase in capital investment and maintenance expenditures."² Other reform campaigns have offered a manager charter as a means of abolishing machine or boss rule in a city without emphasizing the basic positive virtues of the plan. In the end, voters cast ballots for the plan without understanding the basic council-manager concept.

Although the symbols of the business corporation and sound management are difficult values to attack directly, they can, and have, led to instances

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 244.
of conflict in council-manager cities. Inherent in the philosophy of the manager plan is the basic concept of non-partisanship. The idea is that politics can only interfere with the efficiency and economy which comes out of a government patterned after a business corporation. The city manager must be protected from political interference and the most appropriate way of accomplishing this is for business and professional men to assume leadership positions on the council. The problem is that a businessman of importance can not be induced to take part in politics; but he might be drafted for a position on a municipal council if he is assured that the city is to be truly managed like a business corporation. Non-partisan elections were a means of assuring this goal. Thus, as Price notes, the "antithesis of politics was business." However, supporting "business" involvement in some industrial communities means inviting the opposition of labor. In some communities the values of council-manager government have, accordingly, been perceived as being opposed to the interests of organized labor.

Any reform effort aimed at bringing council-manager government to a community means that basic changes have to take place in the organization and structure of government, the political process and the role of interest groups and their relationship with elected or appointed officials. Basic organizational change, in turn, breeds a degree of insecurity, the possibility of social or economic loss, threats to stability and some inconvenience and therefore is likely to be resisted by the people most affected by it.

This resistance is generally present even when there is not a basic clash in

\(^2\text{Ibid., p. 241.}\)
values between groups advocating and opposing the change. Certainly, it is intensified when there is a serious political clash. Price suggests that in the case of a new council-manager system, resistance is further reinforced by the actions of the reformers once they achieve a position of power. Too many times the anti-reform group, in many cases labor interests, are left out of the decision making process. Price writes:

Time after time ... research on the history of the city manager plan showed the the so-called 'businessmen's group' got a new city manager who introduced new social services, while representatives of the 'across the tracks' section ridiculed social programs and opposed the idea of expert administration.¹

This resistance, according to Price, leads to eventual dissension and conflict. The dissension is manifested in direct attacks on the symbol of the city manager. These attacks are described as follows:

Recognizing that the title 'manager' was a plus symbol, the leaders of the opposition to the city manager plan have always had to call the manager something else—in the old days, 'czar;' in more recent years, 'dictator,'²

Research questions dealing with the political environment.—An essential purpose of this study will be to analyze the position of important interest groups in Tacoma concerning the council-manager system. The role of business and professional groups, church groups, the political parties, the news media, labor organizations and public city employees will be reviewed. The study will also focus on the significant events leading up to the reform movement of 1952 and will include a discussion of why that reform movement succeeded after a hard fought campaign. The key issues raised during the 1952 campaign will be identified as well as the key issues raised in the later campaigns to do away with council-manager government.

A number of basic questions concerning the possible causes of community

¹Ibid., p. 243.
²Ibid., p. 244.
conflict will be explored. Some of the more important questions will be as follows: (1) Is political conflict over council-manager government more likely to occur when major socio-political groups in a community are excluded from the important political decisions which: one, bring about the new form of government; and, two, originate the initial policies of that government? (2) Will the excluded groups then coalesce, become a faction in the community and present a long-term united front as an anti-council-manager interest group? (3) What forms of political pressure will anti-council-manager interests attempt to use to change the manager system so that it might become more responsive to their particular interests in a community? (4) Will pro and anti-reform interests resort to using highly emotional community goals not necessarily related to the form of government during periods when political control of a city is uncertain?

Other questions in this regard will be developed and explored during the course of the study. Certainly, a major area of concern, as has been stated, will be the relationship of community conflict to the behavior of the council and the city manager. The city of Tacoma has had four city managers during the course of its twenty years under the council-manager charter. Two managers were forced to resign when a majority of the council withdrew its support. One manager was fired during the middle of a council session. On a number of occasions, the city manager was one vote away from being dismissed. During several campaigns to do away with the manager plan, the city manager and his administration became the crucial bone of contention.

There has been a number of studies of the relationship of the manager, the council and conflict in a community. Jeptha J. Carrell has studied the behavior of managers and councilmen in situations where there is a council split—that is, where certain members of the council represent one faction in a community while other members represent another faction. In these
situations, one faction has assumed political control of the council and has selected their man as city manager. In this setting, opposition quickly emerges on the council against the manager. Carrell quotes one councilman as follows:

We don't have any strong feelings against the manager personally. We think he is a capable man. The thing we're irked about is that the majority councilmen rammed through his appointment, and didn't give us a chance to participate.

Sometimes when we give the manager a hard time we do it because he is 'their boy' and it's one way we can get in a kick at them.  

When factional conflict in a community is represented by factions on a council, it becomes very difficult for the manager to remain above the conflict. In such circumstances, Carrell notes that "no matter on which side of an issue the manager's statements may fall--the manager will in some measure be castigated."  

Charles Adrian and Oliver Williams discovered, after studying manager cities in Michigan, that intense factional conflict in a community leads to councilmen playing the role of arbitrator among varying competing interests. Indeed, in such a community government consumes most of its energies managing the conflict among competing interests. Those interests include homeowners and businessmen with stakes in a particular neighborhood who are especially threatened by undesired changes, persons low on a socio-economic scale--the psychological minorities, and ethnic blocs reaching for a higher rung on the political ladder. The city manager must also play a special role to survive in this kind of environment. Oftentimes,


2 Ibid.


4 Ibid.
he is accused of seeking to "control" the mayor or council. Carrell describes this conflict situation as a question of power prerogatives between the council and manager. He notes:

Among councilmen who express dissatisfaction with their role vis-a-vis the manager there is a vague sense of malaise about their powers. Hardly aware of it themselves, they do not articulate their concern. There is a feeling that 'councilmen should have a little more power.'

In some cases, a group of disaffected councilmen representing an opposing faction will gain control of the council. Adrian studied such a situation and found that the manager survived by doing the following:

... the manager chose to wait out the opposition, almost succeeded in keeping from being quoted in the newspapers concerning his own views on the conflict and eventually weaned the mayor from the opposition ... thus making his supporters the council majority.

Bollens and Ries argue that a successful manager must play an active political role to survive in a conflict-ridden and highly competitive community where the council arbitrates among interests. They say that the manager must spend most of his efforts in "alliance building and in bargaining among conflicting interests." In this situation, "expertise and professionalism would count for little" while logrolling and deals would replace efficiency and expertise as basic values in governmental decision-making. The manager, state Bollens and Ries, must be an "out-and-out political leader... appealing over the heads of other governmental officials on occasions to gain political support."}

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1 Carrell, p. 204.

2 Ibid.


5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.
Another area of study has been relationship of the political structure of the council and the electoral process and the position of the city manager. One critical aspect of this question has been the role of the mayor and how the mayor is politically selected. Carrell found that in the conflicts which deal with the power prerogative of the council, discussions with dissatisfied councilmen in manager cities invariably led to the issue of the mayor's power relationship with the manager. He notes:

... consciously felt [by the dissatisfied councilman] is a need to endow the mayor with more substantive powers. Exactly what additional discretion he should have is not clear. Presiding at council meetings and serving as the city's ceremonial officer are regarded as nominal and insufficient assignments.¹

Kammerer, Farris, DeGrove and Clubok made a special study of manager cities where the mayor was separately elected by the voters. They noted that highly competitive or conflict-ridden cities tended to have an elected mayor and also discovered the following: "Separately elected mayors are a political hazard to city managers... the separately elected mayor can and frequently does shorten the manager's tenure."²

Richard Childs, the originator of council-manager government, argues that a separately elected mayor creates special problems for a council-manager system and invariably, affects the role of the city council and the function of the city manager. He contends that on election day the media will focus its attention on the mayoralty race; thus, the municipal election becomes, in the public's eye, a race for the mayorship and not a council election. After the election, Childs says, the council members drop into relative obscurity "just as they did under the old mayor-council plan."³

¹Carrell, p. 204.
²Kammerer, et al., p. 197.
The results of this could very well weaken the system and create difficulties for the manager, he argues. For example, Childs believes that council membership would lose its attractiveness to "men of high calibre."\(^1\) And, under the manager plan, it is undesirable and "complicating" to put candidates into two separate contests. Childs also suggests that separate elections may result in some candidates who would have made superior council members losing out because of aspirations of becoming elected mayor.\(^2\) And finally, Childs maintains that the selection of the mayor by the council assures that he will have followers—"a fact which is the definition of leadership."\(^3\)

Charles Adrian sharply disagrees with Childs' conclusions. After completing his study of council-manager cities with Oliver Williams, he made the following comment:

> It is impossible to conclude whether the manner by which the mayor was selected affected his role as a policy leader.
> An individual of high prestige both among the public and the council was regularly elected mayor. . . . Because of his high status . . . he appears to have been deferred to by other councilmen and his views were respected.\(^4\)

Thus, there are arguments both pro and con concerning the impact of a separately elected mayor on a council-manager system. Another area of dispute has centered on the process used to elect members to a city council. The council-manager concept originally called for a proportional representation system so that representatives of all groups would sit on the council. But proportional representation was confusing and complex and advocates of the manager plan soon called for general, city-wide, at-large elections for the city council.\(^5\) Recently, Edward Banfield and James Wilson have

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 54.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Adrian, p. 260.
\(^5\)Price, p. 241.
suggested that the old ward system might be appropriate in some council-manager cities. They argue:

Among the modifications that might make the council-manager plan more acceptable and more workable in cities having a politically significant lower class are the following: partisan rather than non-partisan elections, election of some councilmen on a ward rather than at-large basis. 

Banfield and Wilson seem to be suggesting a modified system with some councilmen elected at-large while others are either elected or nominated by ward. The traditional view, of course, is strongly opposed to any changes which might lead to ward elections. Price presents the traditional view and states the basic argument for it in the following:

A strong mayor may have enough legal authority and political independence to preserve a degree of administrative integration and order even if his council runs off in different directions after different policies; a city manager, being responsible to the council, can do nothing of the sort. 

The story of ward elections under the council-manager plan show clearly how easy it is for a minority group--if sure a seat or two--to disrupt municipal administrations, weaken reforms or the policies that the majority support.

These studies suggest that there is a direct link between the extent of conflict in a city and the role played by the council and city manager. The studies also indicate that when there is factional conflict, pressures build to modify or change the structure of government in some way. Many of these efforts are aimed at weakening the authority of the manager or increasing the power of the mayor or both.

There is evidence to suggest that Tacoma has indeed experienced such pressures. For example, as early as 1952 a majority of the freeholders  

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2Price, p. 248.
who drafted the council-manager charter decided to separate the utilities departments of light, water and the city belt line railway from the authority of the city manager. This study will examine the reasons for this decision and the impact of it on the administrative behavior of the city manager. Six years later, Tacoma voters authorized three amendments to the charter which dramatically changed the electoral and decision-making process of the city. The first amendment authorized the direct election of the mayor. The amendment further separated the office of mayor from the council by providing for a two-year rather than a four-year term. The second amendment established a new method of electing councilmen. Under the amendment, councilmen were required to run by position. Thus, an opponent was allowed to sign-up against one particular incumbent candidate. The old system called for elections on an at-large plurality basis—the top vote-getters were automatically elected to the council. The third amendment called for a separately elected Civil Service Board. The new board was given authority to review personnel practices, develop general personnel policy and make recommendations for changes in civil service rules to the council. This study will analyze the reasons for these changes and the impact of them on the role of the city manager as an administrator. Of particular interest will be the relationship of the elected mayor and the appointed city manager.

Research questions dealing with the manager and council. The essential question in this area will deal with the extent of conflict between the two city officers. The study will examine the nature of the conflict that did evolve and it will focus on the following general questions: (1) Will an elected mayor, who opposes the appointed manager, and the city manager, who is supported by a majority of the council, battle for power in administrative as well as policy-making areas? (2) Will a relatively large number of issues coming before the council be regarded by councilmen, the manager and the press as involving important, non-routine decisions when the mayor and manager are in political
conflict? (3) What tactics will a mayor use to deal with a city manager he opposes? (4) In turn, how will the city manager deal with the mayor and his allies on the council?

A number of other issues will be explored during the course of the study. For example, there will be an analysis of the administrative behavior of the two city managers who held office during the first sixteen years of council-manager government in Tacoma. Each played a different role during his tenure and each viewed his position and authority differently. The changing political nature of the City Council will be examined as will the two city managers.

Method and Approach to the Study

This study is essentially a review and an analysis of the nature of political conflict which has occurred during the first sixteen years of council-manager government in Tacoma. However, the political events which preceded the passage of the 1952 charter are important to any understanding of the conflict which emerged later. Indeed, the new manager plan meant that Tacoma's governmental system would be fundamentally changed. Since significant conflict can come about as the result of resistance to change, then an essential question must be: What was changed? Thus, the initial task of the study was to research the following areas: (1) The nature of Tacoma's municipal politics before 1952. This included a review of the mayor-council years from 1890-1910 and highlights of the commission government years between 1910 and 1950. (2) A review of the important political events which led to the successful reform movement of 1952. These events included the successful reform movement of 1910 which brought commission government to the city, attempted reforms which failed to bring council-manager government to Tacoma between 1920 and 1950, and the significant political events immediately preceding the passage of the 1952 charter.

1 Please see appendix.
(3) The identification of important political interest groups and their position on the form of government and related issues. Also, important political leaders were identified and their role in the decisions leading up to the 1952 reform was examined. The following groups were researched: organized labor, the business community, church groups, the city newspapers, reform groups, political leaders in local government, party leaders and crime interests.

The initial step in finding the information pertinent to the general areas listed above was to review two written histories of the early development of the city of Tacoma. Those histories were historian Herbert Hunt's, Tacoma, Its Early History and Its Builders: A Half Century of Activity, (Volumes I, II, III Chicago: S. J. Clark Pub., 1910) and journalist Paul Harvey's Tacoma Headlines: An Account of News and Newspapers from 1873-1962, (Tacoma: The News Tribune Publishing Co., 1962.) After reviewing these two histories and reading through the newspaper clippings files of the Tacoma Public Library, a chronological list of important political events was prepared. The list included charter elections, attempted reforms which failed and periods of intense conflict such as recalls, impeachments and dismissals of politically important public servants. After completion of the list, further research was begun by reviewing the news stories of the listed events found in the Tacoma Daily News, Tacoma Ledger, Tacoma News Tribune, and the Tacoma Times. The following information was found from this research:

1. The editorial position of the city's major newspapers.
2. The major issues in conflict during the period studied.
3. The position of major interest groups and individuals.
4. The outcome of contests of power between competing groups and the general reason for that outcome.
The second stage of the research involved a review and an analysis of the first sixteen years of council-manager government. Once again, a chronological list of important events was prepared. Most of this information was gathered from the clippings files of the Tacoma Library. From this list, further research was conducted by reading through copies of the *Tacoma News Tribune* [the only major daily newspaper still in operation], the weekly *Tacoma Star*, the weekly *Tacoma Labor Advocate*, the official minutes of the Tacoma City Council, the official minutes and related documents of the Tacoma Freeholders' Commission of 1953, official notices prepared by the city manager for the City Council, and campaign and election material prepared for the city elections during the period. The research also included an analysis of the election abstracts prepared by the Pierce County auditor and information concerning Tacoma and Pierce County found in the 1960 census.

During the course of the research several private memoranda and letters were found.

This research stage was followed by interviewing participants in the decision-making process. There were two types of interviews used. The first type was intensive, in-depth interviewing of key figures concerning their attitudes about issues, councilmen, city managers and the form of government. The second type of interviewing was more in the form of general discussions and conversation. The second type was used to double check points of fact gathered during the more intensive stage. The author was aided in some of the secondary interviewing by senior level political science students at the University of Puget Sound.

Some of the more noteworthy people interviewed were as follows: Harold Tollefson, former mayor, councilman and freeholder; Mrs. Clara Goering, former councilwoman and freeholder; Paul Perdue, former councilman; E. K. Murray, former freeholder in 1927, 1953, 1955 and member of the
Utilities Board from 1958-62; David Rowlands, city manager from 1965-69; Omar Bratrud, former councilman; Hal Murtland, former freeholder and councilman; Endsley Llewelyn, campaign manager; James Porter, labor official and former councilman; Mrs. Ellen Price, former freeholder and councilwoman; Patrick M. Steele, freeholder in 1952 and 1955, former county prosecutor and Tacoma councilman; John Anderson, former mayor and councilman; Murray Morgan, newspaper reporter, commentator and historian; Hugh J. Tudor, former freeholder; Gordon Johnston, present mayor; Dennis Flannigan, council candidate and political activist; Lynn Hodges, former director of the Human Relations Commission and Harold Moss, city councilman. There were also other interviews. The list of interviewees includes supporters and opponents of the form of government, the two city managers, and activists in both the reform or pro-manager faction and the anti-reform or anti-manager faction.¹

The second stage of the research, combined with the background gathered during the first stage, provided the information used to explore and analyze the major questions of this study.

The Setting: Tacoma, Washington

Tacoma is a medium size city of slightly more than 150,000 people, located on Puget Sound. It is blessed with one of the finest deep water harbors in the Western United States and is surrounded with natural resources, particularly forests prime for lumbering. In its early history, the city was

¹The purpose of the interviewing was to gain insight into the thinking of the important political figures during the time studied. Openness and candor are vital ingredients to the success of such interviewing. In most cases the author found that the political personalities were more than willing to discuss their thinking concerning the issues and decisions of the period. However, there were instances where the author did not pursue an in-depth interview. In these cases, it was felt that the person involved would not be open or frank or, after initial probing, it was found that the individual was simply not inclined to talk about the issues.
referred to as the lumber capital of the world. A recent article on the
city's early years noted the following:

What cotton has meant to New Orleans, lumber soon meant to
Tacoma, and in the final twelve years of the century it lured some
of the most enterprising of Eastern capitalists out to Commencement
Bay, where their huge timberland purchases grew into a pair of lumber
giants. One of these was the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company . . . .

The second multi-million dollar concern was the Weyerhaeuser Company
which established its Tacoma headquarters in 1889, when a group headed
by Frederick Weyerhaeuser, a timber magnate from the midwest, purchased
900,000 acres of Douglas fir from the Northern Pacific Railroad. By
1900 it had superseded St. Paul and Tacoma as the top producer in the
world.1

The lumber industry was soon supplemented by coal mining which developed
in nearby Wilkerson. Large bunkers were built at dockside to hold the coal
for shipment around the country. During this period, the population of
the city grew tremendously. From 1885 to 1890 it increased from 7,000 to
36,000. Up to 1893, the city was the largest and fastest growing in the
state. But the national recession of the mid-1890's hit the community
hard and only seven of the twenty-eight banks in town survived. In the
meantime, Tacoma's neighbor to the north, Seattle, survived the financial
collapse and, aided by the Alaska gold rush, surged into the lead in
population. Although Tacoma's population more than doubled from 1900 to
1910 with the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the city was never
again to catch Seattle. As one author has noted: "In many respects,
Tacoma has been to Seattle what Boston is to New York."2

Between 1920 and 1940, Tacoma's population stabilized. However,
with the advent of the Second World War, the city experienced another major
economic boom. Fort Lewis and McChord Air Field, located just south of the


2Ibid., p. 25.
city boundaries, became major military debarkation centers for the Pacific Theater of the war. From the end of the war until 1950, the city's population increased by 31 per cent to over 140,000.

The nature of the city's economic growth has had a major impact on the type of people who live in the community. Tacoma, much like Boston, is a socially stratified city. A familiar boast by many of Tacoma's elite has been: "We have more millionaires than Seattle and Portland combined."\(^1\)

Indeed, some commentators have described the city as a town without a middle class. The early Eastern financiers, who moved in to develop the local economy, formed an aristocracy unlike other surrounding communities. One author notes:

Seattle was built by merchants who had to scramble for trade, Tacoma by typical mid-19th century capitalists who thought that the mere presence of land with good resources would naturally bring in the business.\(^2\)

The other economic class was made up of the loggers, miners and railroad employees who immigrated to the community with the rapid economic development. These groups, for the most part from Scandinavian, German and Italian ethnic backgrounds, soon clustered in the neighborhoods of South Tacoma. The upper-class groups, mainly Anglo-Saxon in background, settled in North Tacoma and in the Lakewood area just south and west of the city boundaries. During the 1940's and 1950's military families also moved into the community. By the 1960's a predominantly black area sprouted in the central area of the city. With the expansion of educational facilities, a larger professional, middle-class has begun to emerge.

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\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Ibid.
Today the city has been described as a collection of "fine residential neighborhoods which seem to enjoy a timeless, unhurried and hazy summer afternoon."\(^1\) However, the tremendous potential of the city's port facilities combined with the development of oil reserves in Alaska and increased trade with Asian countries portends possible expansion once again. Recently the western regional director of the U. S. Maritime Administration noted: "Tacoma is at the present time one of the best deep-draft ports in the country, and it appears that in the future this city is going to be pretty nearly unrivaled."\(^2\)

### Tacoma Politics and Government

The Tacoma-Pierce County area has become a stronghold for the state's Democratic party organization. The large number of blue collar workers and the political influence of local unions has consistently given the Democrats the edge in partisan state and national elections, particularly since the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. Indeed, in the presidential elections of 1952 and 1956, Tacoma-Pierce County was the only area in the state to deny Dwight Eisenhower a majority of the vote despite the fact that Ike's brother Edgar lived in the county and the former Army General had once served at Fort Lewis. The strength of the Democratic party has been particularly evident at the state level. During the past five national election years, the voters of the area have given the Democrats forty-six victories in elections for state senator and representative. The Republicans, on the other hand, have managed to win only seventeen elections during the same period.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 19.

Local municipal elections have been nonpartisan since 1910. Previous to that year, the Republicans controlled the local government. However, nonpartisanship did not mean that the political parties would be kept out of municipal politics. Indeed, several prominent Democrats and Republicans have been elected to municipal offices during the nonpartisan years.

The structure and form of government has been changed three times during Tacoma's history. Interestingly, each major change came after a period of rapid economic growth in the community. In all, there have been six major charter elections in the past eighty years. Four charter proposals succeeded with three resulting in completely new charters for the city and the other resulting in minor revisions.

Tacoma's city government provides a considerable number of services to its citizens. In addition to the traditional functions of fire, police and public works, the city also provides light and water services, garbage collection, and bus transportation. The light and power utilities includes vast capital investments in the form of six major dams located on three rivers in the state. The city owns a belt-line railroad which services the port industrial area and an airport.

The city's revenues come from a property tax, about twenty mills; a share of the state-imposed sales tax, license fees, utility taxes and charges, business and occupation taxes, investment uses of property and money, fines and forfeitures and federal grants. The most recent municipal budget provided for more than eighty-million dollars in expenditures.

Tacoma city government has achieved a number of firsts in the state. It was the first city to purchase its own power utility, the first to establish a civil service system, the first to try the commission form of government and the first to provide for collective bargaining proceedings with its municipal employees. Tacoma is the only major city in the state
that has experienced all of the various forms of government--weak-mayor-council, 1890-1896; modified strong-mayor, 1896-1910; commission-mayor, 1910-1952, and council-manager, 1952 to the present. In 1956 the city became the first in the state to receive a federal grant for an urban renewal program. Since then the city has received two additional grants including a multi-million award for the redevelopment of the downtown area. Tacoma was the first city to establish a Human Relations Commission and this has been followed by major federal grants for the development of social action programs in the community.

There are other governmental authorities in the area including the following: the Tacoma School District, with a five-man elected board and taxing authority of over forty mills; the Tacoma Port Authority, with a three-man commission elected at-large and taxing authority of two mills; the Metropolitan Park District, with a five-man elected board, authority to place millages on the ballot and major funding from the Tacoma general government; and Pierce County general government.

**Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into eleven chapters, the first being the introduction and the last being a summary of findings and conclusions. The nine chapters that make-up the body of the dissertation cover specific periods of time during the political evolution of the city of Tacoma. Each chapter focuses on an aspect of political conflict during the city's history. There is a review of this conflict in the chapter followed by a summary and analysis at the end. The nine chapters that make-up the body of the study are as follows:
Chapter two: The Characteristics of Early Political Reform in the City of Tacoma.--It includes a review of Tacoma's first two reforms. In 1890 the citizens of the city approved a mayor-council system and in 1910 they voted for a commission system. This chapter covers the reasons for the success of the reform movements, the nature of politics during the mayor-council era and the position of important interest groups during the period. The absence or predominance of conflict during this period will be discussed and in later chapters compared with the political dynamics of the period leading up to 1952.

Chapter three: Successful and Unsuccessful Reform in Tacoma: Events Leading Up to Council-Manager Government.--The chapter covers the first political moves to bring council-manager government to Tacoma and analyzes why these efforts failed. The discussion focuses on the reformers' disenchantedment with the commission system and their efforts to bring the system under their control through the recall campaign of 1911. The chapter also reviews the nature of political conflict leading to the framing of the council-manager charter by the freeholders in 1952. Between the end of the Second World War and the early 1950's a number of critical events took place which enabled the reformers to succeed in having a council-manager charter approved by the people. Those events will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four: The Evolution of Political Opposition to Council-Manager Government in Tacoma: The Freeholders, the Charter Election, the Appointment of the First Mayor.--This chapter will review the important decisions made by the 1952 freeholders' commission, the position of key interest groups during the charter campaign and the political nature of Tacoma's first City Council. That council made two critical decisions even before the new system went into effect. First, it appointed a city manager. Second, it selected the city's first mayor under the system.
These two decisions will be analyzed within the context of the values of the new councilmen and the reaction of key interest groups in the community.

Chapter five: The Emergence of Political Factionalism in Tacoma

Leading to An Anti-Manager Leadership Clique.--The chapter reviews the administration of Frank Backstrom, Tacoma's first city manager. During this period, opposition to the form of government, the city manager and the council intensified to the point of an open challenge to the charter. A political coalition of labor, Democrats, city employees and "open town" interests succeeded in placing a strong-mayor charter proposal on the 1956 ballot. The reasons for intense conflict, the reaction of the council and the reaction of the manager will be analyzed. The important issues in conflict and the position of key groups in the community will be examined.

Chapter six: The Changing Nature of Tacoma's Political System: Pragmatism and the Rowlands' Approach.--The administrative philosophy of Tacoma's second city manager, David Rowlands, will be described in this chapter. This period also marked the end of the political dominance of the council-manager ideologues who sat on the council from 1953 to 1958. New faces emerged on the scene in the municipal elections of 1958. The significance of these factors will be discussed.

Chapter seven: The Success of Counter-Reform: New Policies, Changes in the Charter and the Response of the City Manager.--In 1958 four anti-manager candidates were elected to the council. They quickly assumed power by securing the support of one of the holdover councilmen who had been in the minority during the first five years under the new charter. The new group managed to elect one of their own as mayor and have three amendments to the charter placed on the 1958 fall ballot. The amendments passed and David Rowlands survived a serious challenge to his continued tenure as manager. The key decisions, the position of interest groups and the reaction of City Manager Rowlands will be reviewed.
Chapter eight: The Formation of a New Political Alliance: The Elected Mayor and the Appointed City Manager.--This chapter will discuss the political relationship established between City Manager Rowlands and Mayor Ben Hanson. Hanson soon became one of Rowlands chief boosters and the city manager, in kind, developed a singularly unique relationship with the mayor. This led to increasing conflict on the council and charges that Rowlands was being influenced in administrative areas by the mayor. During this period, there was another attempt to fire Rowlands. When this failed, attempts were made to weaken the authority of the manager. The most controversial event of the period was the resignation of Police Chief Roy Kerr. The important events of the period and the reasons for them will be discussed.

Chapter nine: The Emergence of Reform Interests, The Social Issue and Political Reaction: Tacoma Government 1962-1967.--In 1962 the reform interests recaptured the council from the Democrats and anti-reform interests who had gained significant political power from 1958-1962. At first, it appeared that Tacoma government would be stabilized. But tension seethed beneath the surface. The council was faced with the challenge of the social issue and political opposition began to once again grow in the community. The relationship between Mayor Harold Tollefson and Manager Rowlands began to sour. Finally, the anti-reformers returned to the council in 1967.

Chapter ten: The Rasmussen Era: Council-Manager Government and the Politics of Reaction.--The election of 1967 introduced a new and more intense form of conflict to Tacoma government. During the Hanson era, City Manager Rowlands was able to bargain and compromise with the mayor. Hanson, a practicing attorney, understood the art of compromise and seemingly worked well with the manager. Mayor Tollefson and Rowlands kept their disagreements in private. But the new mayor, A. L. Rasmussen, was not noted for compromise. Indeed, the railroad machinist and high school drop-out was gerrymandered
out of his legislative district while serving in the State Senate because of a contumacious manner. The manager and mayor battled for power in a number of issue areas, disagreeing on both policy and administration. Rasmussen demanded that Rowlands resign; Rowlands, in turn, charged that the mayor was an evil man. In the end, Rowlands was forced to resign and Rasmussen lost his bid for re-election. This period and the important events and decisions which took place will be analyzed.
CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY POLITICAL REFORM IN THE CITY OF TACOMA

One of the primary questions of this study focuses on the political environment of the city of Tacoma. That question deals with those major socio-political groups that are excluded from influencing the important decisions which bring about a change in the form of government in a community. In brief, the query is as follows: Will those social-political groups tend to oppose the change in government? The intent of this question is to see if the exclusion of major socio-political groups from participation in bringing about council-manager government in Tacoma resulted in dissension and conflict over that form of government. However, for the purpose of examining the issue thoroughly, it is important also to examine past reform movements in Tacoma. Political reform did bring about mayor-council government in 1890 and commission government in 1910. The major goal of this chapter will be to review those reforms and to see if significant socio-political groups did oppose them. Another goal will be to analyze in some depth the nature of politics in Tacoma from 1890 to 1910 and to see if political events during this period affected the reform movement of 1909-1910. The final goal will be to determine whether those political events were similar or markedly different from the events preceding the reform movement of 1952.
The year 1890 saw Tacoma voters approve the city's first charter government. The government of the city had been operating under general authority granted by the state of Washington in 1884, but by 1890 it had become apparent to the city fathers that a written charter was needed to clarify the duties of the elected officers of the city. Indeed, the government of the city was a mixture of authority granted to the council and mayor. Up to 1888, the City Council made all appointments to the boards and major departments of the city. In 1888, the mayor was given authority by the council to appoint a police and fire chief and also hire a secretary. But formal executive authority and fixed responsibility were lacking. During this period, the community's economy was booming to such a degree that by the late 1880's Tacoma had become known as the lumber capital of the world.¹ Services had to be provided to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. Also, reform groups in the community were demanding more forceful action by the police to deal with a growing influx of vice and corruption.² City newspapers and church groups were leading this crusade which culminated in mass meetings in 1889 in the city's red light district.

In late May of 1890, after the Democrats had been swept into office earlier in the month, the Tacoma City Council authorized a city freeholder election for the purpose of drawing up a city charter. The council was responding to the political pressures of the period. The Democrats, promising a change in government, set the election date for the freeholder election and nominated a slate of fifteen candidates for the charter

²Ibid.
commission. However, shortly after the council announced its candidates, a fusion group, made up of Populists and trade unionists, offered an opposition slate. This slate was committed to a reform platform with a strong progressive bent. Historian Herbert Hunt concluded that the pre-election commitment put the fusion ticket in a position of defending a program that they could not, in fact, carry out. Indeed, most of their proposals covered areas that only the state or national government could act in. The platform, which was most enlightened for its day, covered the following points:

1. Reduction of hours of labor in proportion to the progress of production.
2. The city to obtain possession of the local railroads, water works, ferries, electric plants and all industries requiring municipal franchises.
3. The public lands to be declared inalienable. Revocation of all land grants to corporations or individuals where conditions have not been complied with.
4. Repeal of all pauper, tramp and sumptuary laws.
5. Official statistics concerning the conditions of labor. Prohibition of the employment of children of school age and the employment of female labor in occupations detrimental to health and morals. Abolition of the contract labor system.
6. All wages to be paid weekly and the equalization of women's wages with those of men where equal service is performed.
7. Laws for the protection of life, and limit in all occupations and an efficient employee liability law.
8. The people have the right to propose laws and to vote upon all measures of importance according to republican principle.
9. All public offices to be subject to recall by their respective constituents.
10. All citizens to be eligible to hold public office.
11. Administration of justice free of charge.


2Ibid., p. 25.
In reviewing this platform, it is interesting to note that points eight and nine dealt with the initiative, referendum and recall provisions—all of which were included in the reform charter passed by Tacomans in 1910. This platform, and the philosophy behind it, represented the strong Populist influence in Tacoma politics during this period. The second point of the platform became public policy in part as early as 1894 when the city purchased its own water and light utility.

The slate of candidates nominated by the City Council was not committed to any particular platform. There seemed to be no strong argument over the structure or form of government during the election campaign. The Populist platform, a statement of issues essentially, was never really put to the test. Ten of the elected freeholders were from the slate nominated by the council and the remaining five were candidates who had filed as independents. Eleven of the fifteen freeholders came from the Democratic party stronghold in South Tacoma.

The freeholders worked through late summer and early fall and by October they had completed their work. The charter which emerged from the deliberation was described by the freeholders as "modern in every sense and well suited to a rapidly growing city."¹ The main features of the document were as follows:

The mayor was given appointive powers but he was severely checked by the council. He could appoint department heads, but only after securing council approval. And then, after the department head served a specified term of office, the mayor was required to re-appoint the officer and once again ask council concurrence.

¹Ibid., p. 40.
The mayor's removal authority was also limited. To dismiss a department head, for example, he was required to prove to the council that the man was guilty of "incompetency, neglect of duty, offensive partisanship or conduct prejudiced to public interests." Even after proving his case, the mayor had to obtain a two-thirds vote by the councilmen before the offending appointee was removed from office.

The freeholders diffused the mayor's authority in other ways as well. The five-man Board of Public Works and the three-man Park Board held three-year appointive terms. This meant that the mayor, with a two-year term, faced the real possibility of appointees from a preceding, and perhaps hostile, administration setting policy in two important administrative areas.

The mayor was given some compensating authority over council policy-making through the item and direct veto powers. The council could, however, over-ride the veto with a two-thirds vote. The elected and appointed officers and their terms of office can be seen in the table on the following page.

One can only speculate as to why the authority of the mayor was so severely limited. This had traditionally been the practice in Tacoma since 1884. And, of course, this was a common practice in municipal governments throughout the country. However, there were other possible reasons as well. The labor unions in Tacoma were highly suspicious of centralized governmental authority and voiced their fears shortly after the proposed charter became public.

1City of Tacoma, Charter and General Ordinances (1890), p. 22.

TABLE 1
WEAK MAYOR-COUNCIL GOVERNMENT IN TACOMA:
CHARTER PROVISIONS OF 1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Officers</th>
<th>Method of Election, Appointment</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City-wide</td>
<td>Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police-Judge</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Chief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Chief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Master</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Warden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Mayor appoints with council confirmation.
On October 11, the executive committee of the Tacoma Trades Council adopted resolutions urging union members to vote no on the charter issue. The Trades Council directed most of its opposition to the authority of the mayor. As far as the executive committee was concerned, the mayor's authority was too extensive. It was labor's position that such authority would mean the end of "truly representative or popular government."  

The Trades Council also opposed the idea of high salary levels for appointed officials and lower salaries for the elected councilmen. The labor organization believed that such an arrangement would prevent the election of laboring men to the council by "making it impossible for them to serve on a full-time basis."  

But despite the pleas of the Trades Council, the charter passed by a landslide vote of 2,723 to 726 on October 16, 1890. Although the end effect of this vote was a victory for the Democrats, the charter's success seemed to hurt them politically. The first election under the new charter saw the Republicans win every elective office. This initial GOP win set a trend which persisted during the twenty years of mayor-council government in Tacoma. The split between the Democrats and Populists, which seemed to begin with the fight over the charter, carried on from 1890 to 1910 enabling the Republicans to control the city. A discussion of this period of the city's history follows:

The rule of political parties: 1890-1910

Politics in the city of Tacoma was pretty much dominated by the GOP during the era of mayor-council government. Six of the eight men elected to the office of mayor were Republicans. The GOP controlled the mayor's

1Hunt, p. 40.

2Ibid.
chair for fifteen years of the twenty year period. Most of the other
elected at-large administrative officers (i.e., treasurer, controller,
and physician) were Republican. On three occasions, the Democrats did
win the mayorship, but their victories were close and short-lived as
shall be shown later.

However, even though the Republicans won more often than not, their
political strength was far from overwhelming in the community. For example,
there was a total of 68,688 votes cast for mayoralty candidates in the ten
elections between 1890 and 1910. Slightly more than 50 per cent of the total
was cast for non-Republican candidates. Of the eight city wards, only four
could be considered as being strongly Republican. The four weak Republican
wards regularly sent Populist and Democratic candidates to the City Council.

City elections during the period were noted for being intensely
partisan, vigorously conducted and marked by last minute rumors, accusations
and charges. The following table illustrates just how close the ten
mayoralty elections were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Votes Difference Between Winning Candidates and Second Place Candidate</th>
<th>Percentages of Votes for Winning Candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898a</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>2,041</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a total for Socialist candidate Charles Case not available
The average winning margin for the ten mayoralty elections was 51.4 per cent of the total vote. However, as one can see from the preceding table, five of the elections—1890, 1894, 1902, 1906, and 1908—departed rather markedly from the mean.

In 1894 and 1906 the winning candidate received substantially less than the 51.4 per cent. In these two elections, a third candidate was in the field. However, the third candidate was a crucial factor in only the 1894 election. That year, the Populist party had reached the peak of its political strength in the community. It fielded a slate of candidates for every at-large executive position and each open council seat in the city's eight wards. In the mayor's race, the Populist candidate finished second to Republican Edward Orr. In the council races, the Populists won five positions to give them six seats on the sixteen seat legislative body. After this election, their political significance waned considerably and by 1896 they had joined with the Democrats to form a fusion coalition.

In 1906, the Populist interests fielded their last candidate for mayor—John Hartman, a former city councilman. However, Democrat George Wright was able to defeat political newcomer and prominent industrialist, Robert McCormick, despite the Populist spin-off. Wright supporters used a rather common political strategy for the times—last minute unfounded rumors, in this case the accusation that McCormick was opposed to the railroads expanding to Tacoma—to compensate for the $30,000 McCormick poured into his campaign to get elected.¹

The other three elections, 1890, 1902, and 1908, were essentially Republican landslides. In 1890, Republican George Kandle used as campaign

¹Hunt, Tacoma History, p. 225.
issues a conflict of interest charge plus strong state-wide Republican support of national tariff policies to give him, and all of the other Republicans running for office that year, a sweeping victory over the Democrats.\(^1\) Louis F. Campbell, one of the most popular mayors of the period, easily won a second two-year term over the meager efforts of the Democrats. Frank Cole, the Democratic candidate, admitted after the election that he had no hope of defeating Campbell.\(^2\) The 1908 election saw Republican John Linck smash two-term incumbent Democrat George Wright by the largest election margin in the city's history. The key issue in that campaign was a charge of conflict of interest on the part of Wright. Late in the race, Wright was publicly accused of receiving kick-backs from city contractors who were completing the community's most ambitious road paving program in history. Wright was later cleared of the allegations by a grand jury investigation, but the issue ruined his re-election chances and ended his political career.\(^3\)

The election of 1894 was probably the turning point for continued Republican dominance of the era. The party not only survived the most noteworthy scandal in city history [\textit{i.e.}, the Tacoma City Light and Water fiasco of 1892-93] but it managed to sweep all of the at-large administrative positions including the mayor's office and hold eight seats on the council. The party accomplished this while compiling only 39 per cent of the vote for mayor and 33 per cent of the vote for all council candidates. The reason for their success was the emergence of the Populist party and its impact on solidly Democratic wards in South Tacoma. The impact of the populist movement on Republican and Democratic strength can be seen in the table on the following page:

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\(^1\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 38.  
\(^2\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 200.  
TABLE 3

A COMPARISON OF POPULIST, DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN VOTES IN THE COUNCIL ELECTIONS OF 1894

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Percentage of City-wide Total Vote</th>
<th>% Party Vote by Northend Wards--1,2,7,8</th>
<th>% Party Vote by Southend Wards--3,4,5,6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Populist</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indep; Prohibition</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the above table, Populist strength was centered in the south end. Their candidates in this area completely shut-out the Democrats leaving them with only two carry-over seats on the City Council. The Populists were not about to support old-line machine Democrat A. V. Fawcett for mayor; so they ran their own candidate and defeated Fawcett, but finished second to Republican Orr. Thus, the Democratic-Populist coalition lost an excellent opportunity to gain political control of the city for the first time.

Even the aftermath of the Populist gains on the City Council paid political dividends for the Republicans. Heady with power for the first time, the Populists attempted, with Democratic support, to elect the president of the City Council in 1894. The eight-to-eight vote deadlock with the Republicans resulted in two weeks of inter-group bickering over control of the council. At this particular time, the state of Washington was in the midst of a serious economic recession. Yet, during the two weeks of conflict several major city building projects came to a standstill resulting in a massive and unexpected lay-off of personnel. This state of affairs so disgusted the citizenry that the Populists never fully recovered politically. In the next election, only one Populist was elected to the council. The party
label itself, particularly Democratic or Populist, became such a political hindrance that five of the winning councilmen in the 1895 election ran as non-partisans.

The election of 1894 introduced one more reform group to the Tacoma political scene for the first time—the Tacoma Municipal League. The league organized to "work for the city as a whole rather than any one party", worked diligently for the defeat of Democrat Fawcett. Mayor Orr, who had benefited from the efforts of the league, helped to sponsor twenty-two charter amendments aimed at reforming the original mayor-council government along the lines considered by the National Municipal League in 1895. The amendments, all of which passed in the election of 1896, provided for the following important changes in the charter:

First, a civil service system was authorized. Civil service policies would be defined by a civil service board with members appointed by the mayor. Second, the council's authority to confirm the appointments of the mayor was abolished. The mayor was empowered to hire and dismiss all departmental heads. And third, six of the city officers provided for in the 1890 charter and the Public Works Board were abolished. The number of at-large elected officials was reduced to three—the mayor, treasurer and controller.

The amendments strengthened the powers of the mayor measurably. He could appoint and fire all administrative heads of government without interference from the council. The scandal-ridden Public Works Board was abolished and in its place the council was empowered to create by ordinance the office of director of public works under the authority of

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1Hunt, p. 176.
the mayor. The elected officers of the city were reduced to three. And, most importantly, the city of Tacoma became the first city in the Western United States to establish a civil service system.¹

However, the election of 1896 was more of a disaster than a success for the reformers and the Republicans. In that year, the Democrats, under the leadership of A. V. Fawcett, captured the mayorship for the first time under charter government. This election was probably the most bitter and controversial in the city's history.

As previously noted, the Populists had been severely weakened by the council debacle of 1894. By 1896, they were no longer able to field a viable slate of candidates for city offices so they joined forces once again with the Democrats to support Fawcett for mayor. Although the leadership of the Populist party threw their support to Fawcett, the rank-and-file Populists were not at all that enthusiastic. The following table illustrates this fact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote: Election of 1894</th>
<th>Vote: Election of 1896</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>2,690</td>
<td>2,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat and Populist</td>
<td>4,174</td>
<td>2,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Republicans were able to duplicate their voter turnout in the preceding election. But the Populists and Democrats, running as a fusion ticket for the first time, were able to get out only 60 per cent of the vote they had achieved, running separately, in 1894. More than 1,500 Populists sat this election out.

¹Ibid., p. 180.
When the official tally showed Fawcett the winner by two votes, incumbent Orr, realizing the tremendous power the Democrats would have under the new charter amendments, called for a recount. The council, with Democrats and Populists in control, proceeded with a review of the election results and confirmed Fawcett's win one week later. Orr was not to be deterred, however, and shortly after Fawcett was sworn in, he filed a writ of prohibition with the State Superior Court to have the council, under court supervision, once again recount the ballots. In the meantime, Fawcett had cleaned out the courthouse of Republicans and had appointed seven Populists and six Democrats to key positions in his administration.

By the summer of 1896, the court, after hearing evidence of voter irregularities in several city precincts, instructed the council to recount the election ballots. On the night before the count was to be completed, the city vault holding the ballot boxes was blown open and several ballots were stolen. The next day, groups supporting Orr demanded that Fawcett resign from office. In a meeting held on July 24, the membership of the Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution which said, in part:

... the unsavory stench arising today from the county courthouse and city hall, resulting from official rottenness and misconduct in office, is nauseating in the extreme....

Notwithstanding, the city has been robbed of hundreds of thousands of dollars, no man is today or has been placed in the penitentiary... these men are walking the streets of the city.1

Soon after the resolution was passed, the chamber helped to establish the "Committee of 100" to investigate corruption in government. Republican Louis Campbell, who was to be elected mayor four years later, headed the group.

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1Ibid., p. 183.
The case of the missing ballots finally reached a conclusion in Superior Court on August 6 when Judge John Pritchard rendered a lengthy decision giving Orr 2,624 votes to Fawcett's 2,609. Fawcett surrendered his office to Orr but also filed an appeal to the State Supreme Court. One year later, the Supreme Court upheld the original council canvass and Fawcett was returned to office to serve out a controversial term.

In 1898, the Populists, Democrats and Silver Republicans bickered and bartered over the appropriate candidate to head a fusion ticket. The Democrats supported Fawcett, the Populists supported John Hartman and the Silver Republicans offered Cyrus Mentzer as a compromise candidate. Mentzer was the choice and was, in turn, defeated by Republican Johnson Nickeaus. The GOP won again in 1900 and 1902 under the leadership of popular reformer Louis R. Campbell.

In 1904, however, the Republicans split wide-open over the question of the city's tolerance policy. Tacoma had been noted for its gambling and prostitution during the boom of the 1880's. By 1900 the city was once again booming economically and gambling and prostitution was proving to be a serious problem. City Attorney William Reynolds, appointed by Campbell, had by 1903 worked out a series of guidelines for gambling in the city. Reynolds, with help from Republican councilmen, had also arranged with city vice-lord Peter Sandberg to centralize, under police supervision, all of the city's prostitution in one downtown red light district. Sandberg, in turn, agreed to pay the city a monthly fine for the operation of his establishment.

This agreement was opposed by Campbell and by 1904 he had directed the police to shut Sandberg down. Reynolds, fearing that vice would once again move underground and into residential areas, threatened to resign and organize GOP opposition to Campbell's re-election. Campbell held fast to his position.
Reynolds resigned his city position in 1904 to support Democratic candidate George Wright's bid for office against Campbell. To gain GOP support, however, the Democrats agreed not to run candidates for city controller and treasurer. Wright defeated Campbell by 665 votes and went on to hold office for two terms. The next section of this chapter will deal with the reform movement which brought commission government to the city of Tacoma.

Tacoma's Second Reform: The Introduction of Commission Government

The reform movement for commission government began in the autumn of 1908 when leaders of the Commercial Club and the Chamber of Commerce, the two leading business groups in the community, decided that the city should adopt the relatively new governmental form. The general feelings of the membership of the two groups of influential businessmen were probably best described by H. A. Rhodes, a club member and charter freeholder, in the following comments made during a meeting of the Commercial Club: "If this city could be managed more like a business corporation, I believe there would be more efficiency and better results."

Tacoma's business and professional establishment had reason to be concerned over the degree of efficiency that could be achieved by the city's municipal administration. The city's economy was growing at its fastest rate in history. In the ten-year period between 1900-1910, population more than doubled—from 38,000 to 84,000. There was a desperate need for expanded

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1These leaders later formed a political action group called the City Club which actually pushed for the commission charter. The Commercial Club, the City Club and the Chamber of Commerce were all essentially the same group. Hunt covers this in his History of Tacoma, Chapters 8, 9.

public services: light and water utilities, streets, public transportation, and major need for a new access bridge to the industrial waterfront area. Yet, Tacoma's government was in the midst of renewed political conflict and turmoil.

Republican Mayor John Linck was indicted by a state grand jury on April 30, 1909 for "failure to suppress houses of ill fame." On May 4, the Tacoma News Tribune editorialized:

... Linck has been tried and found wanting. The indictment of Linck for nonfeasance in office should be a sufficient hint to the mayor to tender his resignation.

Later, the News Tribune editorial writer made the following observation:

If they prove equal to the task, Tacomans will be blessed with a business administration of its municipal affairs and such off-color individuals as the present mayor, who is a sore discredit to the community, will be relegated to and held in the rear. Few cities have suffered more times from incompetent and unscrupulous officials...

The City Council was deadlocked once again between competing factors jockeying for power. The Daily News made the following remarks in an editorial:

The public is worn to the quick by its bickering and hidden schemes. No wonder there is talk of violence. It would be strange indeed if this indulgent people were not at last aroused to the point where it insisted upon a revolution in municipal government and a bath in the bay for recalcitrant councilmen besides.

Council partisanship and patronage was severely chastised in the following editorial in the News Tribune:

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There are men in the present City Council . . . studying how they may create new offices for political henchmen.

That means, how can we make the taxpayers pay our debts through the public treasury. Party politics in local affairs are a curse to the American people . . . People have voted for men on account of party that they would prefer to see in jail . . . .

Thus, Tacoma's mayor-council government was at a low ebb in popularity. The mayor had been indicted by a grand jury, the council was engaged in its usual bickering and political in-fighting and the city's newspapers were demanding a change.

The twenty year period of mayor-council government was dominated by Republican administrations--administrations generally supported by the business and professional groups in the community. But none of the Republican mayors brought any significant degree of economy and efficiency to government. Even the competent mayors such as Ed Orr and Louis Campbell were burdened by factional in-fighting on the City Council. And the political reigns of the incompetent mayors, such as Herbert Huson, created periods of unsufferable bungling and inefficiency. In referring to the Huson years, Superior Court Justice Wilkin Stallcup was led to say:

... for lawless and void debt making no community of English speaking people of like population can show a parallel to our city officials who controlled the interests of the city for two years preceding May, 1894.  

It was during the Huson administration that thirty-seven police officers were fired from office for incompetency; Republican Treasurer Charles Boggs was arrested and later convicted of embezzling city funds; and the city purchased the Tacoma City Water and Light Company from


2Hunt, p. 155.
C. W. Wright. Again Judge Stallcup:

It appears that C. W. Wright's water involvement hangs like a millstone around the neck of the city, holding the city not only in shameful disgrace, but in deplorable condition of no water supply.

It appears that after the foisting of this $1,750,000 transaction, the fact comes to light that the city acquired no water supply; that the water the said company had been running through wooden flumes, mains and supply pipes, and selling to the city and citizens, was water which they were lawlessly taking from farmers of Clover Creek. 1

The nightmare of the Tacoma City Light and Water fiasco had to be on the minds of the leaders of the business and professional community as they pushed for enactment of a commission charter. A statement made in support of the commission plan by attorney and freeholder O. G. Ellis in 1909 suggests that the freeholders were very much sensitive to Tacoma's plight in 1894:

The cry that politics cannot be eliminated from commission government comes from those who do not want it eliminated. If this charter had been in force 15 years ago many an irregularity would have been stopped in its inception and may never have been undertaken. 2

The reform campaign for commission government: the freeholders

The formal campaign in behalf of a commission charter began on May 20, 1909 when the City Club, a group of businessmen dedicated to commission government, sponsored a public meeting to select a slate of freeholder candidates. The City Club was joined by the Central Improvement League, an association of Tacoma's fourteen improvement clubs, in nominating candidates for the fifteen freeholder positions on the ballot. 3

These two organizations were responding to an excellent opportunity provided to the reform forces by the City Council. The council, in frustrated

1Ibid.


political deadlock, called for a freeholder election for June 8 for the purpose of sorting out and restructuring the basic framework of city government. From 1890 to 1908 amendment after amendment had been passed by the people and added to the charter in an attempt to make the government workable. Yet, political conflict continued and intensified to such a degree that by 1909 the city's government found it difficult to respond to the simplest of problems. A newspaper account of the period illustrates the point:

We now have sixteen councilmen who perform a good many administrative duties as well as legislative. For example, we find by turning to the proceedings of the City Council on Wednesday night ... a number of resolutions instructing the commissioner of public works to do this and that. One instructs him to have specifications on South 31st Street. ... responsibility cannot always be placed in the council because it is widely distributed. Why should a matter of placing a street light take the time of a council of sixteen men when it could be done by a single official elected by the people.¹

The leaders of the City Club seized the initiative early and began to plan a campaign to bring a commission charter to Tacoma. In April they met with the Rev. Harry B. Hendley, executive secretary of the Improvement League, to join forces in sponsoring the May 20 public meeting. The two groups nominated forty candidates for the fifteen positions on a slate of freeholders who would be committed to a commission charter.

During the May 20 meeting, the backers of commission government shrewdly introduced a resolution committing the slate of candidates to the incorporation of initiative, referendum and recall provisions in the charter. This move was aimed at the populist interests in the community—still a factor politically. The meeting also nominated a slate of freeholders which

included mainly Republican businessmen, but also included two of the most prominent Democrats in the city and C. D. Ball, a labor leader and publisher of the *Tacoma Labor Advocate*. The freeholders were as follows: active Republicans—Harry B. Hendley, H. J. McGregor, Frank Lamborn, C. S. Barlow, P. C. Kauffman, S. M. LeCrone, Henry A. Rhodes, E. P. Savage; likely Republicans—E. D. Hodge, O. O. McLane, Olin S. Fowler; active Democrats—Ernest Lister, A. U. Mills; likely Democrats—C. D. Ball, O. E. Ellis.

The two Democrats were Ernest Lister and A. U. Mills. Lister had been a Democratic representative on the council for two terms and shortly after the commission charter's approval became governor of the state. Mills was a prominent Democratic party regular from the city's south end. He was to be elected commissioner of public safety in 1912. Another freeholder, attorney O. E. Ellis, was not an active Democrat but had been appointed city attorney by Democratic Mayor George P. Wright. Lister later appointed him to the State Supreme Court. The selection of Ball was an obvious overture to organized labor. Not only was he a prominent figure in union circles, but he could offer the proposed charter editorial support through the *Labor Advocate*.

The freeholders as a group had a wealth of political experience at the state and municipal level. C. S. Barlow, S. M. LeCrone, Harry Hendley, A. U. Mills, O. E. Ellis, Frank Lamborn, Ernest Lister, H. J. McGregor and E. P. Savage all held public office either before the charter election or shortly thereafter. Nine of the fifteen were also active as members of either the Commercial Club, Chamber of Commerce or Central Improvement League—the city's three most prominent business and professional associations.
The Commercial Club, organized two years previous to the passage of the charter, was committed to "the complete elimination of politics in municipal affairs."  

The overall purpose of the club was described in the Daily Ledger:  

The Commercial Club is more than a commercial organization . . . . It is serving as a unifier. It is creating that which Tacoma long has needed—homogeneity.  

This goal of unifying the city had an obvious influence on the club's leaders and their desire to do away with the old system. The membership of the club took the position that mayor-council government was defective because "interests of one ward were systematically traded against the interests of another . . . interests of the city as a whole were a secondary consideration." The commission plan would, on the other hand, result in "less trading for favors to a particular district" and "less blocking of plans for public improvement."  

The campaign and group support:  
Role of the press  

The role of the local press was certainly one contributing factor to the eventual success of the reform movement. Commission government received overwhelming support on the editorial pages of the city's major newspapers [The Tacoma News Tribune, The Tacoma Ledger, and The Daily News]—particularly in the months leading up to the charter election. This support took the form of savage attacks on the incompetency of the mayor and the council and editorial positions in favor of the general features of the

3Tacoma: The Manufacturing City, p. 18.  
4"Editorial—Representing the City as a Whole," Tacoma Ledger, Oct. 10, 1909, p. 32.
commission plan. Some examples of the support can be seen in the following statements from the Republican Daily News and the Independent Daily Ledger:

The Daily News, September 3, 1909:

One thing after another of importance to this city is held up in foolish pretexts, or are delayed by bickering among Councilmen. Factional set-tos, personal enmities and political log-rolling have all had their share in the regrettable situation. It is no wonder there is a demand for a commission form of government . . . .

The Daily Ledger, October 10, 1909:

. . . if increased efficiency for the benefit of the city as a whole is desired, the people are more likely to obtain it by electing all councilmen at-large. There should be less trading for favors to a particular district under the commission plan. 1

The Daily Ledger, October 16, 1909:

. . . commission form . . . has already in several cities brought a remarkable increase in efficiency and has given far more general satisfaction than the old ward system. Under [commission government] . . . all offices are elected at-large. The number is small and hence responsibility will be more easily placed.

With but a few elective offices the eyes of the people will be on all of them. 3

The Daily Ledger, October 16, 1909:

The Ledger believes the new charter should be adopted. 4

The Daily News, October 15, 1909:

Voters of Tacoma should vote for the charter tomorrow. The proposed new charter for this city should be adopted. Tacoma should try the commission form of government. 5


2"Editorial--Representation of the City as a Whole," Tacoma Ledger, Oct. 10, 1909, p. 32.


4Ibid.

The statements from the editorial pages of *The Ledger*, which seemed to voice the basic principles of the national reform movement of the time, followed a well-publicized visit to Tacoma by Boston reformer, Professor Charles Zueblin. Zueblin, who spoke before 300 reform partisans on October 3, 1909, was brought to Tacoma by the charter revision committee. The professor talked on the subject of: "The 20th Century City." In his speech, Zueblin argued that the modern city should have "simplified government divorced from partisan politics" where every resident is a "real citizen."\(^1\)

There was no apparent political opposition to the new charter from any group in the community. During the last weeks in May, the *News Tribune* suggested that an opposition slate of freeholders might file, but none did. Even the office holders of the then mayor-council government were conspicuous by their silence as can be seen from the comments in the following newspaper report:

> Sentiments at the city hall, especially among members of the police department, has changed materially and from the tone of conversation heard it seems that the commission plan is favored by many.

> Even among the councilmen there is found favorable opinion on the proposed charter and some of them have declared themselves in favor.\(^2\)

Other groups that potentially could have voiced opposition remained silent. For example:

> The position of labor.--Organized labor was not opposed to the commission charter even though the freeholders were predominantly Republican businessmen. As has been previously noted, labor opposed the first charter because of its concentration of authority in the hands of the mayor. The commission plan redistributed this executive authority to five men. Also,

\(^1\)"No Royal Road to Democracy," *Tacoma Ledger*, Oct. 3, 1909, p. 16.

each position was full-time and salaries were set at a high level. This would allow the working man to run for elective office if he wished. Another factor was the political nature of the old mayor-council system which produced fifteen years of Republican controlled administrations—certainly not a political situation favored by laboring interests. And C. D. Ball did sit on the freeholders commission and was in a position to calm any fears through the editorial pages of the Labor Advocate.

**The position of the Democratic party organization.**—The Democratic party organization did not actively oppose the charter. The old system had excluded them from power for most of the preceding twenty years. And, a number of features of the new charter must have been appealing to Democratic party regulars. For example, the charter established a primary electoral system which meant that only two candidates would meet in the final election. The system also provided that any candidate who received over 50 per cent of the vote in the primary would run unopposed in the final election. This new electoral system could only benefit the Democrats since they had lost out in several elections as a result of party bickering with the Populists. The Democrats also had a city-wide organization which could turn out the vote for its candidate even in non-partisan elections.

Another appealing characteristic of the commission plan was the five-man City Council made up of five commissioners having administrative as well as legislative authority. The Democratic machine had only to capture three seats on the council to control overall policy in the city.

**The position of the Republican party organization.**—The GOP had the most to lose by the change in government. Yet, it was impossible for the party to oppose politically the charter. The Republican party organization was controlled financially by the north end business interests. These interests were committed to the commission plan. Indeed, many of the
freeholders on the charter commission were active in the party hierarchy as either former office-holders or active supporters of the party.

The position of the city employees.--Initial opposition to the charter proposal came from the city employees, especially from within the police department. However, this opposition, which was directed mainly at the civil service provision, did not coalesce to become a factor in the election. The key point of contention was the authority of dismissal given to the commissioners. Most city employees seemed to conclude that a fair hearing before one commissioner, as provided by civil service, was better than a formal trial before the City Council.

The position of the Populist interests.--By 1906 the Populists were unable to run viable candidates for city office. However, the Populist philosophy still was a political factor in some areas of the city. In close elections, this philosophy could still spell defeat for a city-wide proposition. However, potential opposition from this group was neutralized by including the referendum, initiative and recall provision in the charter. The Populists had originally proposed these tools of direct democracy in 1890. With the passage of the new charter they would become a reality for the first time.

The position of the vice interests.--The "open town" interests were also conspicuous by their silence--and for good reason. In the past, the mayor's office could control the extent of toleration in the city to a certain degree. However, the council could check the mayor by withholding funds and, before 1896, refuse to confirm the mayor's choice for police chief and city attorney--the two crucial law enforcement posts. Under commission government, the post of public safety commissioner was up for

1"Vote Saturday," Tacoma Ledger, p. 7.

2Ibid.
political grabs. Also, a sympathetic public safety commissioner, an
"open town" mayor and one other sympathetic commissioner could give vice
interests total control of the city administration.

In sum, all of the important political groups in Tacoma, with the
possible exception of the Republican party, stood to gain more than they
would lose by the change in the form of government.

The election results

On June 8, the day of the freeholder election, only fifteen candidates
appeared on the ballot. The entire slate was committed to the commission
plan and the initiative, referendum and recall provisions. Slightly more
than 10 per cent of the registered voters bothered to vote in this
election.

On October 16, 1909 Tacoma voters had the opportunity to vote on a
city charter which would bring commission government to Tacoma. The charter
was approved by a vote of better than three-to-one. However, the election
results showed that only slightly more than 39 per cent of the registered
voters had bothered to cast their ballots on the question of the new
charter. The measure did carry by an overwhelming vote in each of the city's
eight wards as we can see from the following table:

| TABLE 5 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOTES FOR THE COMMISSION CHARTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The preceding table indicates that the charter received its greatest support from the first, second, seventh and eighth wards. These four wards, located in the city's north end, had a history of voting strongly Republican. Most of the membership of the Commercial Club and Chamber of Commerce resided in this area of the city. And nine of the fifteen freeholders on the charter commission were from the north end. The following table, which indicates election results from six key campaigns between 1890-1910, shows the predominance of Republican strength from wards, one, two, seven, eight as opposed to the other wards:

TABLE 6

RESULTS OF COUNCILMANIC ELECTIONS
HELD BETWEEN 1892-1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wards</th>
<th>Percentage of GOP Councilmen</th>
<th>Percentage of Non-GOP Councilmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,2,7,8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,4,5,6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the thrust of support for the reform movement came from the north end, an area that had a tradition of Republican support, higher income families and higher education levels [i.e., of the nine freeholders from that area, two were bankers, two were contractors, two were lawyers and the other three prominent businessmen in the community], there was no appreciable counter move from the Democrat and Populist strongholds in South Tacoma. It has been shown why many of the key groups there were not opposed to the reform. Albert Clark, president of the Civil Association of South Tacoma, explained the general feelings of the people in that area in the following article which appeared in the Daily News:

The charter has been much discussed here and while I think South Tacoma will cast a majority in favor, it is certain that
whichever way the vote goes, it will be the result of earnest and conscientious consideration.

Few of us in South Tacoma have axes to grind. This applies especially to the men in the shops who, as a rule, think and act with great independence.¹

The vote on the charter was remarkable for a number of reasons. First, only 10 per cent of the registered voters cast ballots against the commission plan and for the mayor-council charter. This demonstrated the high disregard the citizens had for the old system. Even more remarkable was the overall low turnout at the polls. Less than 40 per cent of the registered voters cast ballots in a city that had a tradition of high voter turnouts at municipal elections. The following table shows the degree of interest in municipal elections in Tacoma from 1890 to 1910.

TABLE 7

A COMPARISON OF ELECTIONS 1894-1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Average Voter Turnout (per cent)</th>
<th>Comparison of Drop-off in Voting in 1909 (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayorality Elections</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-year Councilmanic Election</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Propositions</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Election of 1909</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At first glance, it appears difficult to explain why such a large percentage, 61 per cent, of the registered voters stayed away from the polls

during this important city election. However, this particular election was unique in that no real competition of interests took place and there was no opportunity to polarize large blocks of voters for and against the proposition. As has been seen, all of the potential opposition groups remained silent on the issue. And, perhaps even more importantly, the political parties were not sparking the interest and polarizing the community in an attempt to get their supporters to the polls. Finally the election took place in an off-year during a period when no national or state candidates were campaigning for office.

The commission charter

The commission charter drastically changed the formal structure of government in the city of Tacoma. The total number of elected municipal officials was changed from nineteen, under the old system, to six under the commission plan. Each elected official was to be elected at-large. The eight city wards no longer had their own representation on the City Council.

Election procedures.--The election procedures were significantly changed in a number of ways. Under the commission plan, there would be a mayor, four commissioners or city councilmen, and a controller. Each of these elected officials would hold four-year terms. However, city elections would take place every two years with either the mayor and two commissioners or the controller and two commissioners up for election. Also included for the first time would be a primary election preceding the final election. The primary would serve to reduce the field of candidates to two in the final election since the campaign would now be non-partisan.\(^2\) The charter also

\(^1\)Information for this section has been gathered from: The City of Tacoma, Charter and General Ordinances (Jan. 22, 1913).

\(^2\)Under the old system the political parties selected candidates at their municipal party convention.
provided for candidates receiving more than 50 per cent of the primary vote to be directly elected to office.

The mayor.--Under the commission plan, the authority of the mayor was also greatly changed. For the first time, he would sit as a voting member of the City Council and preside over the council meetings. The mayor would serve as the commissioner of public affairs, health and sanitation and as executive officer of the city of Tacoma. He would have no veto authority and could appoint only department heads in his general area of executive authority (i.e., public affairs, health and sanitation).

The mayor was also given the authority to sign all city contracts, appoint investigating or special committees with the approval of the council, and appoint an accountant to audit the city books.

The council and controller.--The City Council was made up of four commissioners and the mayor. Each of the four commissioners and the mayor was empowered to supervise one of the five major departments of government--public safety, public works, public utilities, finance, and public affairs, health and sanitation. Each commissioner had authority to appoint the major department heads within his area of authority. For example, the commissioner of public safety would appoint the police and fire chief. However, all ordinances dealing with the appropriation of funds for each department could only be authorized by a majority vote of the council.

The city attorney and the city clerk were the only offices appointed by the council as a whole.

The controller had authority to serve as the city's chief accountant and auditing officer. Although elected at-large as an official of the city, the controller was not a member of the council. The collection of revenues and the supervision of the city treasury were functions under the authority of the commissioner of finance.
Civil service.--The charter established a three-man Civil Service Board to be appointed by a majority of the City Council. The Civil Service Board was given the authority to develop a general merit classification system for all of the major departments of government. The commissioners and department heads were given the right to suspend or discharge employees for "misconduct or failure to perform duties", however, each employee had the right to appeal to the commissioner of his particular department for a review of his case.

Conclusions

From the preceding analysis, the following conclusions are drawn:

First, the change in Tacoma's form of government was generally desired by the people of the city in 1909 and because of this fact the commission plan, the only feasible alternate form of government, was introduced with relatively little disruption in the community.

Second, the commission plan did not appear to threaten the values or interests of the major socio-political groups in the community and because of this fact, the resistance to the charter was nominal.

Third, the commission plan was readily accepted because it was introduced openly and through a formal process that included representation from all of the important groups in the community.

As has been indicated, the groups that may have opposed the reform effort--the Democratic party and organized labor--did not view the reform as an attempt by an opposing group to impose an unwelcome system on the city. Indeed, the Democrats and the union interests likely saw an excellent opportunity to improve their chances at gaining significant political power in the city for the first time.

On the other hand, if the Democrats had controlled the city government during most of the preceding period and if even token representation by
Democrats and the union had not been found on the charter commission, the story of Tacoma's second reform movement might have been very different.
CHAPTER III

SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL REFORM IN TACOMA

EVENTS LEADING UP TO COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT

The previous chapter makes clear that commission government was not opposed by any major political faction in Tacoma. Nor was there a united anti-commission leadership clique in the city. Representatives from labor and the Democratic party were not excluded consciously or otherwise from influencing the important decisions that brought about the new form of government. And, perhaps more significantly, the new governmental system itself did not threaten the values of any powerful political interest in the city. Also, it was shown that the important groups which actively supported the reform movement came from the business and professional class. Other support came from church groups and the city's major newspapers.

This chapter intends to examine the reform movements which took place between the time of the enactment of the commission charter and the enactment of the council-manager charter in 1952. During that period, Tacoma experienced a recall campaign aimed at Mayor Angelo Fawcett and the other professional politicians who captured the five City Council seats in 1910. Although the recall of Fawcett and two other commissioners succeeded, and the reformers placed one of their own in the major's office, the professionals regained power at the next municipal election. The response of the reform groups was to recommend a council-manager charter for the city. From 1920 to 1935, two formal reform movements were begun. Each attempt failed and this chapter will analyze why. The chapter will also examine in some depth the important events immediately preceding the successful reform of 1952.
Counter-Reform and the Recall of Angelo Fawcett

Although the commission charter was passed by a landslide vote in 1909, reform in the traditional sense did not come to Tacoma with the first election under the plan in 1910. The philosophy of commission government called for men with business experience to be elected to the City Council. The idea was that with non-partisan, at-large elections "men who had never figured in city government might accept nomination and get elected."¹ These new political leaders would replace the "political small fry" who had come from the wards and who had intrigued in petty favors and sought appropriations for their wards in reckless disregard for city-wide interests.² Unfortunately for the reform interests, Tacoma's first mayor under the commission plan was machine boss Angelo V. Fawcett. Fawcett was swept into office on the primary ballot in 1910 when he received 6,630 votes to the 4,598 votes for his opponents. The other four commissioners elected in the same race had also been active in partisan politics in the past.

Fawcett, supported by the city's saloon interests, campaigned on an open town platform.³ However, the nature of the city's electorate changed in November, 1910, when Washington State voters granted women the right to vote by constitutional amendment. On February 10 the new amendment was to go into effect, but one month before Fawcett introduced a controversial "anti-treating" ordinance. The ordinance, which was later challenged by referendum, made it unlawful for customers in a saloon to buy a round of drinks for the house or to treat a friend to a drink. Fawcett claimed the law

²Ibid.
³Hunt, Tacoma History, p. 358.
would end drunkenness in the city. In reality, the measure appeared to be more of a political ploy by the mayor to neutralize the issue of prohibition and to influence the newly enfranchised women in the city.

With the ordinance's enactment, controversy and conflict once again returned to Tacoma's government. Public Safety Commissioner L. W. Roys challenged the ordinance from the beginning as being unenforceable and led the fight against it on the City Council. Roys had the support of Public Works Commissioner Owen Woods. In political retaliation, Fawcett introduced a resolution directing the city clerk to prepare petitions for the recall of members of the City Council. This attempt at political pressure backfired when M. B. Stambaugh, a former Democratic councilman under the old charter, picked up the petitions in early January and by the middle of the month submitted formal charges for the recall of Mayor Fawcett.

The charges alleged that Fawcett had:

1. . . . shown himself to be wholly incompetent and unfit to discharge the duties of mayor . . . .
2. . . . (been in violation) of the provisions of the charter relative to civil service . . . by . . . directing all city appointments for the purpose of building up a personal political machine . . . .
3. . . . used . . . unbusinesslike methods . . . that will bankrupt the city . . . .
4. . . . interfered with the other commissioners . . . and attempted to usurp their functions without warrant or authority in law.
5. . . . (became) a menace to the business enterprises of the city . . . and had loaded a burden of taxes on the people under which they will suffer many years to come . . . .
6. . . . had appointed his relatives and political henchmen to city offices without regard to their fitness or qualification . . . .


7. . . . used his influence to release the Northern Pacific Railroad from building a viaduct . . . of great practical use and benefit to the city . . . .

There was some speculation as to what motivated Stambaugh. He and Roys had been active in the Democratic party together and had served in elective posts before at about the same time. However, he explained his action by saying: "I have talked to quite a lot of businessmen and about eight out of ten are in favor of the recall."2 Fawcett, on the other land, felt that Stambaugh was fronting for the Royal Arch, an association of saloon owners. He said: "One may spit on me, but I never will let them rub it in. My fight is with the Royal Arch, which started this recall . . . ."3

On February 8, Fawcett introduced an ordinance which set a 6 p.m. weekday closing time for all saloons— an obvious political warning to the Arch. However, three days later Safety Commissioner Roys, with the support of Works Commissioner Woods and Utilities Commissioner Nick Lawson, managed to table Fawcett's ordinance.

By late January, many of the reformers who had been active in the original campaign to bring commission government to Tacoma organized to bring recall charges against the entire City Council. By February 2, recall charges had been filed against Commissioners Roys, Lawson, Woods and Ray Freeland. The charges were slightly different from those filed against Fawcett and centered on the council's tolerance policy, the creation of unnecessary city positions, tampering with civil service, awarding contracts to favored contractors, and general mismanagement of city departments.

1Ibid.
By the end of February, enough signatures had been collected on the Fawcett petitions to call an election. Fawcett introduced the resolution authorizing his recall election for April 4. The second election for the other four commissioners was set for one month later.

Under the recall provisions of the commission charter, a removal election was essentially a re-run of the previous city election. There would be a primary and if the incumbent received over 50 per cent of the vote he would be returned to office. If the incumbent did not receive more than 50 per cent he would be forced into a runoff against the next highest candidate. In Fawcett's case that opponent became W. W. Seymour, the ideal reform candidate.

Seymour was a member of Tacoma's social elite. He was listed in the social register, was an active member of the University Club, Union Club, Tennis Club and Golf and Country Club, and president of the Grays Harbor Gas Company and the Bremerton Light and Fuel Company. His campaign advisory staff included former freeholders C. D. Ball, S. M. LeCrone, Henry A. Rhodes and A. U. Mills. In reviewing the concept of the commission plan, Seymour said:

It was the aim to harmonize; to correct abuses. To that extent I believe it has succeeded. It was aimed to get efficiency; I do not feel that has been accomplished. I lay that largely at the door of the present mayor. I do not believe that it was intended that one man should combine things to run city government—I believe that is practically what has already been done.

Nearly every civic group and association in the city swung their support behind Seymour's candidacy. Representatives from the Tacoma Women's Club,

1The charter provided that the incumbent charged with recall could resign within ten days after the filing of charges.


the Commercial Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Central Labor Union, the
Union Club, the University Club, Women's Collegiate Alumni, Alahoi Women's
Club, YWCA, YMCA, Central Improvement League, Tacoma Ministerial Alliance,
President's Council of Women's Clubs, Humane Society and Rotary endorsed
Seymour and worked actively in his campaign. The Ministerial Alliance,
an association of Protestant ministers, viewed Fawcett's defeat as a moral
crusade. During the heat of the campaign Rev. George Whithouse, a leader
of the alliance, was moved to say: "In casting a vote for Mayor Fawcett,
for men unable to support the law, you vote on the side of hell and nothing
else."

Many leaders of the women's suffrage movement committed themselves
to the election of Seymour. Mrs. A. E. Shores, active as a suffragette
and President of the Tacoma Women's Club, endorsed Seymour with the following
words:

Tacoma is a dirty city . . . so the men have told us. We women
will vote to make it clean because women are clean.
We have now in the race a good, clean hard-headed businessman
and we should all do our best to elect him.
We want a man who will not graft. Perhaps it is a good thing he
has plenty of money so he won't need to graft.

Seymour's most important support came from the executive leadership
of the Central Labor Council. Fawcett undoubtedly knew that most of the
city's civic associations would oppose him as well as church groups and the
women's clubs; but the loss of key labor support hurt politically. However,

2"Minister Keeps Up War on Mayor," Tacoma Daily News, Feb. 13, 1911,
p. 8.
3"Can't Be Lied to Says Women Speaker," Tacoma Daily News, March 28,
1911, p. 1.
the labor council did not formally endorse Seymour until March 31 when W. E. Clayton, secretary of the council, said: "So far as I have been able to find out, Seymour is strictly fair to labor. And union men will stay by him as a man fair to labor."\(^1\)

Clayton's statement came as the result of a charge by Fawcett supporter George Giblett that a committee of labor leaders supporting the Seymour candidacy had not been authorized by the full labor council.

In the first recall election, held on April 4, Seymour was able to edge Fawcett by 1,303 votes out of the 19,330 votes cast. However, Socialist candidate Edward Barth mustered nearly 18 per cent of the vote thus making a second election mandatory.

The reform forces had to be concerned about the results. Seymour had scored heavily, as expected, in the north end; but in the important south end wards he barely edged Barth for second place. Barth had actually outpolled Seymour in the sixth ward and the Socialist vote became potentially pivotal when Barth endorsed Fawcett the day after the election.

Fawcett's political machine of city workers, Democratic ward heelers and precinct workers held their own against the combined efforts of Tacoma's establishment. They worked hard for their boss and spent money to get him re-elected. The \textit{Daily News} reported:

\begin{quote}
Thirty men, amply supplied with money, are at work in Tacoma talking for Fawcett wherever they can find listeners. It is estimated that the mayor's campaign expenses are already running at least $100 a day.

Men who owe their positions in city hall to Mayor Fawcett nearly all are out today on the hustling for Fawcett . . . .\(^2\)
\end{quote}


On April 19, after one of the city's most vigorous campaigns, W. W. Seymour became Tacoma's second mayor under the commission system. Seymour managed to defeat Fawcett by 749 votes out of the 21,715 votes cast. The election, as we can see in the following table, showed the north end wards one, two, seven and eight behind Seymour while the south end remained loyal to the mayor:

**TABLE 8**

RESULTS OF THE RECALL ELECTION
APRIL 19, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wards</th>
<th>Per cent vote for Seymour</th>
<th>Per cent vote for Fawcett</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On May 17, the fourth recall election was held and Fawcett's antagonist on the council, Commissioner L. C. Roys, followed the mayor into retirement. Nick Lawson, Fawcett's chief supporter on the council, was also defeated. Owen Woods and Ray Freeland retained their council seats.

The administration of W. W. Seymour was one of the rare high points in the history of commission government in Tacoma. Seymour was the ideal, textbook commissioner—experienced in business, honest, unaligned with any political party and deeply concerned with the welfare of the community. But

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1 Hunt, p. 263.
Seymour did not view himself as a professional politician; his interests were mainly in the private sector and at the conclusion of his term he retired from public life.

On April 23, 1914 A. V. Fawcett was once again elected to office. He was re-elected in 1922. In 1926 M. G. Tennant defeated Fawcett in his bid for a fifth term.

The First Campaign for Council-Manager Government

The thought that council-manager government might be appropriate for the city of Tacoma gained its first public credibility two months before A. V. Fawcett's election to a fourth term as mayor. On February 17, 1922, Fred Shoemaker, the retiring city controller, urged that the city embrace the manager plan in a statement released to the press.\(^1\) Shoemaker argued that commission government had failed because of the constant friction and lack of cooperation on the City Council. He suggested that the government could be run more efficiently by trained experts "hired for the same money now being paid to the elected commissioner."\(^2\)

Three years after Shoemaker's pronouncement, the first full-scale movement in support of the council-manager plan began in Tacoma. Support for the plan was generated by the Federation of Improvement Clubs under the leadership of C. F. Mason. On January 28, 1925, Walter McDowell, president of the Kiwanis Club, openly endorsed the council-manager concept. McDowell called for the formation of a council of the presidents of all of the major service clubs to consider the possibility of co-jointly supporting a major

\(^1\)"City Manager Plan Favored by Shoemaker," Tacoma News Tribune, Feb. 18, 1922, p. 1.

\(^2\)Ibid.
campaign for a council-manager charter for Tacoma. By the end of the month, leaders of the Federation of Improvement Clubs and the city's five major service groups had formally endorsed the council-manager idea. Another surprise endorsee and member of the group was the Tacoma Central Labor Council represented by two members from the council's executive committee.

In March, the coalition of reform interests released a report in which they called for the formation of a committee of 100 citizens "representing every worthy business interest, every club and organization and every race and creed in Tacoma." They suggested that the committee be empowered with the following authority:

1. To frame a council-manager charter and to provide the necessary legal safeguards to see that charter is placed before the people.
2. To select and secure sufficient numbers of high-caliber candidates for election by popular vote to positions on the City Council.
3. To carry on an educational campaign for enlightenment of the public.
4. To take charge in directing election campaigns.

The report concluded with the following declaration of purpose:

We believe this form of government will give a dollar's worth of results for every dollar spent . . . that it will eliminate waste; that it will bring to the city of Tacoma the services of the best businessmen we have as commissioners or director; that it is more responsive to the public will because the people are in direct contact with those in authority; that the economies of business administration will reduce the public debt, and either reduce our taxes or with taxes remaining at the present rate make possible unprecedented public improvements; that stimulate and maintain interest in city government; that it is a superior form of government because it has been adopted in 352 cities and found to work. It has been abandoned in only three cities and an explanation other than a failure of the plan is to be found in each.

During the push to generate public interest in the plan, the coalition sponsored a visit to Tacoma by Walter J. Millard, secretary of the National

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1"Manager Plan Urged in 1925," Tacoma Ledger, March 13, 1934, p. 4.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Municipal League. Millard spoke at a number of meetings where he explained the concept of proportional representation and argued for more efficiency in government. The visit by Millard seemed to signal the end rather than the beginning of this reform effort, however. Despite the optimistic planning and the support of a number of key groups in the community, the formal reform movement never really began. The citizen committee of 100 was not formed, the campaign for a charter was not waged and the group did not aim any education program at the public.

There were a number of possible reasons for the failure of this movement. One was the general state of affairs nationally. The economy during this, the Coolidge era, was healthy and people in general seemed satisfied. But, probably the main contributing factor was the City Council's action in calling a freeholder election to revise the commission charter in 1926. Several chief supporters of the city manager plan ran for a position on the freeholder commission. One candidate was Fred Shoemaker.

Shoemaker, who was elected a freeholder, reported that at one point during the charter deliberations the manager forces had a one vote majority in favor of incorporating a "council-manager method" into the commission charter. However, the advantage was a temporary one and the new charter which emerged from the freeholder sessions was essentially the same as the one proposed in 1909. On March 8, 1927 the revised charter was approved by Tacoma voters by a relatively close vote. The changes in the commission charter included the following: authorization for the city to enter into long-term contracts with industries for the use of the power and water


utilities, centralization of city purchasing procedures under a board of contracts, new and stronger civil service provisions, and new formal investigating authority for the mayor. ¹

The second reform effort

The second serious effort to bring a council-manager charter to Tacoma began in 1933 with the formation of an ad hoc citizen committee for better government.

C. F. Mason was a key organizer of this campaign as he had been in 1925. The revised charter had been passed by the voters, but this and the failure of the first reform effort did not faze Mason's determination to see council-manager government come to Tacoma.

In early 1929, he commented:

The recent report of our city controller regarding city finances, and the fact that our taxes are climbing higher every year and that more property is being taken over by the city for unpaid assessments, convinces me that a change in our form of government is absolutely necessary to stop us from going into bankruptcy and owing to the fact that the manager form of government has saved many cities... from bankruptcy and is a proven form of government... that is getting results by reducing taxes, paying off... indebtedness and placing cities on a business basis, should be sufficient evidence that... the form... should be adopted.²

Between 1925 and 1929, economic and social conditions had changed dramatically in Tacoma and in the nation as a whole. The country was plunged into a depression; banks were closing and city municipalities were going bankrupt. In Mason's eyes Tacoma's government was being totally unresponsive to this critical state of affairs. He said: "Politics interferes with business too much, there is too much passing the buck and a lack of

¹"New Charter in Force June 1," Tacoma Ledger, May 1, 1927, p. 1.

²"City Manager for Tacoma Urged by C. F. Mason," Tacoma News Tribune, Feb. 6, 1929, p. 1.
responsibility under our present system." Mason believed that the answer to this dilemma was a system where it would be easy to fix responsibility and centralize power. That kind of system was embodied in the manager plan where "a board of directors is elected to make the laws, lay out plans and decide what should or should not be done." The board, of course, would hire a manager to see to it that the city corporation was run efficiently and economically.

By the 1930's Tacoma's economy had reached a critical stage. Revenues were decreasing and many citizens were continuing simply to forfeit their properties rather than pay taxes. City employees were on the warrant system with the prospect of city wages and salaries being discounted anywhere from 5 to 30 per cent.

Many civic leaders were looking for a way to improve the situation and were not encouraged by what they were seeing at city hall. Roy Sharp, active in Tacoma's improvement clubs and civic associations, commented:

So great has grown the public disgust in Tacoma with the conduct of affairs at city hall that some of our best citizens actually encouraged the non-payment of taxes last year until assurances were given that conditions would be improved.

In the summer of 1933, the citizens' committee, under the chairmanship of businessman Gerald Longstreth had begun a petition drive to request the City Council to hold a freeholders' election. By September, the committee had collected 7,180 signatures on twenty-two petitions. The council, under the leadership of Mayor M. G. Tennant, was not underestimating the possible success


2 Ibid.


4 Ibid.
of the reform campaign. The mayor and council had been willing to hear Longstreth's demands for a freeholders' election in early summer. Their response then was to take the matter under advisement. But the petition drive, which began as a result of the council's delay, was gaining some momentum in the community. The council and Tennant would have to deal with the reformers in some direct way.

In December, the committee filed the petitions and although the city clerk had declared the number of signatures insufficient to call an election, Longstreth was ready once again to confront the council over the question. On January 15, 1934, Longstreth and his committee members were present at the City Council meeting ready to present their case when Tennant pulled a political coup. As the meeting began, Tennant moved to place on the March 13 ballot a yes or no advisory proposition on the question of whether to call a special freeholders' election for the purpose of writing a council-manager charter.¹ Tennant then moved to set aside a $10,000 emergency appropriation to finance the special election if the proposition were approved.

The Tennant resolution placed the council-manager proponents at a distinct political disadvantage. First, there would be no freeholder candidates running for positions on the ballot. Thus, the opportunity to campaign actively for the measure by offering name candidates on the ballot was lost. Second, Tennant and the City Council had symbolically used the question of government increased spending against the manager forces. A "yes" vote on the proposition would mean an additional government expenditure of $10,000 and another special election in April or May. The entire thrust of the campaign by the reform group was to cut wasteful governmental expenditures. In the mind of the voter, a positive vote would mean additional

unnecessary expense out of his pocket. By voting no, the voter would be cutting back that expense. Third, the measure was placed on the ballot with a highly unpopular proposition for new sewer construction. Even the newspapers were strongly opposed to the sewer program. The negative reaction to the construction measure was bound to have some carry over to the next proposition on the ballot. Fourth, organized labor as represented by the Central Labor Council was on record as being opposed to the council-manager plan. Therefore, an influential interest group was actively working against the proposition in the community. Since the measure on the ballot was a simple yes or no matter, the task of organized labor in getting the workingman in the community to vote the right way would be a relatively simple matter. Fifth, the proposition was on the ballot at the same time as the regular city elections. The mayor's office and the public safety commissionship were both up for election. This meant that more people would be at the polls, city employees opposed to the charter would be active in the campaign, and the candidates for the two important offices would have an opportunity to work against the manager proposition.

Finally, one other highly emotional issue was interjected during the campaign. The issue was first brought up by Utilities Commissioner Ira Davisson at a point when the council began discussions on the manager plan. During one such discussion, Davisson charged: "You haven't any doubt in your mind what will happen to the utilities if placed in the hands of the Chamber of Commerce do you? Good god, you shouldn't be blind to that." Davisson had,

1Ibid., p. 2.
with his statement, added the question of private versus public power to the issue of council-manager government for Tacoma. Since many members of the chamber had endorsed private power and also the council-manager plan, the two issues soon became intertwined. The following editorial in the Labor Advocate shows how organized labor used the two issues:

But you should recall that in all its steps to control the industry, the private power interests have moved with duplicity, insincerity and actual subterfuge...
...we find...many of those who tried to balk every step in the development of Tacoma’s superior municipal power plant are lined up to a man in favor of the manager plan.¹

Even with these overwhelming disadvantages, the citizens’ committee did actively campaign for the proposition. One strategy used by the reform group was an appeal to their greatest area of vulnerability, the south end blue-collar section of town. Fred Shoemaker led their appeal with a number of speeches. In one such speech he pointed out:

...my real criticism of the commission plan is that it is neither democratic nor representative. How often, for example, have South Tacoma’s had a commissioner? McKinley Hill has never had one. The women voters have never been represented by a commissioner; certainly they are entitled to representation. Labor has had a representative just once and that was when the Central Labor Council got up on its ear some years ago and elected Ray Harrison.²

The newspapers were in favor of the proposition and offered their support. The following editorial from the News Tribune states the case for the plan and also indicates the nature of the political opposition:

The TNT does not believe that the council-manager form of government would work a great miracle in Tacoma or create a municipal utopia. But it does believe that it would establish a system whereby the people could obtain honest, capable and business-like government with less effort than through any other form thus far devised. Vigilance of the people, of course, is required to make any kind of government succeed.

¹"Editorial--The City Manager Plan," Tacoma Labor Advocate, March 9, 1934, p. 3.
Cities with managers quite uniformly are in good financial condition and their tax rates are relatively low. Cincinnati and other cities are an inspiration to municipalities suffering from financial ills and political inefficiency.

Opponents of this new form of government are saying that the "power trust" is trying to get a stranglehold on Tacoma through the city manager. That is all bosh. It so happens that many progressive leaders are heart and soul behind the manager plan.

A vote for council-manager government will be a vote to make possible better government and lower taxes for Tacoma.¹

The proposition managed to carry in the first and second wards but failed city wide with a 41 per cent yes vote. Proposition two, dealing with sewer bonds, received a 20 per cent favorable vote. Only 60 per cent of the voters who had cast ballots for mayor and public safety commissioner candidates bothered to vote on either proposition. Usually such a voter fall-off would have helped the reform forces, and perhaps it did, but the strongly negative reaction to the sewer bonds measure seemed to neutralize any advantages gained.

After the defeat of the proposition, Gerald Longstreth made the following comments:

The vote on the manager issue indicates that a majority of the citizens of Tacoma are satisfied with our existing plan of city government. Government reform is always a slow and painful process, and most citizens are apathetic until something goes radically wrong. Most manager cities have adopted the . . . plan following some great upheaval, like a flood, tornado, or conflagration, or by some revelation of bad graft.²

The remainder of this chapter will deal with the economic and political setting of Tacoma in the years immediately preceding the successful reform that brought council-manager government to Tacoma.

¹"Editorial--Sewers and City Manager," Tacoma News Tribune, March 9, 1934, p. 15.

With the advent of World War Two, Tacoma's economy once again began to boom. The city benefited from being located in one of the largest military centers in the nation. Fort Lewis, located just a few miles south of the city's boundaries, was a major training center during the war years in 1942-1945 and also during the later Korean action. McChord Field, also located just south of Tacoma, became a large-scale bomber base during both military engagements. These two military installations averaged 28,000 military personnel yearly during the 1940's, 50's and 60's. The following table gives an indication of the impact of the military establishments on Tacoma's economy.

### TABLE 9

**AVERAGE YEARLY MONIES EXPENDED BY MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS 1940-50 (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Military &amp; Civilian Salaries</th>
<th>Procurement, Construction, etc.</th>
<th>Total for Each Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort Lewis</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McChord</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Rainier Ord. Depot</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Murray</td>
<td>2.3 (total)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madigan Hospital</td>
<td>5 (total)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Expenditures per Year (1940-50)--Millions of Dollars: 135.8

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During this same period, Tacoma's population grew by 34,265 people while the surrounding Pierce County added 93,795 new residents. Tacoma municipal revenues were also increasing at a rapid rate. From 1945-60, for example, the assessed valuation of taxable properties increased from $61,524,530 to $156,676,865.¹

However, even during this period of growing prosperity, Tacoma's commission form of government was being severely criticized. In September, 1942, Mayor Harry P. Cain released a two-year study of municipal government which recommended that the legislative and administrative functions of the City Commission be "completely divorced."² By implication, the report suggested that the council should be given strictly legislative, policy-making functions and the executive authority should be invested in one responsible administrator. Cain outlined the following three general weaknesses in the commission government:

(1) No practical way of coordinating the activities of our departments;
(2) No single, responsible executive administrator: a) No one with authority to make emergency or rapid decisions. b) No one with overall, balanced view of the financial needs of each department; (3) No actual or workable division of the legislative and administrative functions of government.³

The Tacoma Times, in commenting on the Cain report, made the following observation: "The mayor would appear to have in mind a council-manager form of government as the remedy for the suggested flaws."⁴

But during the early 1940's there was no general ground swell for change in the form of government. Reformers, after being defeated twice in

¹Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
attempts to bring about a council-manager charter, were waiting for the "great upheaval" that would lead the citizens to demand a change. However, the wait was a short one; events from 1946 on did lead to a ground swell that made council-manager government possible. A discussion of those events will follow.

The Issue of Vice and Corruption

Tacoma has had a long and rather troubled history of vice and corruption. In the early days, the city was a logging and railroad center. During this period, it was felt by many leaders of the community that an open town had to be tolerated to allow for recreation for the tremendous increase of single, working men. Even dedicated and honest political leaders, such as Mayor Louis Campbell, found it difficult if not impossible to close the city. During and after World War Two, these conditions once again openly returned to Tacoma. There were large numbers of single men with money to spend. Gambling and prostitution became more and more of a problem until, in 1943, Mayor Cain called in the Washington State Patrol to raid a number of downtown gambling establishments operated by the "Tong," the Chinese underworld. These raids led Cain to file impeachment charges against Public Safety Commissioner Einar Langseth on April 26, 1943.¹ Before Cain formally filed his charges, he made the following statement to the press:

On Friday, April 16, officers of the Washington State Patrol invaded the premises known as 1347½ Broadway. Eleven Chinese gamblers were arrested. . . . this raid was arranged to stamp out large scale gambling . . . . The raid was conducted by the State Patrol because of the fact that some of those to whom the council and citizens look for law enforcement are either stupid, incompetent, blind or dishonest.²


On April 30, the impeachment hearing was formally conducted with Mayor Cain presenting the case for the prosecution. Defending Langseth was E. K. Murray, a former freeholder and corporation counsel.

During the hearings, it soon became obvious that Cain did not have the votes necessary for conviction. Langseth commented: "I have never seen a cleaner city. This town is in fine shape and I think I have done a good job."\(^1\) As the hearing concluded, Murray waived his right to rebuttal argument and met with Commissioner C. V. Fawcett [Angelo's son], A. R. Bergerson, and R. D. O'Neil.\(^2\) After their discussion with Murray, the three commissioners voted for acquittal.

Vice and corruption continued to make Tacoma headlines from the end of the war until the early 1950's. The entire question became the focal point of serious conflicts in the police department from 1946-48. The next section will deal with this conflict.

The vigilantes

The question of vice and graft in the police department broke into the headlines in 1946-47 when four dissident police officers, who termed themselves the "vigilantes," were dismissed from office by Public Safety Commissioner Robert S. Temme for "insubordination," "incompetency," "offensive conduct," and "conduct unbecoming an officer."\(^3\) The group, led by Anthony Zatkovich, had raided a number of gambling establishments during April, 1947, without prior authorization from the chief of police. After their dismissal, the "vigilantes" appealed their case to the Civil

\(^1\)"Langseth Wins, 3 to 1," *Tacoma News Tribune*, May 1, 1943, p. 1.

\(^2\)Ibid.

Service Commission. The case lasted three months, covered 1,242 pages of testimony, and brought to the surface a story of police graft, gambling payoffs and dissension and conflict in the police department.

During the hearings, there was charge and counter-charge from both sides. On May 1, 1947, Police Chief William Farrar testified that Zatkovich and the other officers, Eugene Reardon, Ted Strand, and Hardwick Smith, were being directed by Vitto Cuttone, an alleged underworld figure and head of the city's pinball and slot machine rackets.1 Farrar quoted an informant as telling him that a known syndicate gambler had said: "If I can't control gambling in Tacoma with the vigilantes on my side, then no one else will."2 Farrar also implied that the vigilante raid were prearranged. He claimed that they merely "walked into an establishment then out" while newspaper reporters and photographers took pictures.3

On the other side, defense attorneys produced witnesses that verified payoffs and protection money as high as $1,000 per month so that illegal slot machines in downtown Tacoma could be operated. Eugene Reardon testified that he and the other vigilantes had been ordered by Temme not to go into any gambling establishments unless called in by the proprietors. He asserted that the vigilantes were certain that efforts had been made to "frame" them by members of the police department.4 He said: "We wanted to get rid of the vice lords in this town who have been here for thirty years."5 The

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2Ibid.

3Ibid.


5Ibid.
vigilantes were supported in their cause by Rev. Loyal H. Vickers, executive secretary of the Council of Churches, who declared: "If the dismissal of the four vigilante police officers . . . is sustained then future possibilities of law enforcement in our city are very remote." ¹

It was somewhat questionable just how altruistic the motives of the vigilantes really were. Zatkovich and Strand had been exiled by Police Chief Tom Ross to the city's "Siberian" beat in the early 1940's. The "Siberian" beat, located in an outlying area near the city's southern boundaries, was reserved for "those officers out of favor with their superiors." ² Farrar testified that Zatkovich and the others approached him in 1946 to lead the vigilantes as a means of embarrassing Commissioner-elect Temme into not reappointing Ross police chief. Later during the civil service hearings, Police Captain Larry Amundsen stated:

"There had been quarreling on both sides--quarreling and bickering--for the past year. Some did not want to work with others and these conditions existed ever since I have been on the police force." ³

The testimony continued as follows:

Defense Attorney: "You said two sides. Are there two sides to the police department?"

Amundsen: "They do take sides for and against the vigilantes."

Defense Attorney: "There have always been sides in the police department?"

Amundsen: "Nothing like in the past year."

Defense Attorney: "That conditions have existed ever since you have been on the force? There have been ups and downs, peaks and lows?"

Amundsen: "That's right." (Italics mine.)⁴

From the tenor of the testimony it appeared that the vigilantes and non-vigilantes on the force represented two factions competing for power.


² "New Chief of Police Controversial Figure," Tacoma News Tribune, May 17, 1951, p. 1.


⁴ Ibid.
The vigilantes had taken action to embarrass the administration and thereby gain control of the department. Indeed, they finally did gain control with the election of James Kerr as public safety commissioner in 1950. Both Zatkovich and Strand became close advisors to Kerr and in April, 1951, Zatkovich became chief of police. In August, 1951, Zatkovich left office as police chief shortly after a vice report stated:

Tacoma leads the Northwest in prostitution and fringe activities. Vice in every form is rampant, with total lack of enforcement, or even acceptable police action.¹

The discussion of James Kerr's controversial term as safety commissioner will follow.

The Election of James T. Kerr as Public Safety Commissioner

The era of Public Safety Commissioner James T. Kerr was one of the most controversial periods in Tacoma's political history. Kerr's election in 1950 and the consequent bickering and conflicts on the City Council created a political climate which demanded change in government. The story of Jim Kerr's political rise and fall was an important prelude to the successful campaign to bring council-manager government to Tacoma.

Kerr was a new face on the political scene in 1950. On the surface, at least, he appeared to be the ideal reform candidate. He arrived in Tacoma in 1937, helped establish a real estate company and in 1940 married Elva E. Donahue, widow of Frank D. Oakly prominent attorney and member of Tacoma's social elite. Kerr's marriage gave him instant respectability.²


²Patrick M. Steele, former Tacoma Councilman, indicated in an interview with the writer on Aug. 12, 1970, that Kerr's reputation before arriving in Tacoma was not the most respectable. Steele noted: "I knew the guy while I was in law school in Seattle. At the time he was selling gravesites. He was a real rounder if there ever was one."
He became active in most of Tacoma's social and improvement clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the Tacoma Athletic Commission and the First Congregational Church.

Kerr's run for the office of public safety commissioner, his first, came at the urging of Tacoma's Council of Churches and one of its founders, the Rev. Harold B. Long. The church group, much in the forefront of a continuing crusade to stamp out vice in the community, had been actively seeking a candidate to run for public safety commissioner after it had demanded that incumbent Robert Temme resign in 1946. Kerr, with his connections and active involvement in Tacoma social activities, was an excellent candidate. In 1948 his name became well-known in the community as a whole as a result of a European "travel survey flight" for the Washington Travel Bureau, a company owned by his wife. Kerr made headlines by passing out bars of soap as a publicity gimmick for a Tacoma hotel.

During his campaign for office, Kerr promised to restore dignity to the police department by appointing a police chief who "will command respect and confidence of the people." He also promised to "cooperate fully with other members of the City Council," "keep all forms of vice down to a minimum" and maintain a unified police department. The Kerr campaign was highlighted by a series of open letters to the citizens of Tacoma drafted by Long and appearing in the News Tribune in the weeks preceding the primary in February, 1950. The letters, written in a homey, down-to-earth style, seemed to catch the imagination of Tacoma voters. In the primary, Kerr

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1Long admitted his association in an interview in January, 1971.
4Ibid.
received nearly 50 per cent of the vote cast in a field of eleven candidates.

Kerr's political behavior

Shortly after winning office in March, Kerr announced five points to serve as a basis for his policies. He stated:

1. I want to be known as a councilman interested in all of the city's problems and not a glorified policeman.
2. I will not select my top men until I know what is needed in the departments.
3. I will not interfere with the other commissioners doing their jobs.
4. I will devote all my time to the office.
5. I will encourage young policeman to pursue their duties vigorously and honestly and to study police work for their own promotion and advancement of the department.1

From the time of his taking office in June until his forced resignation in January, 1952, Kerr's behavior as public safety commissioner became increasingly erratic. The following series of events highlight the period:

In May, one month before taking office, Kerr began a 6,000 mile cross country trip to "interview city officials and law enforcement officials in many states."2 His odyssey ended in Washington, D.C., where he conferred with FBI officials. Kerr reported: "Don't let anyone fool you--those boys know what's going on."3 On June 5, shortly after his return to Tacoma, he appointed Hans L. Kabel chief of police. Kabel, who managed Kerr's automobile garage before his appointment, had never served as a police officer.4

One week later, while attending a conference in Walla Walla, Washington, Kerr was arrested for drunken driving. In a speech before the thirty

3 Ibid.
ranking officers of the Tacoma Police Department, Kerr explained:

You fellows hear lots of stories, some of them about your commissioner. I hear them, too. You hear this and you hear that—even that your commissioner got in jail over in Walla Walla and I don't know that. I hear just as many stories as you do—don't forget that.

But I tell you fellows, I wasn't really in jail over in Walla Walla. I was just making whoopee. It was just a story. Like some of what I hear about you.¹

During the same meeting, Kerr explained the role of his two newly appointed counsellors—former vigilantes Ted Strand and Anthony Zatkovich:

You've also heard the story that Officers Strand and Zatkovich here are your real commissioners and that I just worked for them. It's going around. Nicest story I've heard for a long time. They're two mighty fine fellows and have been my good counsellors. I'd a lot rather have it said that I worked for them—than that I worked for some underworld character, like they've said about some other people.²

As Kerr's activities became more and more criticized, especially by his fellow commissioners, he began to hint at a conspiracy. In August, in an open letter to the citizens of Tacoma, Kerr wrote:

I have been collecting information and affidavits about conditions as they have existed in Tacoma. These make very interesting reading. They are being kept in a safe and are to be published if anything happens to me during my term of office.³

Later in November, he wrote:

The cancer that has afflicted Tacoma has infected many strange places. Sometimes it seems as though I were almost alone in wanting to make this a clean, prosperous, happy city.⁴

On January 2, 1951, Kerr announced a further attempt to clamp a lid on all gambling and prostitution. Following an inspection of the city's lower Broadway area, he said: "I'm going to sit out on the curb and arrest every fag, grafter and prostitute that tries to enter these joints."⁵

²Ibid.
On January 13, Kerr ordered Police Chief Kabel to allow the reopening of the city's downtown card rooms. Kabel explained: "There will be no gambling at all. No one can spend any money on cards." \(^1\)

On March 2, the City Council, under the removal powers granted by the city charter, fired Chief Kabel during a "wild name-calling table-pounding meeting." \(^2\) The firing of Kabel followed his removal of popular police captain Al Farrar from the detective division one week earlier. The meeting was highlighted by a pushing and shoving match between Kerr and Finance Commissioner L. W. Craig. The physical confrontation followed charges by Kerr that the council was "a bunch of little czars," that all of the members but Mayor John Anderson had tolerated large scale "payoffs" under previous administrations, and that Craig had tried to stop the police from licensing all pinball machines in the city. \(^3\) Public Works Commissioner Jack Roberts introduced the motion to remove Kabel with the following questions to the other councilmen:

Do you believe Mr. Kabel has a complete lack of knowledge of operations of the morals and license squads? Do you believe the chief of police has failed to carry out his duties as required by the city charter? Do you believe he acts as chief in name only? \(^4\)

The vote on Kabel's removal was three-to-one in favor with Mayor Anderson abstaining. After the vote Anderson indicated that Kabel had told him that he "could do a much better job of cleaning up the morals situation if the morals squad was under his command." \(^5\) Earlier, Anderson had indicated that the provost marshal of the nearby Fort Lewis had told him that he had never seen a city with a morals squad not under the chief of police.

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
Conflict on the council reached a highpoint again on April 12 when Kerr attempted to renominate Kabel as police chief and introduced a report comparing the Kabel reign with past administrations. Roberts moved to table the motion amidst shouts from Kerr and his friends residing in the council chambers. One Kerr ally, State Representative A. L. "Slim" Rasmussen, rose to his feet to shout:

I've seen all forms of tight rule in the legislature--but never in my life have I seen the type of gag rule rammed through here just now! Why don't you want this report aired? We are entitled to know.1

Before the end of the evening, however, the council did authorize a vice investigation by special investigators out of the mayor's office. Kerr voted for the probe stating: "It'll save me a lot of trouble."2

On May 17 Kerr nominated Anthony Zatkovich as chief of police. The nomination was seconded by Anderson and the council voted four-to-one in favor. Finance Commissioner Craig commented: "I've felt all along that Tony Zatkovich has been chief of police."3 During Kabel's short and controversial term as chief, several council members had repeatedly referred to Zatkovich as the "unofficial chief of police."

On August 17 Anderson's vice report, which had been commissioned in May, was made public. It said, in part, that the city was leading the Northwest in "prostitution and fringe activities."4 The report continued:

Vice in every form is rampant, with a total lack of enforcement, or even acceptable police action.

... there is a lack of any semblance of law enforcement ... which could only lead to the conclusion that fixing and corruption of public officials is present ... .5

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1 Jim Faber, "Council Sets Vice Probe," Tacoma News Tribune, April 12, 1951, p. 1.
2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
While the report was being made public during the day, County Prosecuting Attorney John J. O'Connell was telling the Young Men's Business Club:

It is impossible for any degree of vice to operate in a city without the knowledge of the police. It is a popular fallacy that a little vice is a good thing from a standpoint of tourism and the encouragement of business. Take prostitution for example:
First, it is morally wrong, and it lowers the moral tone of the entire city. It is legally and socially wrong. It promotes graft.1

Two days after the report was released, Zatkovich left his position as chief of police.

From the time that Zatkovich left office, Kerr attempted to give the impression that a new and tougher policy was being implemented by the police. On August 28, Kerr issued an order which said, in part:

Each man will be responsible for the control of all vice on his designated beat or assignment and each prowl car officer will be held responsible for the control of vice in his district. Each detective will be responsible for the control of any vice that might come to his attention during his tour of duty.2

Two months later, Kerr set an example for the force by personally leading a raid on the notorious Union Hotel in downtown Tacoma. Kerr raided the suspected house of prostitution by using a hook and ladder rig from the fire department and leading a charge of police officers up through the second story windows of the hotel.

The period from Kerr's taking office in June 1950 to the end of summer in 1951 set the foundation for his eventual resignation from office in January of 1952. During this period, Kerr's one ally on the council, fellow political newcomer John Anderson, turned against him. Anderson had believed that Kerr was basically capable and deserved a chance in the beginning. But after the

1Ibid.
release of the vice report in August Anderson's mood and position on the
council changed. In December Anderson announced that he was going to file
impeachment proceedings against Kerr. This followed Kerr's dismissal of
Fire Chief Charles J. Eisenbacher and popular police officer Al Farrar. On
January 16, Anderson filed four impeachment charges with the Tacoma city clerk.
The charges stated:

1. That Kerr was under the influence of intoxicating liquor when he
summarily dismissed and removed Fire Chief Charles D. Eisenbacher.
2. That the safety commissioner was intoxicated ... during an official
meeting and at that time conducted himself in a disgraceful and disorderly
manner and fashion.
3. That Kerr acting in his official capacity intervened in a liquor
law violation case and ordered the charges dropped although he had
personal knowledge that intoxicating liquors were, from time to time,
illegally sold at same premises.
4. That Kerr while under the influence of intoxicating liquors required
policemen to act as his personal chauffeur and companion and to use
equipment of the police department to transport him and his friends
from place to place.2

The next day, Kerr responded to the charges in a speech before the
Tacoma Bar Association. The speech was Kerr's last hurrah and it exemplified
the mystifying behavior of the man. He said that the council had pre-judged
him and that even before he was to take office they had selected a successor.
"Had he been named," Kerr claimed, "we'd again have two people pulling the
vice strings and telling the people to go to hell."3 On the other hand, he
continued, a "little vice isn't bad for any city."4 "And during my administra-
tion," he said, "people have been made conscious of conditions in their city
as they never have been before."5 On January 21, before the council could

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
vote on an impeachment trial, Kerr resigned from office.

Kerr's erratic behavior, his inconsistencies in dealing with vice and his questionable choices for police chief all contributed to a general feeling in the community that change was needed. However, the nature and extent of the change had not been fully defined. One recall campaign directed at Kerr did begin in 1951, and ended when Mayor Anderson filed impeachment charges. But even with Kerr out of office, an urge to do something more dramatic, to change the system in a more specific way continued to grow in the community. This strong feeling was probably motivated by two other events which took place during the period of Kerr's tenure in office. The two events were the Rosellini crime hearings which took place in November, 1951 and the Tudor Commission report which was made public in October, 1951. A discussion of these two events will follow.

The Rosellini crime hearings

As we have seen, James Kerr's political battles with his fellow commissioners made continuing headlines while he was in office. However, the height of controversy concerning Tacoma's government probably occurred late in November 1951 when State Senator Albert Rosellini's crime investigating committee held hearings in the city.

The eight-man legislative committee was established by the State Legislative Council, which was controlled by the Democratic party, in early 1951. The committee's formal mission was solely of an information gathering nature. Senator Rosellini, a former Tacoman, indicated that the hearings would:

... provide the committee with a picture of crime and vice conditions on a local level. Findings will provide a basis for recommendations on corrective legislation.1

1Jim Faber, "Vice Probe to Begin," Tacoma News Tribune, Nov. 25, 1951, p. 1.
However, the committee did have the authority to issue subpoenas and punish recalcitrant witnesses for contempt. In this regard, Rosellini's chief investigator, Thomas Judge, described the purpose as follows:

We feel that the hearings will clear the air of a lot of charges and countercharges regarding vice conditions...some prosecutions could result from the hearings.¹

Some political observers felt that the real purpose of the committee hearings was to boost Senator Rosellini's bid for the state governorship. These suspicions were heightened when Rosellini authorized state-wide television coverage of hearing sessions over the strong objections of State Representative Gordon J. Brown of Tacoma. Brown charged that the television coverage would serve as an "infringement on personal rights" and suggested that the entire process be handled by a grand jury.² Whatever Rosellini's true intentions were, he did eventually run for governor and was elected to that office in 1956.

The hearings themselves were fraught with controversy almost from the very beginning. On the second day, former police officer Don Davies charged that police officials up to the safety commissioner were receiving payoffs from gambling operations and houses of prostitution. During his testimony, Davies was asked about an alleged house of prostitution run by an Ann Thompson on lower Broadway. The questioning went as follows:

Q. [Counsel George Kahim] 'Did you ever see Mr. Kerr at that address?'
A. [Ann Thompson's establishment] 'Yes.'
Q. 'Mr. Zatkovich?'
A. 'Yes.'
Q. 'Mr. Strand?'

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
A. 'Yes.'
Q. 'What was Mr. Kerr's condition?'
A. 'He was being helped downstairs.'
Q. 'Had he been hurt?'
A. 'No, apparently he was under the influence of liquor.' (italics mine.)

Two days later, Alma Jackson, self-confessed madame, charged that she paid $3,200 in payoffs to two police officers who served on Police Chief Jack Elich's "secret six" special investigation unit. Miss Jackson went on to tell of a man named "Pete" who had called and told her it would cost $1,000 a month for her establishment not to be raided.

Another notorious night life figure, Amanda Truelove, owner of the Union Hotel, related details of a two to three hour visit she had with Kerr shortly before he took office in June, 1950. She said that Kerr bought a number of small bottles of whiskey, became "polluted" and fell off the sofa. She went on to allege that for a number of months after the Kerr administration began she paid $1,000 a month for protection of her liquor business. She testified that the protection money was reduced to $800 late in the summer of 1951 following a visit to Kerr's office. She claimed that Zatkovich, then police chief, was present at the meeting.

Kerr, Zatkovich and the other police officers named during the hearings all claimed that the charges were lies. Kerr demanded that a grand jury be called to air the testimony offered during the probe. Kerr said: "We have had ... days of wild pitching. It's time we called in an umpire into the game."

3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
On Saturday, the last day of the hearings, Rosellini adjourned the meeting with the following admonishment:

We definitely know that some people committed perjury this week. The transcript of the testimony will be turned over to the proper authorities, and perhaps some of those people will be brought to task.¹

The Tudor committee report

Television coverage of the Rosellini hearings gave the citizens of the state of Washington a glimpse of the political happenings in Tacoma--soon to be termed "Seattle's dirty back yard." The hearings were an embarrassment to most Tacomaans. However, the timing of the probe served to reinforce the findings of an earlier citizens' committee appointed by Mayor John Anderson. This committee, chaired by political scientist Hugh J. Tudor, was given the task of investigating Tacoma's governmental system and making recommendations for changes in that system. But before discussing that report and its recommendation, this study will first examine the background of events leading up to it.

As previously noted, Mayor John "Big John" Anderson was as new to the political scene in 1950 as Safety Commissioner James Kerr. In many ways, he was of the same mold as Kerr. He was an attractive reform candidate--a hardworking businessman, lovable, a dedicated Boy Scout leader and, as one news commentator was to describe him, the "happiest Elk of them all."²

Anderson claimed that he was running for mayor because of the disgraceful conduct of the incumbent C. Val Fawcett. Indeed, at one meeting of Big John's Boy Scout troop Mayor Fawcett appeared on the guest platform "stumbling drunk."³

¹Ibid.
Later, Big John was to say that Fawcett's appearance was the last straw; from that point on Anderson was committed to running for mayor. The probable key to Anderson's decision to run, however, was the support offered by the then Public Works Commissioner Jack Roberts.¹

Anderson's campaign strategy was to carry his message to "the people." In this case, the people were the Elks, Lions, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs and his message was essentially the same—"Big John is for big changes."² The recommendations for big changes would come from a citizens' committee Big John promised to appoint upon being elected to office.

However, it wasn't until May of 1951 that Anderson appointed his committee. The controversy in government by that time had reached a fevered pitch. Kerr had appointed Zatkovich police chief and by month's end a recall committee began campaigning to oust the safety commissioner. The political timing for a "big change" committee was perfect. Many people were looking for some direction in government including the use of a recall movement if necessary.³ A citizens' committee at this point seemed to be the most appropriate course of action.

Anderson appointed Professor Hugh J. Tudor, chairman of the political science department at the College of Puget Sound, to head the committee. Also selected was the executive secretary of the League of Women Voters, a member of the city Library Board, a member of the Park Board, the manager of the Tacoma Smelter, several attorneys and prominent businessmen and a representative from the Central Labor Council.

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³The recall experience of 1910 could very well have served as a threatening reminder to the commissioners. The campaign began against Mayor Fawcett and ended up with all of the commissioners facing recall. Three commissioners, or a majority of the council, were ousted from office.
On October 12, 1951 the Tudor Committee released its final report and recommendations. The report was highly critical of the commission government. Specifically, it focused on the following eleven areas:

1. ... a lack of a clear-cut line of demarcation between legislative and administrative functions.
2. ... the impossibility of securing a coordination of administrative functions.
3. ... the diffusion of authority and responsibility.
4. ... friction between department heads leading to demoralization of administrative services.
5. ... administrative functions such as centralized purchasing is under no formal authority.
6. ... activities related to specific functions are scattered throughout the organization.
7. ... lack of an opportunity to make elected officials publicly accountable.
8. ... diffusion of authority making quick decisions necessary for pressing problems impossible.
9. ... a lack of proper legislative body directly responsible to the people.
10. ... no coordinated budgetary process.
11. ... unqualified administrators administrating.

The committee completed their findings with the following recommendation:

... the mayor and council of the city of Tacoma (should) immediately authorize the calling of a freeholders' election for the same date as that set for the general municipal election of March of 1952.

The Tudor Committee made no recommendations concerning an alternative form of government. Indeed, the report stated:

The committee wishes the mayor and the council and the citizens of Tacoma to understand that it is not under the illusion that there is such a thing as a perfect organization for municipal government.

However, there seemed to be a general feeling that the committee was attempting to justify a council-manager charter. For example, labor representative L. Clevender boycotted all of the committee sessions until

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2 Ibid., p. 2.
3 Ibid.
the end when he appeared to criticize the council-manager system and to describe it as being anti-labor. The following report from the *News Tribune* gave the impression that Anderson originally established the committee to justify council-manager government for Tacoma: "Both Mayor Anderson and Safety Commissioner James Kerr originally favored a city manager form, although these views have been modified."2

In late October, the City Council formally authorized a freeholder election for March. The council also authorized a ballot proposition that would give the freeholders the power to revise the city charter. On March 11, 1952, fifteen freeholders were elected and were given an overwhelming mandate to revise the charter when more than 80 per cent of the electorate voted in favor of the proposition. [*i.e.*., the vote was 30,047 for to 5,942 against out of approximately 70,000 registered voters].

**The freeholder election of 1952**

The freeholder election of 1952, which led to the eventual passage of a council-manager charter in Tacoma, did not follow the pattern established in the elections of 1890 and 1909. For example, the City Council did not endorse any particular group of freeholder candidates. And, the year 1952 was not marked by mass meetings in which slates of candidates committed themselves to one specific form of government. However, many of the major interest groups in the community [*i.e.*., the League of Women Voters, AAUW, the Central Labor Council, A. F. of L., Teamsters, Metal Trades Council, Junior Chamber of Commerce, South Tacoma Business Club, Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary and

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the Young Men's Business Club joined forces to form a "City Wide Freeholders' Information Committee." The committee endorsed thirty of the sixty-three candidates for freeholder. On the list was leading spokesman for the council-manager system, banker Gerrit Vander Ende, who in September, 1951, inappropriately described the manager plan as a government in which "the council hires a boss to run the city like a business." Also on the list was Fred Shoemaker, the original advocate of council-manager government in 1922 and past president of the Municipal League; Hugh Tudor, of Mayor Anderson's citizens' committee; Stanton Warburton, another early advocate of the manager system; Dr. Charles T. Battin, professor at the College of Puget Sound and a manager supporter; Mrs. Clara Goering, wife of a prominent physician; Dr. Charles P. Larson; Miss Elizabeth Shackelford; GOP State Representative Mrs. Francis Swayze; and former GOP County Prosecuting Attorney Patrick M. Steele. A number of outspoken opponents of council-manager government were also on the list and they included E. K. Murray, attorney and former freeholder in 1927; D. H. Ketler, business representative of the Municipal Civil Service League; Charles Eisenbacher, fire chief under James Kerr; State Representative A. B. Comfort and Al A. Bradley, business manager of the Central Labor Council. On March 12, 1952, the Tacoma Municipal League, a group on record as being in favor of council-manager government, gave its support to twelve of the candidates. The league endorsees included Hal Hurtland, active Young Republican; Handle Ingham, Fred Veatch and a number

of candidates endorsed by the citizens' committee including Warner Matson, businessman; Stanley Shaw, businessman; Michael Sterbick, attorney and a member of Mayor Anderson's citizens' committee; Shoemaker, Representative Swayze, Tudor, Vander Ende and Warburton.

Of the fifteen candidates elected to the freeholders' commission, fourteen had been endorsed by either the citizens' committee or the Municipal League. The only surprise freeholder-elect was Harold Tollefson, attorney and brother of Republican Congressman Thor Tollefson. Battin, Comfort, Eisenbacher, Goering, Larson, Murray, Shackelford, Shoemaker, Steele, Swayze, Tudor, Vander Ende, Warburton and Murtland were all elected to the freeholders' commission. Not a single prominent Democrat, member of organized labor or south end resident made the list. However, eight members of the commission had served in public office at one time. Comfort and Swayze were Republican state representatives from the north end 26th legislative district, Steele had served as county prosecuting attorney, Eisenbacher as fire chief, Murray as a city corporation counsel, Shoemaker as city controller and Vander Ende as a city manager in California. Miss Shackelford had served as an elected municipal court judge.

**Summary and Conclusions**

The events leading up to the successful passage of the commission charter in 1909 and the events leading up to the council-manager charter election of 1952 were both similar and significantly different in many ways. As previously noted, Tacoma's economy grew rapidly between 1900 and 1910. The city's population actually more than doubled during that period. From 1942 to 1952 similar growth also occurred in the community although the reasons for the growth were different and rate and relative impact were not nearly as great. In both instances, however, it was a time when the government of the city had to be responsive to new needs. Expanded utilities, new
transportation systems and some form of comprehensive planning were areas that needed attention.

The reformers of 1909-10 believed that by changing the formal institutions of government a new breed of community leader would come forth to handle the business of government. The election of 1910 and the elections that followed demonstrated that this was not to be the case. Commission government called for full-time leadership with little opportunity for significant personal economic rewards. The leaders of the business community were not about to retire from the private sector to battle the professional politicians for control of Tacoma's government.

Since the commission system did not turn out as the reformers had hoped, they began to search for different alternatives. Thus, in 1922 the first moves for a council-manager reform began. These initial moves resulted in full-scale reform efforts in 1926 and 1934. But, the first reform efforts failed for essentially the following reasons:

First, a significant percentage of the citizenry did not perceive a need for drastic changes in Tacoma's governmental system. Second, the politicians in control of the government were able to devise political strategies which weakened the reform movements. Third, a number of important political interest groups were able to actively and successfully oppose the reformers.

The reform effort of 1909-1910 succeeded for the very reasons the later reforms failed. During that period large segments of the city's population were disenchanted with the political system, the politicians in control were so disunited that they could not mount an effective counter-reform effort and, perhaps most importantly, all of the important interest groups in the community were either in favor of the change or neutral to it.
On the other hand, the City Councils of 1926 and 1934 were able to act quickly and effectively to squelch the reform efforts. They could marshal group opposition to the reformers and most importantly they could control the electoral process and time crucial political events to their advantage.

The political setting in Tacoma during the early 1950's was in many ways very similar to conditions in 1909 and very much different than conditions in 1926 and 1934. For example:

The nature of political conflict.--City government in 1909 was in the midst of turmoil and conflict. The City Council was split politically and was bickering with the mayor. Although the mayor-council government had traditionally been noted for intense partisanship and conflict, this conflict had reached a point of being counter-productive in 1909—during a period when the city was experiencing its greatest growth.

City government in 1951-52 was also in the midst of conflict and turmoil. The conflict in this case was between the mayor and commissioner of public safety—again a tradition in Tacoma politics. However, by 1951 the intensity of conflict had reached embarrassing proportions. Finally, the conflict resulted in an actual test of power between the two offices and the eventual resignation of the safety commissioner. Again, as in 1909, the political conflict in the community reached a point of being counter-productive.

City government in 1926 and 1934 was not noted for unusual conflict. Indeed, the City Council acted with dispatch and a great deal of political sophistication in dealing with the reform elements in the community.

The opposition of politicians.--In 1909 the reformers were not opposed by the politicians who were holding office during the period. As has been previously noted, the Republicans were in no position to oppose their
benefactors--the downtown business establishment which was supporting the reform effort. And the Democrats, who had been excluded from power during the mayor-council years, were not particularly opposed to any change in the system.

In 1951 the City Council actually called for some form of change. Indeed, Mayor John Anderson campaigned on the theme of change in government. The other commissioners, who saw the threat of a recall election against one of their colleagues, realized that some action was a political necessity.

The City Councils of 1926 and 1934 were very much opposed to any change in the institutions of government and acted accordingly. In 1926 the council did call for freeholders' elections; however, the changes which came about as a result were minimal.

The exposure of graft and corruption.--In 1909 Tacomans were embarrassed politically when a state grand jury indicted the mayor and several city officials. There had been grand juries in the past, but this was the first one that had indicted a public official while he was still in office. The newspapers, which had been hostile to the government anyway, began to demand action.

In 1951 the Rosellini crime hearings found evidence of wholesale corruption in government. These hearings were carried by television throughout the state to the embarrassment of Tacomans. Once again, the newspapers and other media called attention to Tacoma's plight.

In 1926 and 1934 Tacoma government was relatively clean--at least on the surface. In the 1920's the city was experiencing an economic boom--the citizens were in no frame of mind to change their institutions of government. By 1934 Tacoma was experiencing the depression years, but this too worked against the reformers. Mayor Tennent was able to cast enough doubt on the wisdom of changing the political system during a period of
financial hardship that Tacomans voted against the council-manager proposition offered in the spring of 1934.

The opposition of interest groups.--There was no major interest group opposition to the reform effort in 1909. The reasons for this were examined in chapter two.

In 1951 most of the important interest groups were also in favor of some change in government. As has been previously seen, organized labor joined with key reform and business groups to endorse thirty freeholder candidates. Those candidates included Republicans, Democrats, labor leaders, professionals, and businessmen.

In 1926 representatives from organized labor joined the leaders of most of the city's key service clubs to support a push to bring council-manager government to Tacoma. However, the City Council neutralized the move politically when it called for freeholder elections in 1926. By 1934 organized labor had gone on record as being opposed to the manager system. Labor, the City Council and the city employees joined forces to work against the reform effort.

Even with all of these apparent similarities, the reform movement of 1951-52 which eventually brought the council-manager plan to Tacoma was significantly different from the successful reform of 1909. During the move to bring commission government to Tacoma, and the later unsuccessful reforms for the manager plan, citizens'committees had been established by the reform interests for the purpose of organizing campaigns to bring a new form of government to Tacoma. The goal then was to run a slate of freeholder candidates committed to a specific city charter. This strategy worked in 1909 and failed in 1926 and 1934.

In 1951-52 there were still many reform groups actively supporting the council-manager plan. The League of Women Voters, the Municipal League
and the downtown business and banking interests were three of the more important. However, these interest groups did not publicly combine their efforts to support a slate of freeholders committed to one specific form of government. Indeed, the League of Women Voters, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and several other pro-manager groups joined forces with anti-manager groups to endorse thirty freeholder candidates. These candidates held a variety of viewpoints concerning the question of what changes should take place in Tacoma's government. The Municipal League endorsed their own slate of committed candidates, but the other groups did not follow suit.

Thus, when the voters cast ballots overwhelmingly in favor of the proposition to revise the charter in March of 1951 most of them appear to have been voting only for some change in the governmental system. They certainly were not in any formal sense voting for one particular form of government. This was not the case in June of 1909 when Tacoma voters elected fifteen freeholders to draft a commission charter. This was not the case in March of 1934 when voters rejected the proposition on council-manager government.

It should be noted, however, that the pro-city manager forces had a distinct advantage over the anti-manager groups. For one thing, they were unified on what they believed should be done with Tacoma's government. Many of the pro-manager freeholder candidates were openly advocating the new system as the answer to Tacoma's difficulties. On the other hand, the anti-manager people were far from united in their stand. Some of the anti-manager candidates were for strong mayor government while others were in favor of amendments to the commission charter. However, it was not until the freeholder meetings actually began before an alternative form of government was suggested.
CHAPTER IV

THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO
COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT IN TACOMA

THE FREEHOLDERS, THE CHARTER ELECTION
THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST CITY
MANAGER, AND THE SELECTION OF
THE FIRST MAYOR

In the previous three chapters, an effort was made to review and analyze Tacoma's political setting leading to the election of the freeholders of 1952. The study has examined the mayor-council government years and partisanship in Tacoma, the commission government years and the controversy within the Tacoma Police Department. These political periods were important preludes to the election that brought council-manager government to the city in November 1952. In this chapter, the focus will be on the decision process and the roles of the political actors in four subject areas: (1) the 1952 freeholders'commission deliberations and the decisions which led to the adoption of the council-manager charter; (2) the political campaign which led to the final approval of the reform charter; (3) the appointment of the first city manager; (4) the election of the first mayor.

These decision areas were fraught with controversy and conflict. The purpose of reviewing them is to identify those political interest groups that supported and opposed the city manager concept. Through this process, there will be further analysis of one of the primary questions offered in the introduction of this study. Thus, it will be determined if any major
socio-political interest groups were excluded from participation in the decision-process which led to council-manager government for Tacoma. The response of those groups—if there were excluded groups—will be reviewed.

The Freeholders' Commission of 1952

The freeholders elected in 1952 were not committed as a group to any particular form of government. However, several of them had expressed approval of the council-manager plan. Gerrit Vander Ende, a local banker, was one of the leading proponents in the community. Vander Ende had served as a city manager in Berkeley, California before moving to Tacoma. Another long-time advocate of the plan was Fred Shoemaker. Shoemaker had been city controller in the early years of commission government and on the day of his retirement from government service called for reform leading to a council-manager charter. Shoemaker had also been elected a freeholder in 1927 and pushed for the manager concept then. Six of the newly elected freeholders had been endorsed by the Tacoma Municipal League, a group in support of the council-manager plan. Those freeholders included Professor Hugh J. Tudor, chairman of the political science department at the College of Puget Sound and the former chairman of Mayor Anderson's citizens' committee; Stanton Warburton, local businessman and executive secretary of the Tacoma-Pierce County Taxpayers' Association; Mrs. Francis Swayze, Republican representative to the State House from Tacoma's 26th legislative district; Hal Murtland, attorney and active Young Republican; Shoemaker, who had served as president of the league, and Vander Ende. These six freeholders clearly endorsed the council-manager plan and consistently voted in favor of the concept during freeholder deliberations.

Six other freeholders also emerged as strong advocates of the manager system. Professor Charles Battin, chairman of the school of business and
economics at the College of Puget Sound, perceived the city manager concept as good business practice. He was to later say: "We need good business sense in our government and Tacomans should be stockholders in a growing concern."¹ Mrs. Clara Goering, Republican, wife of a prominent north end physician and active in Tacoma's garden clubs, viewed the council-manager system as the best "tool" available.² Dr. Charles Larson, a local physician nationally prominent as a bone specialist and Harold Tollefson, local attorney and brother of Tacoma's Republican Congressman, were also committed to the council-manager plan and joined with Battin and Mrs. Goering during the deliberations. Patrick M. Steele, former Republican Pierce County prosecutor, also supported the council-manager plan but only after it became apparent that the overwhelming majority of the freeholders were in favor. Miss Elizabeth Shackelford, municipal court justice, joined with Steele in voting for the system.

Five of the pro-manager freeholders had had some experience in public service either as an elected official or as an appointed administrative officer. Steele, Shoemaker, Miss Shackelford, Mrs. Swayze and Vander Ende were the five. Although these freeholders were committed to a council-manager charter, they were willing to compromise on a number of important questions which led to a weakening of the city manager's authority. Battin, Goering, Tudor, Larson, Murtland, Tollefson and Warburton were generally doctrinaire in their view of the charter. These freeholders consistently voted against any proposition which departed from the traditional model of council-manager government.


Three freeholders were adamantly opposed to the council-manager plan. The leader of the opposition was E. K. Murray, local attorney and former city corporation counsel under the commission plan. In 1927, Murray had been elected to the freeholders' commission and along with fellow attorneys Robert Abel, Homer Bone and Louis Muscek, drew up the charter modifications that year. Murray had served with Shoemaker on that freeholders' commission, but unlike the former city controller he had not supported the inclusion of a city manager in the system.

It is also important to note that Murray's perception of the local political scene differed sharply from many of the other freeholders. He believed that the charges of an open town were "grossly exaggerated." The Rosellini crime hearings were purely political and overplayed in the newspapers as far as Murray was concerned. He was to say: "It remains a fact that no one was ever convicted of anything out of those hearings." Murray believed that the city commissioners were basically honest men. Even the much maligned Jim Kerr was not corrupt in Murray's view. "I knew these men, they were honest. If there was corruption and graft they certainly never had the means to show it." As was shown in the previous chapter, Murray defended Public Safety Commissioner Einar Langseth before the impeachment trial called by Mayor Harry Cain in 1943.

Although Murray was very much opposed to the council-manager system, he was not sold on any other form of government. "It's the people who run the government that really count," he said. His opposition to the manager

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
plan was in many ways understandable. The commission charter that the freeholders began to criticize severely during the freeholder deliberations had been drafted by him and the other three attorneys in 1927. However, Murray's chief argument against the system boiled down to the following: "From the inception, you elect a board and they go through the motions while the city manager runs the city."¹

There were two additional points which became increasingly important as the freeholders' meetings progressed through the summer of 1952. The first point of significance was Murray's total commitment to the concept of publicly owned and operated power utilities. Murray first became interested in the public power question when the city of Tacoma constructed power dam facilities on the Nisqually River shortly before the First World War. His thinking on this question was shaped by his father—a public power advocate who served in the state legislature and later on the Tacoma City Council from 1922–26.² He became directly involved in the public power issue while serving as a city attorney from 1923–30. It was at this time that he handled litigation concerning the city's second major construction project—the Cushman Dam.³ Later, during the 1950's, he was to argue the city's case for construction of two more dams on the Cowlitz River.

The second point of significance was Murray's personality. Murray was a sharp-witted lawyer who was fully aware of the intricacies of rules of procedure. One freeholder described him as having a "steel-trap mind."⁴

¹Ibid.
²Murray interview.
³Ibid.
⁴Patrick M. Steele, private interview with the writer, Tacoma, Wash., Aug. 12, 1970.
At the same time, it was important to the city manager advocates on the freeholders' commission that all of the freeholders, including Murray, sign the proposed city charter. Murray, on the other hand, had the ability to delay the meetings for great lengths of time on minor points. He could very well have made consensus impossible if he had so wished.

Murray's two supporters on the freeholders' commission were A. B. Comfort and Charles Eisenbacher. Interestingly enough, Comfort was one of the original supporters of the council-manager plan in 1924. However, his attitude changed as he became more politically involved in the community. At the time of the freeholders' sessions, Comfort was serving in the state legislature with Mrs. Swayze as the other Republican representative from the 26th legislative district. But, unlike Mrs. Swayze, Comfort took a dim view of appointed chief executives. His position on city manager government was essentially the same as Murray's. Late in the campaign to enact the proposed charter, Comfort joined with Murray and Eisenbacher in signing an advertisement for the News Tribune in which they recommended that the voters vote no on the charter proposition.

Eisenbacher was the popular former chief of the Tacoma Fire Department who served under the controversial James Kerr. It was Kerr's firing of Eisenbacher from the cocktail lounge of the Towers Restaurant which helped bring on the Kerr impeachment charges by Mayor Anderson. Eisenbacher, who served long and well under the commission plan, was not about to contribute to its downfall. Although Eisenbacher signed the proposed charter, he consistently voted against the plan during the freeholder discussions.

Decisions leading to the council-manager proposal

It was the mission of the freeholders to review Tacoma's charter with the intent of suggesting revisions and changes. However, at least ten of the group were already committed to the council-manager plan. Thus, it became
a question of getting a council-manager proposal before the group as quickly as possible and working out the details during the late summer months. This strategy became glaringly apparent almost from the very beginning. In late April a majority of the freeholders elected Fred Shoemaker as the chairman of the commission. Shoemaker defeated Mrs. Swayze by a nine-to-five vote. 1 This vote set the tone of the freeholders' discussions and ended any speculation that simple revisions in the commission plan or a mayor-council charter would be objectively considered. Indeed, Shoemaker was a committed ideologue when it came to the manager plan. He had been pushing for it for thirty years and had seen two reform movements fail in attempts to bring the system to Tacoma. Mrs. Swayze was also thought to be leaning in favor of the council-manager plan, particularly since her endorsement by the Municipal League. However, she was a political colleague of Comfort's, had not stated her position publicly and seemed to have a more open mind than Shoemaker.

Although it became apparent that a council-manager charter would emerge from the freeholder deliberations, the freeholder commission under the direction of Shoemaker went through the motions of objectively considering the alternative forms of government. In early May, the freeholders heard an explanation of the strong-mayor system from Ewen C. Dingwall, executive director of the Washington State Taxpayers' Association. Dingwall had been involved in drafting Seattle's mayor-council charter and he was to be the only "expert" adviser to discuss objectively the attributes of the elected mayor concept. But his presentation soon turned into a discussion of the relationship of vice, tolerance in the police department and mayor-council government. In reply to a question dealing with the role of the Seattle

1City of Tacoma Freeholders' Commission 1952, Minutes of Commission Deliberations, meeting of April 12, 1952. (Typewritten.)
Police Department in that city's previous municipal election, Dingwall said:

... the police department was very much involved. My opinion is that it entered into the last election because it had reached a point in their clean-up campaign that vice was down to an absolute minimum of what the public would tolerate. We have no slot machines, almost no prostitution, and in cleaning up some of those activities, we have interfered with the profits of some very big people. I estimate that there was a hundred million dollars in vice broken up by it. The public is not too enthusiastic. I am frank to say I don't know what the public wants, but anyway, we cleaned that stuff up, although you never completely obliterate any of those problems in a seaport city, but they are tamed down quite a bit in Seattle. But there's some point where the public won't let the police go beyond, and I don't know what that point is.

Later, a freeholder asked Dingwall if he really preferred the city manager form of government. Dingwall replied that the principal benefit of the manager plan was that it "professionalizes the city government and takes it out of politics." This statement was undoubtedly what the majority group of freeholders wanted to hear.

Additional support for the mayor-council system came from incumbent Mayor John Anderson. In late April, Anderson appeared before the freeholders to make the following statement:

In my campaign for mayor, I advocated very strongly the city manager form ... The word manager carried connotations to me of efficient business operations ... I am sold on the city manager type of government where it can actually fit properly into the picture. It is possible that the findings of your committee will disclose the city manager type of government is best; however, in my observation and also my association with officials of other cities; it appears that the 'strong mayor' in the larger type of city is preferable and most acceptable.

My recommendation in this respect would therefore ... be considered first the strong mayor form ... and second the city manager type ... Anderson called for an appointed civil service commission as did Public Works Commissioner Jack Roberts who appeared before the freeholders one week

\footnote{1}Transcript of discussion of Ewen C. Dingwall's discussion with the 1952 freeholders' commission, May 8, 1952, p. 2.

\footnote{2}Ibid.

\footnote{3}Mayor John Anderson, speech given before the 1952 freeholders' commission, April 28, 1952.
later. An appointive board had been recommended by the Public Administration Service in a survey of the city's personnel operation prepared for the City Council in February. Roberts also argued for a continuation of the commission government or a strong-mayor form. He said: "I think the commission form of government or the strong mayor system most truly reflects a truly democratic spirit . . . ."\(^1\)

Appearing with Roberts to advise the freeholders was Commissioner of Finance L. W. Craig. Craig said: "I think that there are a few changes which can be made in the present charter, but I think the present one is a good one."\(^2\) Craig suggested that the civil service rules should be made more flexible: "I think that the department heads should have the right to appoint employees from the top three to five persons eligible on civil service examinations."\(^3\) The commission charter restricted administrative officials to making appointments from the top man on the civil service list.

The position of the incumbent commissioners was not particularly surprising. Mayor Anderson had endorsed a council-manager charter before a meeting of the Municipal League in 1950, but slowly began to change his position as his tenure as Tacoma's elected mayor progressed. The remaining commissioners had not offered their opinions before 1952. The other political interest potentially hostile to a manager plan was organized labor. The Central Labor Council's representative to Tudor Committee put the council on record as being opposed to a council-manager charter in 1951. Even so, the executive officers of the labor council were willing to present labor's

\(^1\)City of Tacoma Freeholders' Commission 1952, Minutes of Commission Deliberations, meeting of May 5, 1952.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid.
case before the freeholders. This decision came after Chairman Shoemaker had promised the unions that no decision on the form of government would be made until they had made their presentation.\(^1\) In a reply to Shoemaker's commitment, H. S. McIlvaigh wrote the following response in late May:

A committee is presently engaged in preparing data relative to changes in our form of government and would desire the opportunity of presenting the views of our council in regards to the above mentioned statement.\(^2\)

Representatives from the Central Labor Council were never to appear before the 1952 freeholders' commission, however. The reason for them not doing so became obvious on June 2 when Shoemaker directed the freeholders to meet as a committee of the whole for the purpose of discussing alternative forms of government. Shoemaker's move came before the labor council had agreed on a date to appear before the commission. Freeholder Patrick M. Steele described the meeting as follows:

E. K. (Murray), Kim Comfort and Charlie (Eisenbacher) saw nothing wrong with the commission system. They were for the status quo. When it came my turn, I spoke in favor of a mayor-council type with a strong council veto and civil service security. I could see the town wanted a mayor and also wanted to keep him out of the council's hair. After I was through talking you could hear a pin drop. Finally, Clara Goering turned to me and said: 'Well, that's your opinion!'\(^3\)

After initial discussions that evening, the freeholders took their first straw vote on the question of the form of government. Eight members favored the council-manager plan, four expressed approval of a council-mayor form [the four being Steele, Shackelford, Eisenbacher and Comfort\(^4\)] and two, Murray and Dr. Larson, did not vote.\(^4\)

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\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Patrick M. Steele, private interview.

\(^4\)Minutes, Meeting of June 2, 1952.
The reason for the straw vote on June 2 was important to Shoemaker. Ten days earlier, he had informed the freeholders' commission that he was following an agenda suggested to him by the National Municipal League, a group committed to the council-manager plan. Shoemaker also made it clear that he was following the advice of Herbert A. Olson of the regional office of the Public Administration Service, another group associated with the manager system. Shoemaker said that Olson had recommended to him that the freeholders start framing a tentative draft of a charter by June 1 and that the initial draft be completed by the end of the month. Final preparation of the document would follow during July and August and submission to the City Council would be made in September. Shoemaker needed some kind of commitment from the freeholders by the first week in June for other reasons as well. During the June 2 meeting he informed the group that Olson had arranged for a Public Administration Service consultant to help draw up the charter. Olson had to know where the freeholders stood on the form of government before final arrangements could be made with the consultant. Thus, Shoemaker had the freeholders put themselves on record as being in favor of one particular form of government before several interest groups including the Central Labor Council could present their views before the commission. And the reasons Shoemaker gave for this decision must have been particularly unsettling to local labor leaders, a group already suspicious of the manager concept. Indeed, what Shoemaker was saying consciously or otherwise was that two outside interest groups had more influence over the actions of the freeholders than the interests of the local unions. This viewpoint would be confirmed later by the reaction of organized labor in the community as the next chapter discloses.

Ibid.
One week after the freeholders expressed their position on the charter, Shoemaker called for a general public meeting so that other views could be presented. Only fifty-eight people showed up at this meeting and only seven presented their views for the record. At the end of the meeting, eighteen of the on-lookers had left. Even so, Shoemaker called for a vote on the issue of the form of government. Twenty-eight citizens voted in favor of the manager plan, three cast ballots for the strong-mayor concept and nine refused to vote.\(^1\) With this public show of support, the freeholders put themselves formally on record as being in favor of the council-manager plan one week later. The formal vote was ten-to-three in favor with Comfort, Eisenbacher and Murray casting the negative votes.\(^2\) Steele and Mrs. Goering were absent from the meeting but later put themselves on record as being in favor of the manager plan. During the same evening, Shoemaker announced that Donald Nemetz of the Public Administration Service had been hired to come to Tacoma on June 16 to help advise the freeholders in their preparation of the charter.

In all fairness to the freeholders, it should be noted that during the summer months in 1952, Tacoma's only daily newspaper, The Tacoma News Tribune, was on strike. Because of this, very little publicity concerning the freeholder deliberations was circulating in the community. Also, the freeholder meetings were held at a rather obscure meeting hall in the nurses'quarters of the Tacoma General Hospital. The strike, the obscure meeting place plus very little radio or television coverage led to a general lack of public awareness. Thus, the first public meeting held by the freeholders was probably doomed to failure.

\(^1\)Minutes, Meeting of June 9, 1952.

\(^2\)Minutes, Meeting of June 16, 1952.
By the end of June, it became apparent that Shoemaker was keeping in line with his agenda and the suggestions of the Public Administration Service. Shoemaker was aiming at completing at least a tentative draft proposal by the end of the month; and, indeed, by June 30 the freeholders had reviewed and generally accepted the following nine recommendations presented by Nemetz:

1. A city council with nine members.
2. Terms of office to be for four years.
3. Each councilman to be elected at-large.
4. Three-year resident requirement for each councilman.
5. Councilmen will have salaries of $25 per meeting or $1,200.
6. The mayor will be appointed by the council from its membership for a term of two years.
7. The mayor will receive a salary of $2,400.
8. The city manager to be appointed and removed by a majority vote of the city council.
9. Councilmen will be ineligible for appointment as city manager until two years after they have left office.¹

Thus, by the end of June the freeholders had accepted a number of important features of the council-manager charter that Tacomans would be voting on in November. However, the meetings during the months of July and August were far from harmonious. During this period, the freeholders were confronted with a number of controversial issues.

Areas of controversy during the freeholders' meetings

By the middle of June the freeholders were faced with their first serious area of controversy. During this period, Randy Green, business

¹Minutes, Meeting of June 30, 1952.
manager of the electrical workers' union, met with the commission to request formally that the freeholders separate Tacoma's public utilities operation [Tacoma City Light, City Water and the Belt Line Railway] from the general government and, in turn, put the operation under the policy direction of an appointed utilities board. Just four days previous to Green's presentation, Shoemaker had appointed a sub-committee of Murray, Comfort and Warburton to investigate the role of the utilities under the new charter. Murray, who became chairman of the group, followed Green's visit before the freeholders with the sub-committee's first formal recommendations concerning the role of the utilities. Murray suggested that there were two ways in which the utilities could be organized under the council-manager system. The first alternative would be to place the entire operation under the direct authority of the city manager. The second alternative would be to have a separate board appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. The board would then appoint an administrative manager to head the utilities departments.

One week later, Murray once again returned to the freeholders with his sub-committee's final recommendation. This time, he proposed that the freeholders approve the second alternative. Murray's plan also called for a 7½ per cent gross tax to be returned to the general government from the utilities operation. Stanton Warburton, the third member of the sub-committee, issued a minority report in which he suggested that the utilities board set policy only for Tacoma City Light and that the city manager have direct

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1 Minutes, Meeting of June 16, 1952.
2 Minutes, Meeting of June 19, 1952.
3 Ibid.
4 Minutes, Meeting of June 26, 1952.
authority over the water and belt-line railway departments. In his report to the freeholders, Warburton wrote the following:

A properly qualified city manager has studied and most likely has considerable experience with such utilities as water and transportation, which could include our incidental belt-line operation. Sewerage and garbage are common to all cities, and do not pose too great a problem. But the writer questions the advisability of adding the additional burden of a power utility equal in size approximately to all the usual city government. The writer suggests that the city manager could effect economies and efficient operation in the water, transportation and sewerage utilities as well as the city generally. Relieving him of the burden of the power utilities would permit him to do a better job.

Warburton, who had been active in the Tacoma Taxpayers' Association, also suggested that the recommended 7½ per cent tax return to the general city government might be too low a figure.

The issue concerning the utilities board finally came to a head during the first week in August when Professor Battin suggested that an advisory board be appointed by the mayor and approved by the council and the administration of all utilities be formally placed under the authority of the city manager. The opponents of the Murray plan produced a letter from Clarence E. Ridley, executive director of the International City Managers' Association (ICMA), to support the Battin proposal. In his letter to freeholder Harold Tollefson, Ridley wrote: "The overall advantage of integration, as measured in sound principles of organization and management, are clear." Battin felt that the inclusion of an advisory board would serve as a compromise to accommodate the differences between Murray and the other freeholders.

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1 Ibid.
2 Memorandum from Stanton Warburton, Jr., to the 1952 freeholders' commission, June 30, 1952.
3 Minutes, Meeting of August 5, 1952.
5 Minutes, Meeting of August 5, 1952.
The Battin proposal represented the traditional reform approach to municipal administration. Under this concept, executive authority must be centralized and held responsible to the citizenry. The old concept of municipal government called for as many separate boards as possible thereby diffusing powers and authority in government. The reformers argued that the virtues of this decentralization were often used to advantage by the machine politicians. Thus, the reformers stressed good business practice in government; and this good practice included administrative integration, clear lines of authority and chain of command.

Murray, however, felt that Battin's proposal was in no way a compromise. To support his position concerning the utilities board, he was able to muster the backing of some of the more important interest groups in the community.

During the week that Battin made his proposal, L. Evert Landon, president of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, wrote the following letter to the freeholders:

It is our judgement that the magnitude of the utilities, and the need for further rapid development, necessitates creation of a utilities board and a manager whose undivided attention can be devoted to power and water.  

One day later, the freeholders received a letter from Randy Green, business manager of the electrical workers' union. Green wrote:

This union would like to concur with the subcommittee in its recommendations. It is my understanding the labor group as a whole concurs with the findings of the committee as regards the establishment of the utilities board. I would like to add these observations to the commission:

A city manager would find it difficult to arrange a long range industrial program in which the ordinary functions of the city government would not interfere. As an example, a manager and light superintendent might have an excellent long-range utility plans in progress during which time difficulties may arise as regard to vice and police conditions. The manager might be removed as well as the light superintendent. The new manager would have to start again under these hardships.

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1Letter from L. Evert Landon, president of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce to the freeholders' commission, Aug. 4, 1952.
In addition, it will be almost impossible to procure a competent utility superintendent in such an unfavorable and volatile political climate. No well-trained utility executive will take a job under such unfavorable conditions.\(^1\)

The debate over the utilities board lasted four days. Early in the discussion, Eisenbacher moved, with Steele's second, that a five-man utilities board be created with appointments by the mayor and confirmation by the council. This measure passed when Shoemaker, Mrs. Swayze, Miss Shackleford, Warburton and Hal Murtland joined with Steele, Murray, Comfort and Eisenbacher.\(^2\) Battin, Tudor, Tollefson, and Mrs. Goering, purists when it came to the question of administrative integration and the authority of the city manager, voted no. Dr. Larson and Vander Ende were absent from the meeting.

However, Murray suffered his first serious setback on the utilities question the next evening when Battin moved to delete the water department from the authority of the proposed board. On this motion, Eisenbacher, the former fire chief, sided with the Battin forces to vote in favor. Warburton, who made this suggestion in the first place, and Murtland also crossed over to vote with Battin.

The importance of the water utility to the fire department was obvious and it made sense to Eisenbacher to have both functions under the city manager. However, to Murray any compromise on the utilities question meant a possible take over by the city manager. Indeed, Murray's edge in the freeholders' voting was secure during this period with the former City Manager Vander Ende and Dr. Larson out of town. At this point in the

\(^1\)Letter from Randy E. Green, business manager for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, to Fred Shoemaker, chairman of the freeholders' commission, Aug. 5, 1952.

\(^2\)Minutes, Meeting of Aug. 6, 1952.
deliberations there was potentially a solid majority bloc of freeholders in favor of a separate utilities operation. Fred Shoemaker, the long-time supporter of manager government for Tacoma, sided with Murray on the question of a separate board. Shoemaker undoubtedly realized that Murray and his friends in the electrical workers' union were important allies in the coming campaign for enactment of the charter. Shoemaker had seen in 1934 what solid opposition from organized labor could do to a reform effort in Tacoma. As a former elected official, Shoemaker also undoubtedly realized that some compromise was necessary for any degree of political success. The earlier slight of the Central Labor Council may have also been on his mind. Pat Steele, Miss Shackleford and Mrs. Swayze were also experienced politically and understood the art of political accommodation. And Comfort and Eisenbacher were supposed to be voting the Murray line. This gave Murray a seven-to-six vote edge; but with the defection of Eisenbacher the edge was in jeopardy.

The next evening, Battin, sensing victory on the utilities question, moved to have the belt-line railway deleted from the authority of the utilities board. However, this motion was defeated when Tollefson and Eisenbacher sided with Murray and the others. Murray then moved to include the water department under the utilities board once again. The motion passed when Eisenbacher switched his vote to the Murray side.

The change by Eisenbacher was not particularly surprising. He was fundamentally opposed to the manager concept and voted on nearly every issue with Murray. Indeed, it was Eisenbacher's primary wish to see the charter itself voted down. As was previously mentioned, he joined with Murray and

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1 Minutes, Meeting of Aug. 8, 1952.
2 Ibid.
Comfort to sign an open letter to the voters of Tacoma in which he indicated that he was to vote no on the proposition.

The issue of the utilities board was revived one more time by Battin during the last days of the freeholder deliberations. Although Steele and Eisenbacher were absent during this period, Battin's move against the separate board failed when Murtland switched to the Murray side and was joined by Vander Ende. The vote was seven-to-five against Battin.

There were a number of other areas of controversy which emerged during the freeholder deliberations—although none were as intense as the utilities debate. In late June the freeholders discussed the question of the city's finance operation. During this period, Miss Shackleford recommended that the finance and audit functions of the government be separated into accounting and auditing divisions and that two specific offices be created. She suggested that a director of accounting functions be appointed by the city manager and a permanent director of auditing functions be appointed by the City Council. The Shackleford proposal was another departure from the traditional council-manager model. Under the traditional concept, the manager would appoint all administrative personnel after the council had appointed him to office. Miss Shackleford found support from Murray, Comfort, Eisenbacher and Murtland and she would have probably had the support of Steele had he been present. But the measure lost with seven votes in favor of traditional manager authority in the finance area. Shoemaker, Swayze, Vander Ende and Battin and the other purists voted against the Shackleford proposal. This issue was settled when Vander Ende moved that a director of

1Minutes, Meeting of July 7, 1952.
finance be appointed by the city manager and that the City Council be directed to appoint a firm of certified public accountants to make a running audit of the city books and report their findings directly to the council.¹

Later during the month of July, Miss Shackleford joined with Pat Steele, Comfort, Murray and Eisenbacher to propose a motion that would give the City Council the authority to appoint a city attorney.² This measure was defeated when the other freeholders joined forces to oppose it.

The final area of controversy concerned the charter's civil service procedures. Early in June, Owen P. Hughes, attorney for the Municipal Employees Civil Service League, testified that the city employees were strongly in favor of an elected civil service board and were "violently" opposed to the "rule-of-three" concept under which the department head could select an employee from the top three eligibles on the civil service certification list.³ The old commission charter provided for the elected board and included the rule-of-one concept. Later, in mid-August, D. H. Ketler appeared before the freeholders during a public meeting to urge that the civil service board be elected. Ketler noted: "Only an elected board can be truly independent and serve the interests of the municipal employees."⁴

The freeholders did not seriously consider the requests presented by Hughes and Ketler. The civil service board was made appointive and the rule-of-one concept was not included in the proposed charter. The votes on these questions were unanimous.

¹Ibid.
²Minutes, Meeting of July 16, 1952.
³Minutes, Meeting of July 2, 1952.
⁴Minutes, Meeting of Aug. 21, 1952.
Thus, when the freeholders completed their deliberations in September, Tacomaans were presented with a proposed council-manager charter with the following major features:

1. A council with nine members, elected at-large and serving as part-time policy-makers.
2. A mayor selected by the council from its own membership for a two-year period.
3. A city manager as a chief administrative officer of the city to be hired and fired by a simple majority of the council.
4. A separate utilities board appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council.
5. A director of public utilities to be selected by the Utilities Board to be chief administrative officer of the city departments of light, water, and the belt-line railway.
6. A civil service commission to be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council.
7. A provision for a 'running audit' to be performed by an auditing firm hired by the council. The director of finance and the city treasurer would be appointed by the city manager.

The proposed charter did not provide the council with any administrative appointive authority beyond the appointment of the city manager. However, the mayor was given authority to appoint, with council confirmation, members of a utilities board, a planning commission and a civil service board.

The Political Campaign For and Against the Charter

The campaign against the proposed council-manager charter began even before the document was formally presented to the city commissioners. On the next to the last day of the freeholder deliberations, Public Works
Commissioner Jack Roberts appeared to formally state that he was "reserving the right to oppose the charter if I feel that it is not in the best interests of the city." Commissioner of Public Finance L. W. Craig and Public Safety Commissioner William Farrar appeared with Roberts to concur with his statement. The same evening Mayor John Anderson came before the freeholders to read a statement in which he once again expressed his support of a strong-mayor system and then indicated that if the voters approved a council-manager government the first city manager under the system should be selected from the residents of the city. The city commissioners were to later help lead the political fight against the charter.

By the middle of September, after the proposed charter had been presented to the commissioners and an election date was set for November, the leadership of organized labor began to put themselves on record as being opposed to the charter. Vernie Reed, director of the Building Trades Council, announced that his union group was opposed. On September 25, Reed met with the commissioners to present the Building Trades Council's grievances concerning the proposed charter. The commissioners voted unanimously to support the trades council efforts against council-manager government. Mayor Anderson was led to say:


Reed responded: "We all conceded that a dictatorship is efficient functionally, nevertheless, we are in agreement with you that the adoption

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1 Minutes, Meeting of Sept. 2, 1952.

2 Notes from a Speech of Mayor John Anderson made before the 1952 freeholders' commission, Sept. 2, 1952.


4 Ibid.
of the manager plan as proposed will result in a situation which will almost remove the contact of the voters and taxpayers with elected officials."

By the end of October the municipal employees had joined the trades council in opposing the charter. To help finance the campaign, City Controller Lyle Lemley established a special fund so that the employees could deduct pledges from their paychecks. On October 5 representatives from organized labor, the municipal employees, the media and a number of Democratic party regulars met to form a citizens' committee to actively oppose the charter. A steering committee made up of Rufus Davis, representing the city employees; Maurice Raymond, port commissioner and active Democrat; Vernie Reed, of the trades council; Leo McGavick, former county commissioner, active Democrat and attorney; and Elliot Metcalf, radio commentator and newspaper columnist, emerged from the meeting. During the meeting an unnamed freeholder appeared to charge that the freeholders never met as a group actually to study possible revisions to the commission form of government or to study alternative types of government.

For the next ten days the steering group organized its campaign. A professional public relations man, Clark Richardson, was hired to develop the publicity efforts. Walter Pray, a conservative Republican active in John Anderson’s political campaign, and head of the city sanitation department, agreed to help plan overall campaign strategy. And Mrs. Doris Nolte, an unsuccessful candidate for public works commissioner and an attorney, agreed

1 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Patrick Steele, private interview.
6 Ibid.
to become chairman of the Citizens' Committee for Better Government (CCBG), the interest group which was to lead the political fight against the charter.\(^1\)

On October 16 Mrs. Nolte released the first press statement in behalf of the CCBG. In the release she made the following charges:

Interests favoring the adoption of the charter have attempted to railroad this measure through before the voters could have a fair opportunity to study both sides of the question. The charter was forced upon the ballot at the last minute. They hoped to take full advantage of the general feeling that our municipal form of government needed changing. All of us are aware that changes or revisions are needed, but it is certainly unfair to present so drastic a change without more time for study, debate and consideration.

The object of the proponents was to present only the favorable side. They did not anticipate any organized opposition. When this opposition began to develop, they stooped to deliberate lies to cast suspicion on the motives of anyone opposing the charter.\(^2\)

In the meantime, former freeholder Pat Steele was trying frantically to pull together some sort of organizational effort in support of the charter. After contacting Shoemaker and Warburton, Steele found that most of the pro-manager freeholders were convinced that the people wanted council-manager government and felt that no organized campaign was needed.\(^3\) However, this general feeling began to change as the CCBG campaign began in earnest. In the week following the press release by Mrs. Nolte, the "Better Government" group ran a series of three quarter page ads in the News Tribune. In these ads the group suggested that the voters should oppose the charter proposal on four grounds:

1. The voters do not elect one single full-time public official.
2. The voters do not have the privilege of voting for their mayor.
3. The voters no longer elect their six most important public officials.
4. All of the important and numerous subordinate offices are filled by appointment.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Interview with Patrick M. Steele.
During this period, Steele had pulled together an informal steering committee of charter proponents which included Shoemaker, Warburton, Vander Ende and Murray Morgan and Jim Faber, two newspaper reporters. Morgan and Faber suggested that a strong campaign was needed and projected a budget of at least $5,000. Shoemaker, Warburton and Vander Ende were convinced that a campaign was needed but could offer no suggestions as to how the money could be raised. Steele, who had money raising contacts in organized labor, knew that all of the unions were "kicking the hell out of the charter although not publicly." There would be no financial help coming from that source. Even with the financial dilemma facing them, the steering committee agreed to organize an interest group to support the charter. The group became known as the Charter Education Committee (CEC).

The establishment of the CEC meant that Morgan and Faber could plan a publicity campaign to counter the massive efforts of the "Better Government" committee. Steele, in the meantime, began to search for a committee chairman. Shoemaker suggested a local businessman, Steele agreed and Faber wrote up a press release for the next day. Shoemaker's choice had other ideas, however, and Steele once again began to search for a chairman. The chairman turned out to be local businessman Frank Clinton. On October 21, Clinton released a press statement severely criticizing municipal civil service policies and the CCBG. In the release he charged:

... the present Civil Service Commission is a political institution too weak to stop the abuses that have stripped city employees of many of their rights for decades. Since our opponents opened their 'big lie' campaign against a better government for Tacoma, a number of city employees have furnished us with clear-cut evidence that civil service rights are ignored to provide extravagant pay raises to city hall favorites.

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1 Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Three days after Clinton's statement, Elliot Metcalf began a series of columns paid for by the CCBC and printed in the News Tribune and Tacoma Labor Advocate. The Metcalf columns charged the following:

1. The proposed system is fraught with dangers to our city because it provides one-man dictatorial rule.
2. One man will undoubtedly come from a syndicate with headquarters at 1313 East 60th Street in Chicago.
3. The proposed plan passed the freeholders only eight-to-five with two not present to vote.
4. The signs of the dictator are already evident in the pressure to keep the minority freeholders from expressing any opposition to the charter.
5. Under the proposed charter your American privilege of voting for your mayor is denied you.¹

One week after the Clinton statement, Mrs. Nolte replied by charging that the "advocates of the proposed city charter" were throwing up a smoke screen to confuse the voters on the issues. She said:

If you read the appeals of those who want a new charter, you will find vilification of our city executives and smears at the people who serve you in city government.²

Mrs. Nolte also lauded the utilities operation and noted that the system was not entrusted to a "city manager who is supposed to be an efficient super-executive."³

On the same day that Mrs. Nolte made her smoke screen charge, the city commissioners released the following statement to the press:

Your council, by its action, demonstrated its desire to change and strengthen our present charter . . . the City Council does not believe that the vital checks and balances should be rested in one man and overbalance the democratic process of government. In this proposition the voter will decide a serious question that will influence his or her community's destiny for many years to come--and from the standpoint of the democratic approach to community problems it is only fair to advise you that your elected officials will vote no on the city charter proposal.⁴

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³ Ibid.
During this hectic last week in October, a period when the charter campaign really began in earnest, the charter proponents were also active. Clinton charged that the anti-manager forces were using "scare tactics" in their advertising campaign. Clinton said:

"Once more the [American] flag becomes the last refuge of political scoundrels. Without cheap appeals to emotions, let's look at the dictator charge. There are numerous examples of well-run manager cities including Cincinnati, Kansas City and Dayton."

Indeed, the pro-manager forces had a point concerning the question of scare tactics. On October 23, the CCBG reviewed the charter proposal and concluded:

"Dictatorships have plunged this world into nothing but trouble. The placing of too much power in the hands of one man is dangerous in any sphere of influence, large or small."

The same week, the League of Women Voters and the Tacoma Engineers Club formally endorsed the council-manager charter.

The utilities department also became an issue during this period. CCBG charged: "If there is no other reason whatsoever, the proposed charter should be defeated on the grounds that it tosses out the finest utilities administration in the country and lays the entire system open to political sabotage." Fred Shoemaker, who compromised on the utilities question to bring a consensus to the freeholders' commission, termed the charge a gross distortion and pointed out that the city light management and other public power advocates praised the independent board concept. Later the CCBG was

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to claim that the charter would not "protect public funds" because of the absence of an elected "independent controller."¹

During the last weeks of October, the "Better Government" group was clearly on the offensive in the campaign. The city manager was portrayed as a "total stranger" controlled by a syndicate who was to be given a "blank check" by the taxpayers.² Campaign posters were prepared showing a monster looming over the city skyline and the message that citizens should vote no on the charter proposition. The interests of organized labor, the city employees, leaders within the Democratic party, conservative Republicans, and, quite possibly, gambling and vice interests joined forces actively to work against the proposal.

However, as the campaign drew to a close, the pro-charter forces began to move. Vander Ende, Norm Runions, president of the Municipal League, Steele and several other businessmen began to raise money for an active campaign. Murray Morgan wrote a series of hard-hitting articles bringing attention to the Kerr era and the vigilante days. The publicity effort was taken over on a full-time basis by a major advertising company.³ A number of debates were arranged with former freeholders Tollefson and Battin against Mrs. Nolte and McGavick. Battin and Tollefson, quick witted and sharp, usually did well in the encounters.⁴ The News Tribune began to run a series of editorials in support of the council manager system.

The tide in the election seemed to turn in favor of the manager forces during the last few days of the campaign. Steele had managed to arrange a

² Ibid.
³ Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
⁴ Ibid.
five minute radio spot for Walter L. Jones, president of the Central Labor Council of Santa Clara County in California. Jones was a political rarity, a mayor who supported council-manager government and at the same time active as a leader in the organized labor movement. Jones was introduced by Sam Huntington, executive secretary of the local pants makers' union, the only local labor leader willing to publicly support the charter. The radio spot was recorded and played continuously on Tacoma's three radio stations on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday preceding the election.

The election was bound to be close. Not only had the opponents of the charter waged an expensive publicity campaign, but the measure was on the ballot with the presidential candidates in 1952. This meant that more Democrats and more working men would be at the polls, certainly many more than would be voting during municipal elections. Indeed, nearly 80 per cent of the registered voters cast ballots on the proposition. The charter did pass with 52 per cent of the vote and a 3,056 ballot plurality out of a total 57,116 votes cast. The greatest support for the charter came from the north end precincts in the 26th legislative district. In fact, it was the 4,120 vote margin in this district that gave the charter its victory.

The table on the following page shows the vote breakdown by legislative districts:

\[\text{Table showing vote breakdown by legislative districts}\]

\[\text{Note:}\]

1 Ibid.

2 Jones served as President of the Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, was Vice-President of his local cannery union and was a close associate of Teamsters boss Dave Beck.

3 Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
TABLE 10

CHARTER ELECTION RESULTS BY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS
NOVEMBER 4, 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Votes For (%)</th>
<th>Votes Against (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The election did not end active political opposition to the city charter. Indeed, in December two groups organized to urge that the City Council [the old commission government was to remain in office until June] consider placing amendments to the charter on the ballot during the March municipal elections. The two groups were the Tacoma Charter League and the Democratic party club of the 27th legislative district. On December 18 the Democratic club made the following statement:

... the committee members are quite well agreed that what is happening, and what may happen to the Tacoma City Light, under the new charter is the greatest, if not the only issue in the coming election ... 1

Before the end of the month, the city commissioners indicated that they were considering placing a number of amendments on the March ballot. This led Norm Runions, president of the Municipal League, to say:

... the latest release by the Tacoma City Council concerning the matter of amending the new charter is without a doubt the worst demonstration in a long series of bungling efforts. Whatever support they ever conceivably could have had from the 27th district Democratic club or the so-called front the Tacoma Charter League for charter revision, must surely be forgotten in the light of this bold-face move. 2


On January 2 the council directed Dean Barline, the city corporation council, to prepare four amendments to the city charter. The four amendments would provide the following:

1. Keep the present mayor in office until June, 1954.
2. Keep the present finance commissioner in office until June, 1954.
3. Keep the present city controller in office until 1956.
4. Give the council authority to appoint the city attorney and the city clerk.1

The political reaction on the part of the pro-charter groups was swift. As one reporter indicated: "... the highly controversial propositions have created a storm in city hall the like of which has not been seen since the days of Jim Kerr ..."2 One week later the council dropped the propositions when legal action was threatened by the pro-charter forces.

The New City Council, the New Mayor
And the New City Manager

The election for City Council found more than sixty candidates willing to run in the primary. Included on the list were four of the freeholders--Tudor, Battin, Tollefson and Mrs. Goering.3 Several well known political figures also decided to run including William Farrar, public safety commissioner; John Coffee, a former U. S. Congressman; Everett Jensen, member of the Tacoma School Board; Omar Bratrud, member of the Metropolitan Park Board; and Mrs. Nolte, spokeswoman for the CCBG. However, the most popular candidate was Frank Stojack,

3In an interview with the writer, Tollefson claimed that Donald Nemetz was the guiding force behind the decision of the four freeholders to run for council seats. Freeholder Pat Steele, also in an interview, disagreed with this view. It was his feeling that the freeholders should not run at least initially so that the objectivity of the freeholders' commission would be preserved. Nemetz, on the other hand, felt that candidates were needed who knew the system.
professional wrestler and a sports hero from Lincoln High School in South Tacoma. Stojack finished well ahead of all of the other candidates in the primary.

Between the primary and final election, pro-manager forces were able to rally enough political support to get six of their candidates elected to the City Council. Slightly more than 45 per cent of the registered voters cast ballots that resulted in the election of Tollefson, Mrs. Goering, Jensen, Bratrud, Stojack, Battin, Dr. Homer Humiston, Paul Perdue, and Albert Hooker. The following table provides information about the nine councilmen:

### TABLE 11

BACKGROUND DATA ON THE TACOMA CITY COUNCIL 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councilman</th>
<th>Public Offices Held</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Party Affil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tollefson</td>
<td>Freeholder</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>B.A. (CPS) LL.B.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battin</td>
<td>Freeholder</td>
<td>Professor CPS</td>
<td>B.A., M.A., Ph.D.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perdue</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>B.A. (CPS) C</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goering</td>
<td>Freeholder</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiston</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>M. D.</td>
<td>B.A., M.D.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooker</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stojack</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Wrestler</td>
<td>B.A. (WSU) C</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratrud</td>
<td>Park Board</td>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Ind. Dem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Information for the above table was gathered through a number of interviews with the councilmen and people who knew them.*

*The residence designations mean north end (NE) or North Tacoma or south end (SE) or South Tacoma.*

*College of Puget Sound (CPS); Washington State University (WSU).*
The six pro-manager councilmen were Tollefson, Battin, Perdue, Mrs. Goering, Dr. Humiston and Hooker. As the previous table indicates, the six shared a number of values and interests. They were each identified as Republicans, in a strongly Democratic city; they each lived in north end Tacoma; they were well educated and traveled in the same social circles. Perdue and Tollefson were alumni of the College of Puget Sound, located in North Tacoma, while Battin taught there and Hooker served on the board of trustees. Mrs. Goering's husband was a physician as was Dr. Humiston. Battin, Mrs. Goering and Tollefson not only served on the 1952 freeholders' commission together, they also voted together and were uncompromising on the question of the separate utilities board. Perhaps the most common characteristic of the majority six was their commitment to the belief that Tacoma must be a closed town and the police department had to be cleaned up. In turn, they perceived Stojack, Bratrud and Jensen with a great deal of suspicion. As Perdue was to comment in an interview: "The majority group on the council was in favor of a closed town—I say the majority group only." Bratrud was mistrusted not only because he was not a member of the prominent north end social circles, but also because he had been supported in his campaign by the CCBG. Stojack was from the south end, or the wrong side of the tracks, and there was a suspicion that his brother was connected in some way with open town interests. Jensen was a good friend of Stojack's from college days at Washington State University, had no social relationships with the majority and was considered a part of the minority.

1 Tacoma first swung strongly to the Democratic side in the 1930's. Since then Tacoma and Pierce County have become the strongest Democratic stronghold in the State.


3 Murray Morgan, private interview.
The feeling of being an outcast was apparent to the minority group from almost the beginning. Bratrud, for example, explained: "Jensen, Stojack and I were the three outs. The majority group seemed to think we were out to sabotage something." The position of the Battin group became apparent publicly during the initial organizational meeting of the councilmen-elect. In an apparently staged operation, Battin was elected acting chairman of the council-elect and proceeded to appoint a committee to review the qualifications of prospective city managers. Jensen and Stojack immediately objected to the plan with the comment that the "whole council" should have been included in the decision-making process. Battin, claiming that he had powers to decide such questions, overruled the two minority councilmen and appointed Tollefson head of the committee and himself, Perdue, Humiston and Jensen members.

During this period it also became clear that the popular Stojack was not going to be appointed mayor. Indeed, the council did not have to appoint Stojack even though he finished first with the most votes in the council race. The charter left the choice entirely up to the City Council. However, many people felt that the former All-American football player and graduate of Lincoln High School would be given serious consideration. Such was not the case, as shall be seen later. On March 22, the News Tribune reported:

Who will be Tacoma's next mayor? Contrary to popular opinion, Frank Stojack, who polled the highest number of votes, is not necessarily an automatic choice. The new charter does not stipulate that the top

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2 At this point, Tollefson was not a part of the inner circle as he was to admit in an interview with this writer. By mistake he nominated Mrs. Goering as chairman; thus Battin received only five votes for chairman.
4 Ibid.
vote-getter is the mayor by virtue of his high vote.

Prominently mentioned for the post are Harold Tollefson, who is reported to have three or four of the council in favor of him already. Next Humiston, Hooker and Battin.¹

In early April, the council elect discussed vice conditions in the city with Robert S. Elliot, western field agent of the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHS). On April 7 Elliot charged: "In the Western eight states no city with relations as Tacoma has with the military has a situation approximating Tacoma's in seriousness."² He continued:

It is the experience of the ASHA that the activities of the exploiters of women can be stopped, brothels closed and the activities of streetwalkers and individual prostitutes effectively curbed in a city in which the citizens insist that this be done.³

The week of Elliot's visit saw the new councilmen discuss the possibility of formulating a definite policy concerning the question of vice conditions in Tacoma.⁴ The week also saw the new group come into conflict with the press corps over the question of secret meetings concerning the selection of the new manager. Earlier, the council-elect had suggested that the press and radio keep the names of the prospective candidates in confidence. When news reporters replied that such conditions were impossible, Dr. Humiston moved that all information concerning candidates be kept secret.⁵ He said: "We don't want to have to have private sessions. I think all business here should be conducted in public, but I feel we have a reasonable request to make on this part."⁶ The reporters were not at all sympathetic. Said one:

³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
⁶Ibid.
"This is a very dangerous situation."1

By April 7 the council had decided to keep the names of all applicants secret. Paul Perdue commented: "The public really isn't interested in the majority of the names of the applicants anyway."2 Dr. Humiston took a different track. He asked Clarence Boyle, the city corporation counsel, if letters sent to the council from applicants requesting confidence were privilege communication. "If they are," Humiston asked, "wouldn't we be violating the law if we revealed the names?"3 Boyle failed to take the council off the hook, however, and replied: "As far as I know, no principle of law exists in a matter of this kind."4 On April 26, the new council received its first editorial scolding from the News Tribune on the secret meeting question. The editors wrote:

... [the council] did make a mistake, however, in acceding to the request of the joint committee of civil service employees organization for a closed meeting.

It turned out that nothing, according to the councilmen present, was brought up which could not have been discussed in the open.5

The council members found themselves in their first serious public conflict on April 27 when Stojack and Bratrud charged the majority with leaving them "out in the cold in policy decisions."6 Stojack claimed that he learned of the selection committee's intention of sending a group East to

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
interview candidates by reading about it in the News Tribune. "I don't feel the way this is gone into is right," Stojack argued. Bratrud agreed and said: "I don't have the faintest idea who the committee is calling on back there . . . I thought the entire council was going to decide." Stojack then questioned whether tax funds could be spent for sending the councilmen-elect on plane trips East. Stojack commented: "I talked with the controller's office and they informed me that such procedures were doubtful."

Battin, who seemed to be doing a slow burn, responded to Stojack: "Are you serious about the taxpayer's money or are you just offering obstruction on this move?" At this point Horace Green, a city attorney, assured the council-elect that funds had been appropriated by the lame duck commissioners for the purpose of allowing the new councilmen to search for a city manager.

Bratrud continued to object to the trip East. He expressed the belief that it was the purpose of the selection committee to "screen out the unlikely candidates and bring in the rest for council discussion."

Battin replied by stating: "We had a meeting last Friday, it was open to all councilmen. It is an unfortunate situation that a few chaps didn't make it." The group ended the public session by voting to exclude the press while they discussed manager candidates. The vote was five-to-three with Battin, Stojack and Mrs. Goering voting no.

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 2.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
In the following weeks Hooker, Perdue and Jensen traveled East to interview a number of candidates including George Bean, city manager of Grand Rapids, Michigan; William Deegan, city manager of Quincy, Massachusetts; and Frank Backstrom, assistant city manager of Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. Humiston, who was not at the April 27 meeting, was in California and Oregon meeting with Oren King, manager of Eugene and Wesley McClure, manager of San Leandro, California.

On April 30, News Tribune reporter Bob Myers reported in a front-page story that Bean was the likely choice for manager. Myers wrote: "Beans's appointment as city manager is highly probable because of the fact the selection committee is cutting short its jaunt to return." The members of the committee did nothing to squelch the rumors. Councilman Hooker exclaimed: "I doubt if we will find another man of his capabilities. I feel that any city is fortunate to have a city manager of Bean's caliber." Perdue and Jensen concurred with Hooker. Perdue said: "From his qualifications he appears to be one of the top men in the country."

Bean seemed to be the ideal candidate. His record with labor was good, he was popular with business interests, the newspapers and other interest groups in Grand Rapids. More importantly, he appeared to be a candidate the entire council would unite behind. His inclination was to leave Grand Rapids because of anti-council manager forces on the City Council and a feeling that Tacoma's new city charter was a good one.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 2.
On May 4, Bean arrived in Tacoma to be interviewed by the council-elect. The News Tribune reported:

Tacoma's City Council-elect indicated Monday it would not hire immediately George E. Bean, its first city manager applicant, even if the entire group endorses him.¹

Indeed, as one councilman put it: "We certainly couldn't take such a risk without interviewing a few more applicants."² Before returning home to Tacoma, the council selection committee had stopped off in Kansas City and Quincy to interview two other applicants.

The next day, May 4, Bean was interviewed by the council. The highlights, topics and Bean's replies to council questions went as follows:

Role of the manager: ... I should serve as a technical advisor to the City Council and carry out effectively decisions of the council.

The city charter: ... one of the best in the U. S. from the standpoint of carrying out the functions of government. The city manager form is the best government at the local level.

Vice: ... it is not the function of the city manager to determine policy but merely to carry out the City Council's orders ... a city cannot be raised above the level of community thinking ... before a change in direction of city policy is made effective the way must be prepared ... the whole question is a broad social one ... ³ (Italics mine.)

Bean's position on vice conditions troubled several councilmen. His views did not seem at all clear to the majority group.⁴ However, it was Bean's position on secret meetings that sealed his fate and ended any speculation that he would be Tacoma's first city manager.⁵ At a meeting in Mayor Anderson's

²Ibid.
⁴In an interview with this writer, Harold Tollefson indicated that the council majority was looking for a manager candidate who would not serve under a council that permitted an open town. Bean did not indicate that these were his feelings.
⁵The writer's interviews with Paul Perdue, Harold Tollefson, Omar Bratrud, Clara Goering and Murray Morgan confirm this view.
office after the regular interviewing, Bean said it was his policy to let reporters sit in on sessions at which questions were discussed. However, he argued that the reporter should pledge not to reveal any information until the council finally made up its mind on an issue. When a reporter would not make such a pledge, he would be barred from such meetings. When this point was questioned by reporters sitting in on the discussion, Bean indicated that he would personally "prepare" statements for press releases and give them to reporters when the proper time arrived.

The press corps, which had been putting pressure on the council over secret meetings, reacted strongly to Bean's stand. At this point, the council felt that media support for the new manager was crucial to the success of the new charter. However, Bean's statements were particularly inappropriate on the evening of May 4. Before the interviewing began, Battin, for the record, denied that "so-called secret meetings" by the council majority were taking place.

Battin said: "These developments with consequent misunderstandings on the part of the press and public regarding what the council is trying to do seem to call for some statement of policy." He went on to say: "We have a good council and there is no fundamental disagreement." Battin then suggested that only the general chairman and the chairman of the selection committee should speak for the council. This prompted Stojack

1 "Manager Role . . . Told," Tacoma News Tribune.
2 Ibid.
3 Interviews with Tollefson and Morgan confirm this.
4 "Manager Role . . . Told," Tacoma News Tribune.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
to once again say that the entire council should be involved in the decision-making process. Stojack said: "I didn't even know that Mr. Bean was coming until I read about it in the papers; I would have liked to have been part of the reception committee."¹

The day after Bean left for Grand Rapids, the council announced that four more candidates were scheduled to arrive for interviewing. This was the first formal indication that Bean was no longer the leading candidate. It became even more apparent when Jensen enthusiastically endorsed William Deegan. Jeansen said: "Deegan is one of the most popular and energetic city managers I met ... he is an excellent promotion man and is responsible for bringing many new industries to Quincy."²

Bratrud and Stojack were also enthusiastic over the prospects of Deegan being the city manager. Bratrud viewed Deegan as "my kind of man" and as a person with fire and a lot of go.³ Bratrud said: "I felt he was an excellent salesman; an aggressive person who would make Tacoma move. Since I am in sales I immediately like him."⁴

But the council majority had crossed Deegan off the list weeks previous to his visit. Paul Perdue explained:

Jensen and the others kept pushing for Deegan so we decided to bring him out for an interview even though we were against him.

Earlier, on our trip East, I had gone to Quincy to interview Deegan along with Jensen and Hooker. He met us at the airport. I immediately was struck by the way in which he felt his importance. People would continuously call him on the radio and he would report in. When we reached his house, we waited for the longest time at the

¹Ibid.
³Omar Bratrud, private interview.
⁴Ibid.
door. I had the feeling we were being delayed while his wife was struggling to clean up.

His wife was not at all impressive. . . . his furniture was cheap and shabby. Later, while Hooker and I were talking with members of his City Council, we began to find out how bad he really was. One councilman was so upset by Deegan's antics that he was taking heart pills. On further investigation, Hooker and I found out that there was a red light district just outside the city limits. . . . the general feeling was that Deegan was in some way connected.¹

On May 10 the News Tribune reported that Deegan held an edge over the other candidates as the council began pointing to May 11 as the day for selecting the first manager. However, the real choice of the council majority was Frank Backstrom. Backstrom had arrived in town to be interviewed with Deegan but seemed almost to go unnoticed. Indeed, he was the exact opposite of Deegan. He was seemingly introverted, soft-spoken and to many a "cold fish."² But he was obviously the right kind of man for the council majority. In Kansas City he had served on the City Council as one of the rare Republican councilmen during the heyday of the Pendergast machine. During his tenure, he was the lone voice of opposition to the graft and corruption that was a part of city politics in Kansas City.³ In 1951, when the reformers took control of the government, Backstrom became assistant to the city manager. Thus, Backstrom could be trusted on the question of a "closed town," he had more experience in the policy-making process of government than any of the council majority and could help guide them, and he had served under the highly respected City Manager Eugene Cookingham. However, Backstrom had some rather glaring drawbacks. He was not the kind of dynamic personality that

¹Paul Perdue, private interview.

²Several councilmen interviewed during the research phase of this thesis referred to Backstrom as a "cold fish." Mrs. Ellen Price and Pat Steele, to be elected to the council later, referred to him in those terms. The Tacoma News Tribune described him as retiring, introverted.

could help sell the city manager system to a city much divided over the new charter; but even more importantly, while opposing Pendergast and his ring he had incurred the wrath of organized labor in Kansas City.

On May 12 the council-elect met for the first time to formally consider the appointment of a city manager. By 1 a.m. it became evident that a consensus on the choice of the new manager would not be forthcoming. The vote was six-to-three in favor of Backstrom over Deegan.1

Tollefson attempted to make the choice a moot question by suggesting that the council establish a specific policy concerning the question of vice.2 It was Tollefson's feeling that the field would be narrowed down because only two manager candidates stated firmly that they would not consider accepting a position in Tacoma unless the city was closed tight.3 Thus, Hooker moved to put the council on record as favoring a policy that would "eradicate" prostitution in Tacoma. The strategy backfired, however, when Mrs. Goering joined Stojack, Bratrud and Jensen to vote no. Mrs. Goering was quick to explain: "I'm not voting no because I favor prostitution .... It's just that I don't think this is the time for such a vote."4

In the meantime, the Central Labor Council was forwarding to the councilmen telegrams from organized labor groups in Kansas City that indicated that Backstrom was not sympathetic to labor's interests. This convinced Bratrud to oppose Backstrom to the end even after it became obvious that Deegan was not

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 3.
about to get the five votes necessary. On the evening of May 14, Bratrud suggested that the council select a third choice—either Bean or Oren King of Eugene.

The council majority was not about to compromise even after the unions had expressed their adament opposition to Backstrom and had reminded the council that it had "promised to avoid" appointing anyone who couldn't get along with labor. Paul Perdue explained the majority's position as follows:

Why should organized labor have a man? We were looking for a man who was an administrator . . . who could do a job. Why should a particular faction have a man . . . they hadn't looked into the background qualifications. They were concerned with the pressure they could apply—not in the interests of the city as a whole. Organized labor—the hell with them! The councilman is there to do the best job for the community as he sees it and he is not there to follow the dictates of a faction.

On May 14, after Bratrud pleaded to his fellow councilmen that a compromise choice be selected, the council-elect voted six-to-two with one abstention to appoint Frank Backstrom. The next morning, Vernie Reed stated that it was labor's feeling that Backstrom was unsympathetic to their interests. Reed said: "We will try to get along."

The selection of Tacoma's first mayor under the council-manager charter was almost anticlimatic after Backstrom's appointment as manager. The decision came on May 18 and in this case the council did compromise. Stojack, the top vote-getter in the election, was unacceptable to the council majority because of his profession as a professional wrestler. He was viewed as


4 Paul C. Perdue, private interview.

5 "Kansas City Man Picked . . .," South Tacoma Star.
"inarticulate" and simply "inappropriate" for the position. On the other hand, Professor Battin was also eliminated from consideration. Battin, a man of emotions and quick temper, clashed with Dr. Humiston, a man noted for his sharp mind and, at times, arrogant manner. Humiston, in turn, cast his ballot for his own candidacy on the first vote. The other candidate was Harold Tollefson. Tollefson generally voted with the majority bloc. However, he was to admit that he was not included as a part of the inner circle. Thus, he got the support of Bratrud in the voting. On the final ballot, Tollefson found support from Humiston, Bratrud, Stojack, Jensen and Mrs. Goering. Battin received votes from Hooker and Perdue.

Summary and Conclusions

The previous discussion has shown that there was a great deal of political opposition to Tacoma's council-manager charter in 1952. This opposition should not have been particularly surprising to the reform interests. For example, the interests of organized labor first stated their case against strong executive authority and part-time legislators in 1890. Later, during the 1930's, the Central Labor Council helped to lead the political campaign against the reform movement aimed at bringing a council-manager system to Tacoma.

However, the intensity and nature of political opposition and the extent of hostility toward the charter in 1952 had to be the result of political events and decisions which took place during that period. Even after the

1 Paul Perdue, Mrs. Clara Goering and Harold Tollefson expressed this viewpoint in interviews with the writer.

2 Harold Tollefson, private interview.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
charter was passed and a new City Council was elected, group hostility remained and, as shall be seen in the next chapter, it intensified even more. The basic reasons for this hostility seemed to have been the result of decisions which were made during the freeholders' deliberations in the summer of 1952, the nature of the campaign which resulted in the narrow political victory for the charter, and the initial decisions made by the majority bloc of the first City Council under the manager plan. These decisions and political events were as follows:

The first crucial decision made by the freeholders was to follow the advice of Fred Shoemaker and take a straw vote on the form of government before the Central Labor Council representatives could present their case. It is doubtful whether the labor council would have endorsed or supported in any way a council-manager charter. However, the labor group did indicate an interest in presenting its views to the freeholders. And, the leadership was promised that no decision would be made by the commission until they did appear. These views might have included a recommendation for a mayor-council system. In that case, labor's request would have eventually been turned down. But the labor council may have made a number of recommendations which the freeholders could have accepted. For example, near the end of the deliberations Randy Green, business manager of the electrical workers, suggested that the labor council was in favor of a separately appointed utilities board. If the labor council had been able to make such a recommendation, and if it had been accepted by the freeholders, as it eventually was, then the labor group might very well have viewed that decision as a victory for its interests in the community. Such a "victory" during this initial decision-making process may very well have resulted in less hostility and suspicion on the part of organized labor during the later, heated campaign to enact the charter. As it was, the freeholders made it appear that the influence of the National
Municipal League and the Public Administration Service was of greater import than that of the local unions.

The citizens of Tacoma desired some change in their governmental system. In this sense, their feelings were very similar to the feelings of the citizens in 1909. However, the council-manager plan was not the only alternative form of government available. Indeed, the freeholders of 1952 were not elected to frame a specific charter as were the freeholders of 1909. And a council-manager plan could not be introduced with relatively little disruption in the community as was the case with the commission form in 1909.

A number of important interest groups were strongly opposed to the manager system. This opposition had been traditional. Organized labor was opposed and active in the campaign as they had been in the 1930's. The city employees were opposed and they were supported in their opposition by the incumbent commissioners. The "open town" interests were opposed and were undoubtedly aiding the opponents of the charter financially. Many of the leaders of the Democratic party were opposed and worked for the charter's defeat. These important interest groups had been either neutral or actually in favor of the commission charter in 1909. Yet the freeholders and many of the supporters of the city manager concept felt that the charter would pass on its own merit. They seemingly misinterpreted the mandate given them by the voters in the freeholders' election. As has been seen, the City-Wide Freeholder Information Committee endorsed many candidates not committed to the manager concept. Indeed, a prior commitment to a specific form was not necessary for that endorsement. However, the north end professional groups and reform interests were able to sort out their candidates on the ballot and give those candidates enough political backing to insure their election to the freeholders' commission. This did not represent a
consensus of community thinking. For example, Mrs. Swayze, the leading vote-getter among the freeholder candidates, received less than 40 per cent of the total vote cast during that election.

Thus, there was no organized community-wide campaign of any significance to sell council-manager government to Tacoma citizens. This lack of an organized campaign was apparent even after the freeholders had lost a great deal of free publicity while the News Tribune was on strike during the summer months when the important freeholder deliberations were taking place. On the other hand, the opponents of the charter were well organized and financed. Their efforts during this period seemed to represent the initial formation of an anti-manager leadership faction in the community. They used the media effectively and attacked the method by which the charter was presented and attacked the concept of a city manager from an emotional perspective. The response of the supporters of the charter also took the form of an emotional campaign, in this case an attack on the motives of the charter opponents. A review of some of the important adjectives used by both sides in their campaigns gives an indication of the level of emotionalism and conflict during this period:

**Charter opponents describing the reformers and the charter**

1. zeal for centralized management.
2. radical departure from a true democratic form.
3. efficient dictatorship.
4. attempted railroad.
5. stooping to deliberate lies.
6. American privileges denied.
7. controlled by a syndicate.
8. vilification and smears.
9. political sabotage.
Charter proponents describing the opponents of the charter

1. big lie campaign.
2. extravagant pay raises to city hall favorites.
3. refuge of political scoundrels.
4. cheap appeals.

The campaign over the council-manager charter seemed to evolve into what William A. Gamson has described as a "rancorous conflict."¹

... these are characterized by the belief that norms about the waging of political conflict in American communities have been violated. In such conflicts, actions occur which produce a shared belief that tactics used to influence the outcome are 'dirty,' 'underhanded,' 'vicious,' and so forth.²

This apparent rancorous conflict resulted in groups lining up on one side of the issue or the other. The supporters of council-manager government included the professional groups in the community, leaders in the business and banking community, prominent Republicans, church groups, the editorial staff of the News Tribune and the college community. The opponents of the charter included organized labor, leaders in the Democratic party, the city employees and the incumbent commissioners. The nature of the campaign made accommodation difficult and a polarization of community interests became the result.

Many interests in the community did not feel that the council-manager plan was introduced openly and through normal formal processes. The Committee for Better Government charged, for example, that the entire charter had been "railroaded" and had been placed on the ballot at the last minute. As has been seen, Fred Shoemaker admitted during the freeholder discussions

²Ibid., p. 197.
that he was being guided by an agenda prepared by the National Municipal League. Later, as a result of the advice of a representative of the Public Administration Service, the freeholders hired an "outside" consultant to advise them on preparation of the charter. This gave the appearance to many interests that the decisions of the freeholders were being influenced by outsiders while important local groups were being excluded. E. K. Murray was to note during the last days of the campaign: "Not a single freeholder was from the south end, east side, nor one representative of either organized or unorganized labor."¹ The decisions of the majority bloc of the first City Council under the system reinforced this feeling.

Unlike the first commissioners elected in 1910, Tacoma's initial city councilmen under the manager system fitted the mold of the traditional reformist view of an elected official. That view was perhaps best expressed by Stone, Price and Stone:

... the most capable and public spirited citizens should serve on the governing body as representatives of the city at large, to determine policies for the benefit of the community as a whole, rather than for one party, faction or neighborhood ... ²

Paul Perdue expressed the prevailing views of the council majority when he said: "... we are here to do the best job for the community ... and not to follow the dictates of a faction."³ Yet, the council majority's perspective of government represented the values of one faction in the community. The decision to hire Frank Backstrom as Tacoma's first city manager was based on those values. Certainly, a large number of Tacomans


³Paul Perdue, private interview.
took the following view concerning the appointment of the city manager:

... the manager plan has so gripped the imagination of the people that they actually applaud when the council tries to find the best man for the job ... wherever he may be found ... .

But, perhaps just as large a number of Tacomans took the view that an outsider would have "no conception of the sentiment among the people regarding their desires as to how the city shall be conducted." This happened to be a traditional view of organized labor throughout the country. The appointment of Frank Backstrom did nothing to ameliorate that viewpoint locally.

3 Ibid.
In the last chapter, there was a discussion of some of the basic reasons for the political opposition towards council-manager government in the city of Tacoma. This opposition can be traced to the 1930's when the Central Labor Council and the municipal employees campaigned against the council-manager proposition of 1934. However, the intensity and emotionalism of both sides during the campaign of 1952 must be viewed within the context of political events that took place and the decisions that were made during that later period. The role of the freeholders and the decisions they made, the nature of the political campaign concerning the council-manager charter and the political attitudes and values of the majority members of Tacoma's first City Council under the council-manager system were all issue areas examined previously.

This chapter will focus on the administration of Tacoma's first city manager, Frank Backstrom. Backstrom the man, the decisions he made, his relationship to the City Council and the reaction of the potentially hostile groups in the community will be reviewed. As has been noted, Frank Backstrom was faced with some very difficult political problems from the very beginning of his tenure of office. The Central Labor Council had recommended to the City Council that he not be appointed. Union leaders viewed him with considerable suspicion for a number of reasons. He was an outsider, a product of a governmental system unsettling to the unions, an appointee of a group of
councilmen who were not sympathetic to the wishes of organized labor, and he had received unfavorable notices from labor council in Kansas City. Backstrom was also not a unanimous choice of the City Council. Three councilmen opposed him to the very end and refused to vote for his appointment even as a unifying gesture.

Backstrom was also faced with some very difficult choices in developing the new administration under the recently passed charter. He had to deal with the problem of the police department. This issue was top priority as far as the council majority was concerned. Backstrom had also to develop the city's administrative code. This meant that budgetary procedures had to be reviewed and integrated under a single chief executive. The development of the code also meant that Backstrom had to deal with the civil service regulations—a highly sensitive area with a suspicious and potentially hostile group of city employees. Backstrom's decisions in these areas will be examined as will the reactions of hostile interest groups in the community.

Frank Backstrom--Tacoma's First City Manager

Frank Backstrom, Tacoma's first city manager, was not the picture of a politically controversial figure. Indeed, he was a rather shy and retiring person. Some observers described him as a "cold fish" while others felt he was "not aggressive." Yet, his background in Kansas City demonstrated another side of the man's personality. In the 1930's he had been elected to the City Council at the heyday of the Pendergast period as a reform candidate of the Republican party. During his tenure on the council, he was a lone voice against the abuses of the machine. Later, when the Pendergast machine lost power to the reformers, he became assistant city manager.
The majority members of the Tacoma City Council viewed him as a very fortunate choice for manager. Paul Perdue, for example, noted that the "man had guts" to vote against the machine, bring the issues to the people and help bring about change in the form of government there. "He was the man we wanted," he said later. "And after his lengthy time on the City Council in Kansas City and his experience as assistant manager, he was in a unique position to understand policy-making and administration." Mrs. Clara Goering described him as follows:

Frank Backstrom was a mild sort of fellow but with a certain amount of hard sense and realism that stood him in favor. He was a solid rock of philosophy even though he seemed mild and meek. As a councilman, I found him extremely easy to work with.

Harold Tollefson, mayor during Backstrom's first three years in Tacoma, described the city manager as follows: "Frank Backstrom was a good manager; he never surprised me . . . and this is important. A good manager never surprises the mayor because the manager has to work with him."

The leaders of organized labor thought differently about Backstrom, however. They perceived him as anti-labor, particularly after the unfavorable reports they had received of him from the Central Labor Council in Kansas City. Vernie Reed, member of the Tacoma labor council, was led to say: "I feel the man is unsympathetic to labor, but we will try to get along." Minority councilman Omar Bratrud, another critic of Backstrom, also voiced a wait and see attitude. He said: "Kansas City labor didn't give Backstrom a good record, but there shouldn't be any of that kind of trouble here if he gives

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1 Paul C. Perdue, private interview.
2 Ibid.
4 Harold Tollefson, private interview with the writer, Tacoma, Wash., Nov. 17, 1970.
labor any kind of break and they give him one in return."  

Backstrom expressed puzzlement over labor's attitude upon his arrival in Tacoma. He indicated that under the charter in Kansas City, municipal labor unions could not be legally recognized as such and collective bargaining was impossible. He did indicate that during his tenure as councilman he was forced to vote on a number of controversial issues including a building code which labor had opposed. "Maybe that's why they turned against me," he said, "but give me six months here and they will change their opinion."  

Backstrom's first significant move as manager was to announce his intention to reorganize the police department. The extent of the reorganization was made clear on June 23 when the News Tribune reported that Jack Elich, the last police chief appointed by former Public Safety Commissioner James Kerr, was to be replaced by Backstrom. The news "leak" concerning Elich was reported by a News Tribune reporter after Backstrom had conferred with the council in an executive session. One week later, Backstrom fired Elich after the incumbent chief refused to resign. The same day he hired Roy K. Kerr as Tacoma's first police chief under the council-manager charter.

Kerr, who was not related to the former public safety commissioner, came to the city highly recommended by the FBI. As a personality, he was much different than Backstrom. He was big physically, had a warm and rather folksy manner and was straight-forward and direct in stating his feelings on police enforcement. During an interview with the council he noted that "what holds good police work back is politics." He continued: "As a rule,

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3 Ibid.
a policeman wants to do a good job. Police work and politics have nothing in common."¹ Kerr also indicated that he had never worked under a city manager form of government, but that he would "never work under a council-mayor system again."²

The whole area of police reform had been a key issue in the fight to bring council-manager government to Tacoma. The new council majority viewed it as the most important policy area. The hiring of Backstrom over the vigorous objective of the Central Labor Council has been, in part, because of his views on cleaning up the city. However, where Backstrom could afford to be "not aggressive" and a "cold fish" as a personality, the new police chief had to be aggressive and at the same time create a positive public image of honesty and integrity. Kerr seemed to fit that picture. One week after formally assuming office on July 15, Kerr revamped the police department's vice squad. Dan Johnson, who had headed the squad under Elich, was reassigned to the position of superintendent of the police garage.³ The other two members, Dale Deskins and H. F. Wiley, were returned to the traffic and detective divisions. The new vice group was headed by John Hickey and included three other officers—Kenneth Roach, Glen Alexander and Lyle Smith. Hickey was considered above reproach as far as honesty and toughness were concerned. He took the job because of his respect for Kerr and proceeded to dedicate himself to closing down gambling and prostitution operations in the city.⁴

By the end of the year, the News Tribune was to report:

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
Tacoma's notoriety as a den of iniquity has practically disappeared. The new City Council agreed on a policy toward vice, hired a manager who was informed of the policy, the manager brought in a police chief with no apparent connections and the chief set the local underworld and the police straight.  

In early July, Backstrom made his first public speech before a group other than the City Council. During his discussion before a number of downtown businessmen, he defined his role as a city manager and listed his goals for the coming year. Backstrom noted that "as in a business, I am responsible to a board of directors and must carry out their orders." Backstrom defined the manager's task as being an administrative link between the City Council and the city departments. "It is my responsibility to interpret the wishes of the council to the department heads and to represent the departments before the council," he said. Backstrom also noted that it was the manager's administrative authority to review all day-to-day expenditures of the departments and to watch over budgetary allocations. Within this context, Backstrom indicated that it would be his responsibility to develop the city's administrative code in the months ahead. As a part of that task, Backstrom said that he was going to: (1) define the duties and scope of functions of the various city departments; (2) develop city budgetary procedures; (3) develop accounting and purchasing regulations and (4) develop new personnel regulations.

During the summer months, Backstrom began to establish the new city fiscal policies. In early June, he hired Joseph Balcer as his administrative

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3Ibid.

4Ibid.
assistant in charge of budgetary control. Balcer, who left a post in Milwaukee, to accept the position, had worked with Backstrom in Kansas City. \(^1\) He came to Tacoma as a highly qualified public administrator with graduate degrees in law and administration. \(^2\)

By August, Backstrom and Balcer had developed an allotment schedule to allow central review of all city departmental expenditures on a quarterly basis. \(^3\) During the same period, a new overall city budget was put together for the first time and a projected $280,000 deficit, left by the commissioners, was eliminated. The only serious departmental reorganization planned, other than the fiscal controls, was for the police department. Here, Backstrom projected an additional twenty police officers, an increase in salaries and a number of new executive positions to be filled through inter-departmental promotion. \(^4\)

The fourth area of concern, personnel procedures, was saved for the last. In September, Backstrom hired his third "outsider" to serve as personnel director. The new man was Gavin Lawson, a professional public administrator with experience with a number of municipalities and also the Public Administration Service. \(^5\)

The civil service question was a highly controversial one. During the freeholders' hearings the year before, Owen P. Hughes, attorney for the Municipal Civil Service League, had put the league on record as being


\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Myers, "City Appears to Gain," p. 1.

\(^4\)Ibid.

"violently opposed" to the rule-of-three concept.¹ He went on to suggest that an elected Civil Service Commission be empowered to appoint a personnel director and that the city charter include the "rule-of-one concept." Later in the hearings, D. H. Ketler, secretary of the joint labor committee of city employees, had said that the city employees were in favor of an elected civil service commission and opposed to the rule-of-three concept.

The city employees had good reason to oppose the rule-of-three procedure under the commissioners. This procedure would allow the department heads to appoint a new city employee from the top three finishers on a civil service examination list. Although the concept was aimed at allowing administrative officials more flexibility in making appointments, it had the potential to be used for political purposes by the commissioners. Any flexibility in civil service regulations under the commission system could conceivably lead to spoils. Indeed, an elected city councilman under the old charter was also the chief administrator of a city department. His powers to hire and fire at will were checked only through the city's civil service merit system and the rule-of-one concept.

The freeholders did not see the danger of spoils under the manager system. The city manager was a professional administrator and as such he was not aligned to any political faction. His decisions were to be based on objective considerations and not political influence. Yet, as has been seen, the council-manager charter had become an issue which polarized the community. And, the city employees, aligned with organized labor,² had been

¹City of Tacoma Freeholders' Commission 1952, Minutes of commission deliberations, Meeting of June 5, 1952.

²Tacoma had a history of being a strong labor town as has been seen. However, even the municipal employees were unique in this respect. Tacoma was the first city on the coast to develop collective bargaining procedures for its municipal employees.
the losers in the charter election. The process of municipal employees losing out in the political decisions that went into bringing council-manager government to Tacoma began during the freeholders' meeting.

The municipal employees' representatives had suggested that the Civil Service Commission be an elected body. This recommendation was turned down. They had suggested that the commission be empowered to appoint the personnel director. They were turned down on that also. Finally, they had suggested that the rule-of-one provision be written into the charter and had lost that as well. Now, the employees found themselves confronted by a city manager with a reputation for being anti-labor; a council majority who, as one councilman had put it, had a "labor be damned" attitude; and a personnel director who was an outsider and who had formerly had been employed by the Public Administration Service, an organization that had been influential in the decision-making which led to the city charter.

Thus, Backstrom and his new personnel director found themselves dealing with a highly sensitive and suspicious group of city employees as they began to consider the new civil service regulations which were to become a part of the city's administrative code. Backstrom handled this matter in much the same way that he had handled police reorganization and the new budget and accounting regulations. He hired a technician in the field, in this case Lawson, let him analyze the problem and come up with suggested solutions. This led to a revamping of the civil service system which included a provision which would introduce the rule-of-three concept.

Lawson felt that the inclusion of the rule-of-three concept was totally justified as were the other modifications in the procedures. He said: "These rules were drawn from those adopted by other cities and were an accumulation
of what was deemed best."¹ Backstrom backed up his personnel director with
the following comment: "We have striven to retain the same type of rules
the new charter calls for. We have asked nothing new or different from what
the charter says."²

In November, as the proposed procedures became public for the first
time, the representatives of the city employee groups began to voice their
opposition. On November 23, D. H. Ketler, secretary of the Joint Labor
Committee, appeared before the City Council to put the committee on record as
being opposed to the rule-of-three concept.³ During the council meeting
Backstrom indicated that the draft procedures were "preliminary" and suggested
that he would be willing to meet with the city employee representatives to
"iron out" any difficulties.⁴ Ketler then asked the council if it would be
willing to meet with the employees and the manager so that they could hear
both sides of any argument which might arise. The response was mixed with
strong opposition coming from the council majority group. Dr. Homer Humiston
was led to say:

This issue is touchy business. I think that the question of reviewing
the civil service regulations should be left strictly up to the city
manager as a part of his duties. It is his authority to iron out nego-
tiations on the rules.⁵

During the spring and early summer of 1954, the controversy over the
civil service proposals continued with the council majority approving the

¹"Councilmen Labels Rap at City Premature," Tacoma News Tribune, Nov. 24,

²"Backstrom Appraisal Move Defeated 7 to 2," Tacoma News Tribune,


⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵Ibid.
recommendations of Backstrom and Lawson. Most of the new regulations had been written into the administrative code by late summer. The rule-of-three proposal was also approved in late July.

The growing political opposition to Backstrom was reflected in a hardening attitude against him on the part of the council minority. During a council session in early August, Frank Stojack charged that Backstrom was "withholding information" from the council concerning a proposal from the Tacoma Society of Architects to draw plans for a new city hall.\(^1\) Stojack moved to have the council appraise Backstrom's fourteen months in office as a means of eventually dismissing him as city manager. Stojack was supported by Everett Jensen but his motion failed on a seven-to-two vote. Charles Battin, speaking for the council majority, charged that Stojack was using "innuendo" to attack the city manager. He said: "Engaging in obstructionist tactics for whatever political advantage it might give is pretty poor treatment for our city."\(^2\) During the same meeting, D. H. Ketler, now Municipal Civil Service League secretary, stated: "Employee morale is now at the lowest ebb it has ever been. These rules were over the overwhelming opposition of the city employees."\(^3\) Stojack agreed and said: "They have taken the heart out of the civil service system."\(^4\)

The conflict between Stojack and Jensen and Backstrom continued on to the August 9 meeting of the council. That evening Jensen accused Backstrom of allowing "featherbedding" of supervisory positions in the city's sanitation

\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid.
division of the health department. Jensen said:

I checked with a number of employees in the division and they all complained about Backstrom's proposal to put three supervisory positions in charge of the ten man sanitation staff. I've had enough business experience to know that this proposal is completely out of order.  

Once again, Battin came to the defense of Backstrom. He declared:

Mr. Jensen, you are over-extending your authority as a councilman in your attempts to talk with municipal employees and find gripes. I am distressed and disgusted by your attitude.  

D. H. Ketler, who was at the meeting to document Jensen's charges, was ruled out-of-order when he attempted to speak to the council. However, after the session he told the press: "My objection is that two of the new supervisory positions are made by appointment and not by civil service examination."  

By early September, the civil service provisions had been passed by the council. However, the controversy was far from over. The same month, Ketler joined with several other active labor leaders, Democratic party regulars and other anti-manager interests to plot a new strategy to deal with their political opponents on the council and the city manager.

**Counter-reform and the Strong-Mayor Charter**

By the early fall of 1954, the leaders of the anti-reform groups in Tacoma had come to the conclusion that there was only one option left if they were going to change the current political pattern of decision-making in the city. That option was an end to council-manager government in the city.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
The only viable strategy available to bring about the change was the formal procedures of a freeholders' election. Thus, in early September Ketler joined with Fred Dabroe, a retired city employee and active Democratic party organizer; Claude Munsey, a former Democratic state representative and Howard Carothers, a former city attorney under the commission form of government, to organize the "Committee of 100," a counter-reform group that would be dedicated to the downfall of the council-manager charter. By the end of the month, Ketler had distributed several thousand petitions to anti-manager forces in the city. The petitions called for amending and revising the council-manager charter by providing for another freeholders' election.

The anti-reform groups were united in their opposition to the council-manager government. However, their opposition was not necessarily based on the same reasons. Many of the city employees viewed the City Council as puppets of Backstrom and his "government by experts." However, the problem in their eyes went deeper than just Frank Backstrom. The council-manager system itself was faulty; and because of its very nature, the system naturally led to a dictatorship based on government by technocrats. Backstrom had to go, and with him, the council-manager system that brought him to Tacoma.

Other groups supported the counter-reform movement because of the political nature of the council majority. The labor unions had long been opposed to the council-manager charter because they perceived it as being a system based on anti-labor values. Indeed, a hired manager and the corporate board concept symbolically represented a pro-business philosophy. The council majority reinforced this perception by their political behavior. They appointed

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a former Republican city councilman from the East who had an anti-labor record as Tacoma's first city manager. They made this decision in the face of strenuous objections by the Central Labor Council. The council next refused to consider a union representative for the Utilities Board after the labor council had asked that one be appointed.¹ Other allies of labor also viewed the council majority as the political enemy. The South Tacoma, Democratic party political clubs worked for the charter change. Where the north end had been historically Republican, business and professionally oriented and politically active in past reform movements, the south end had been strongly Democratic, working class and anti-reform. It has been shown in past chapters that the south end had supported the political career of Angelo Fawcett and had voted strongly against the recall of 1910. This political orientation was also reflected in the vote on the charter in 1952. The north end had given the charter a 65 per cent favorable vote while the south end had voted 52 per cent against. Indeed, the council majority was a reflection of north end interests. They were Republican, business and professionally oriented, highly educated [the 1960 census indicated that the average level of schooling in the north end was 12.5 years while in the south end the level was 9.3 years] and all committed to the basic philosophy of council-manager government. Yet, the north end represented only about 30 per cent of the voting public [and much less overall when you consider that more highly educated people are more inclined to vote].

¹Harold Tollefson was to relate later that Vernie Reed had not been appointed to the Utilities Board because he had been publicly opposed to the Council-Manager charter. Tollefson indicated that as Mayor he could not nominate Reed because he did not have enough votes on the council for confirmation.
Thus, seventy per cent of the voters lived outside of the north end of town and a majority of this group had voted against the charter in 1952. Nothing had happened since that election to change their attitude about the charter. Interestingly enough, Everett Jensen, a north end resident but a member of the council minority, had warned his fellow councilmen that more south end residents deserved appointment to city commissions and boards. Even Paul Perdue suggested that South Tacomans believed that the Planning Commission was biased because it had only north end residents serving on it. But the council made no move to allay the fears of many South Tacomans who felt that they were being excluded from political decision-making in the city.

There was a great deal of suspicion that vice and gambling interests were also connected in some way with the Committee of 100. The News Tribune ran a series of articles suggesting that Vito Cuttone, an alleged underworld figure, was financing the committee. In one article Fred Dabroe was quoted by an informant as saying:

The Cowlitz gangs the city was about to begin construction of two massive power dams on the Cowlitz River will be coming into town when the dams get started, and there'll be plenty of easy money, so they want a wide open town.³

The open town interests did have much to gain by a new and more sympathetic administration. As previously noted, the new City Council was committed to having a closed town and the city manager proceeded to close it. An elected mayor could give the vice and gambling interests a foot in the door politically and an opportunity to bring in a new tolerance policy.

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²Ibid.
By the middle of December, the Committee of 100 had gathered enough signatures to require the council to place on the ballot a proposition for the election of freeholders. However, it was Ketler's intention to collect many more signatures than necessary to demonstrate to the community that there was a mandate for change. On December 14, Ketler ran a large advertisement in the Civil Service Bulletin urging the city employees to sign and distribute petitions. The advertisement indicated that the employees had a "legal right" to sign the petition without legal action being taken against them. The advertisement concluded with the following statement:

We also realize that there can be some spite work personally against you with the merit system you now have, but that is all the more reason that it is important that you sign.1

Two weeks later, Ketler, along with Carothers, Dabroe, Munsey and Hulda Ramser, Clarence Cawthorn, Hal Hughes and Robert G. Earley, presented petitions containing 18,750 signatures to the city clerk. The petitions contained over 10,000 more signatures than were necessary to legally force the City Council to call a freeholders' election. The petitions stated the following:

We the undersigned respectfully demand that the City Council cause an election to be held for the purpose of electing a board of fifteen freeholders for the purpose of preparing a new charter for the city of Tacoma ... by altering, revising, adding to or repealing the existing charter ... including all amendments thereto ... .3

One week after the petitions were certified, the City Council passed a resolution setting May 10 as the election date on the freeholders' proposition.


2Ibid.

The council majority now found themselves in a frustrating position. They had tried to play the traditional role of councilman under the council-manager system. They had hired the best candidate available as city manager. He, in turn, did all of the "right" things. He brought in three administrators with excellent backgrounds and told them to make recommendations based on an objective appraisal of the situation. These recommendations were presented to the council with the suggestion that they were based on the very best information available in the field of public administration. The council majority, in turn, passed the recommendations. Yet, now the city manager had become a political figure. His decisions were not apolitical or objective. Indeed, a large segment of the community was claiming that the manager's judgement was politically motivated and his recommendations were subjective. The council majority responded to this charge by attending more committee meetings and reviewing more closely the administrative decisions made by the city manager. However, by February they once again decided to revert to the more traditional role after attending a one hour special hearing on the technical aspects of street cleaners.¹ Mrs. Goering declared the meeting "a waste of time" and stated: "We should spend more time on policy-making and less on these technical subjects."²

During late January and early February 1955 the council majority, led by Mayor Tollefson, began to openly attack the motives of the Committee of 100. On January 30, D. H. Ketler sent a letter to Tollefson in which he accused the mayor of using the "council meetings and the council chambers

² Ibid.
as the time and place to publicly attack me."\(^1\) The previous week Tollefson had ruled Ketler out-of-order when he attempted to address the council in response to the mayor's warning to not use "coercion" in the solicitation of funds from city employees for the anti-administration campaign. In his letter to the mayor, Ketler also stated:

I do not charge you with knowingly making a false statement last Monday night, but I do charge you with deliberately making your statement without taking the trouble to ascertain the accuracy of whatever information you had on which you might have based your statement.\(^2\)

The following week during the council session, Tollefson asked Ketler to comment on the source of the funds that were being used in the campaign to change the charter. Ketler replied by saying that he knew there had been funds collected but that he was in no position to tell about them or about the function of the Committee of 100 in getting signatures for the anti-charter petitions.\(^3\) Ketler indicated that the council could obtain the information from the committee's chairman, Howard Carothers.

The Committee of 100 did receive contributions from city employees. In fact, the fund raising efforts began as early as November 2 when Ketler sent letters of solicitation to all city personnel. Each letter contained a return envelope numbered so that "each contributing employee will get credit and so the committee can follow up to encourage those slow to contribute."\(^4\) In his letter Ketler suggested that each of the 1,500 employees contribute ten dollars to the campaign. Thus, the committee was applying pressure of sorts to get the city employees to help finance the anti-charter campaign.

\(^1\) Ibid.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
However their efforts were not much different than past fund raising campaigns sponsored by labor and business organizations. And, the very civil service provisions that were the bone of contention in the anti-charter campaign protected the city employee from undue harassment on the part of the committee.

The committee was also receiving financial support from organized labor including the Central Labor Council and the Teamsters Union. These contributions were legal in every sense. Indeed, as has been seen, the reformers secured financial support from the downtown business and banking interests in their campaign to bring council-manager government to Tacoma.

However, the key issue in the campaign was the source of financial backing for the anti-charter campaign. It was not the labor unions or city employees who were the issue, however. Instead, it was the implication that the anti-reformers were being financed by the gambling and vice interests that seemingly controlled the politics of the city until 1952. This implication was used by the News Tribune in its campaign to discredit the anti-reform group in the weeks before the freeholders' election in May.

As was previously noted, Vito Cuttone was linked to the Committee of 100 in the days leading up to the May election. The News Tribune used as its source an alleged former member of the Committee of 100 who served as an informant for a series of articles written by Paul Anderson. The informant named Fred Dabroe as Cuttone's frontman and implied that Ketler and the city employee groups were being duped by the vice interests. Anderson quoted the informant as making the following statement concerning his relationship with Dabroe:

1Patrick M. Steele, private interview. (Member of the 1955 freeholders' commission and member of the Tacoma City Council.)
Dabroe had deposited $639 in the Central Bank. For personal reasons he found it necessary to withdraw all his money and place it in another bank, so I went with him when he did this.

'I've got to withdraw my $4,000 from the Central Bank and the $650 that Vito gave the committee,' he said on our way out to the bank.

Dabroe said Ketler didn't know where he was getting the dough and added that some tavern operators wanted to give, too.¹

The informant also claimed that the committee was paying the petition handlers money for each signature they obtained. He said: "There was no accounting at that time of the source of the money paying some of these expenses."²

During the week of the Anderson articles, the News Tribune also ran a front page story announcing the resignation of Hal Hughes from the Committee of 100. Hughes had been a member of the seven-man executive committee and his letter of resignation to Committee Chairman Howard Carothers was printed by the paper in full. Hughes stated that he was resigning because he had "hopes that members of the committee would reveal themselves publicly, no matter what the consequences."³ Hughes went on to state:

Perhaps I am being a stupid politician, but I must live with myself, and be honest in my conception of principles.

I truthfully believe that you have some basic reason for this movement, however, I can also recognize many virtues in favor of your opponents, and complete perfection in our municipal government shall never be realized .... I truthfully feel that for the good of our community the present form of government is a terrific improvement over past experiences.⁴

In an additional statement to the News Tribune, Hughes said:

I felt that I was being used as a patsy, which in the vernacular of 'Dragnet' means a fall guy, for the fast buck and special favor society who hide in the background and refuse to reveal their names.⁵

¹ Paul Anderson, "Vito Cuttone's Name Linked."
² Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
On May 6 the Committee of 100 ran a half-page advertisement in the *News Tribune* which listed the 100 members of the committee. The advertisement noted that city employees were omitted from the list along with "certain businessmen and others whose economic security could well be affected by declaring their position." It also referred to an earlier advertisement ran by the Citizens' Charter Committee in which the names of 209 supporters of the council-manager charter were listed. The committee ad stated: "In checking the list of the charter committee we find that 5 per cent live outside the city, 20 per cent live south of 6th Avenue and 75 per cent live north of 6th Avenue." Interestingly enough, the list submitted by the Committee of 100 found that 73 per cent of the individuals named lived south of 6th Avenue while the remaining 23 per cent resided in the north end of town. The list included seven freeholder candidates, several members of the Democratic party Central Committee and a number of active labor leaders including Vernie Reed. The next segment of this chapter will deal with the freeholders' election during this period.

The Anti-Reform Freeholders And The Strong-Mayor Charter

The interest groups working against the council-manager charter had succeeded in getting their freeholders' proposition on the ballot. It now became important for them to line up a viable slate of candidates for the fifteen positions on the charter revision committee. Patrick Steele, who became a member of the slate, described the process as follows:

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1"Committee of 100," (advertisement) *Tacoma News Tribune*, May 6, 1955, p. 3.

The Committee of 100 was entirely a Teamsters, labor and Democratic party proposition. Personally, I was against their proposition at first. I didn't want another uproar so I tried to cool it. However, the opposition continued to pick up and the council majority was incapable of dealing with it.

Finally I was approached by the committee's screening committee. Mrs. Dawn Olson, A. C. Bertocchini, Claude Munsey and Det Ketler were involved in the interviewing. I had no intention of filing, but just before the deadline Herb Satterlee of the Teamsters Union called and asked me to run . . . so I did.

I think they asked me because of my former association with the Civil Service League in settling jurisdictional disputes in the 1942 Nisqually River dam project. I worked closely with Vernie Reed and others at the Central Labor Council in working out an agreement between two unions involved with the project.1

Mrs. Ellen Price, another freeholder, indicated that the same process applied with respect to her decision to run. She said: "Labor asked me to run. My first thought was to say no, but my friends urged me to file so I did, not expecting to win."2 Mrs. Price and Pat Steele were two members of the slate who had not been identified with the activities of the Committee of 100. Mrs. Price had been active in PTA work, Girl Scouts and March of Dimes campaigns and had gotten to know a number of anti-manager leaders through her association with those campaigns.3 Steele, of course, had served on the 1952 freeholders' commission and had strongly campaigned for the council-manager charter.

All of the other members of the anti-reform slate [those candidates endorsed by the Committee of 100 or the Central Labor Council] were identified as being either pro-labor, active Democratic party regulars or strongly opposed to the council-manager charter. Seven of the candidates had been on the Committee of 100 membership list which appeared in the News Tribune on

1 Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
3 Ibid.
May 6. These included Howard Carothers, chairman of the committee; D. H. Ketler; J. Bruce Burns, a local attorney; John C. Sullivan, member of the Democratic party Central Committee and former Tacoma School Board commissioner; Claude Munsey, a past Democratic party representative to the state legislature; A. C. Bertocchini, Democratic county clerk, and Louis Peterson, a South Tacoma architect. Also on the slate were Mrs. Dawn Olson, secretary of the Democratic party Central Committee; E. K. Murray, former freeholder in 1927 and 1952; Norman E. Bradley, member of the Central Labor Council; Z. A. Vane, a past Democratic party representative to the state legislature; A. B. Comfort, former freeholder in 1952 and Republican representative to the state legislature and Gerry Bott, a South Tacoma fuel dealer and unsuccessful Republican candidate for the State House of Representatives and City Council. Eight of fifteen candidates had held public office at some time during their careers. Nine members of the slate were residents of South Tacoma while six had been active in Democratic party politics. All fifteen were committed to an end to council-manager government in Tacoma. Although the slate had not endorsed an alternative form, it was obvious what the general consensus of the group was. One candidate was quoted as saying: "... there is no need for us to study the various forms of government, as was done three years ago. All that is left is the strong-mayor form."

The pro-charter efforts were headed by the Citizens' Charter Committee chaired by Gerald Longstreth, long time advocate of the council-manager system. It was the strategy of this group to defeat the freeholders proposition so that the charter would remain in force. However, the committee did endorse

several of the freeholder candidates on the ballot including Mrs. Muriel Chamberlin, of the League of Women Voters; John Anderson, former mayor under the commission charter; Mrs. Thomas Swayze, freeholder in 1952; Stanton Warburton, freeholder in 1952; Hugh Tudor, freeholder in 1952 and several young businessmen who filed as candidates committed to the council-manager charter. In all, twenty-six pro-charter candidates filed, twenty-six anti-charter candidates filed and fourteen neutral candidates filed as candidates for the freeholder commission.

The efforts of the charter committee and the *News Tribune* to defeat the charter revision proposition were for naught, however, as slightly more than 51 per cent of the 34,231 voters who cast their ballots voted in favor of the proposition. The total turnout was slightly less than 50 per cent of the registered voters and 22,905 votes less than the total cast in the election which brought council-manager government to Tacoma in November 1952. Thirteen of the fifteen candidates on the anti-reform slate were swept into office. The losers were A. B. Comfort and Gerry Bott. John Anderson and Mrs. Francis Swayze were the pro-charter candidates elected to the freeholders' commission.

The following table indicates the vote by areas in the city:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOTE ON THE PROPOSITION TO REVISE THE COUNCIL-MANAGER CHARTER MAY 10, 1955</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Per Cent in Favor</th>
<th>Per Cent Against</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26th District a</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(North End)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th, 27th, 28th, 29th Districts (South End)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24,301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aPortions of each legislative district lie outside the city limits.
It is interesting to note that North Tacoma gave the council-manager charter a 65 per cent plurality—the same margin as the 1952 vote. However, South Tacoma voters increased their opposition by 7 per cent. This shift in vote obviously made the difference in the outcome and reflected the strength of the Democratic party vote, labor's influence and general alienation in that part of town.

A total of 425,372 votes were cast for the sixty-six candidates for freeholder. Of that total, 48 per cent were cast for the twenty-six anti-reform candidates and 44 per cent of the vote went to the pro-charter group. Thus, there was a 3 per cent drop-off vote for the anti-reform group compared to a 5 per cent drop-off for the pro-charter candidates. This led to sweeping victory of the anti-reform slate. As the News Tribune reported after the election:

One factor which hurt the pro-charter candidate chances was the fact that many persons who voted 'no' on the proposition said they failed to vote for freeholders since they wanted no change.1

The freeholders' commission of 1955

On May 26, 1955 the city of Tacoma's fifth freeholders' commission held its initial organization meeting. E. K. Murray was elected chairman, Mrs. Ellen Price vice-chairman and Mrs. Dawn Olson secretary. Murray indicated that the commission would produce "a new and basic document for the city."2 He then announced that the Public Administration Service and the National Municipal League would not be asked to contribute their services.3

3 Ibid.
The influence of the freeholders on the City Council and Frank Backstrom became apparent ten days later when Gavin Lawson, the city's embattled personnel director, offered his resignation. Bob Myers, the News Tribune's court house reporter wrote:

The recent election of freeholders to study possible new forms of city government led to speculation there might be changes in Backstrom's staff setup. Several City Council members opined that opposition might be mollified if some of the objectionable faces were eliminated. 1

Ironically, Lawson was the first administration representative to appear before the freeholders one week after his resignation. He defended the city's personnel program and blamed its poor reception on a lack of sound internal communications. 2 "I truly believe the program will prove itself," he said. 3

During the first freeholders' meeting in July, the commission heard testimony from Police Chief Roy Kerr. Kerr defended the council-manager system because he said it emphasized the "chain of command" concept. He explained:

When I came here I was able to reorganize the department to conform more nearly like the Army plan of one supervisor for every five men. When I took office there was one supervisor for every 11.6 men. 4

Kerr admitted, however, that Tacoma was not under the control of a syndicate or the mafia when he arrived on the scene in 1953. However, he did emphasize that all of the notorious houses of prostitution were closed down mainly because of his "policy of constant and tough enforcement." 5

At the conclusion of his testimony, Kerr answered a number of questions

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3 Ibid.


5 Ibid.
posed by E. K. Murray which were to have an influence on the outcome of the commission hearings. The discussion went as follows:

Murray: 'What does the city manager system give your department in the way of backing that you couldn't get under any form of government? How about Kansas? Didn't you do a good job there under the mayor-council form?'

Kerr: 'Yes, I thought I did... but I became disenchanted with the strong-mayor system in Topeka when the mayor developed political ambitions and put the heat on me to lessen up on enforcement. Let me conclude by urging you to write something into the charter which will keep the police department and politics separated.'

Murray: 'By politics you don't mean political parties--Democrats and Republicans--do you?'

Kerr: 'No, I mean favors for the mayor's friends.' (Italics mine.)

One week later the freeholders heard from former Democratic Congressman John Coffee and Gerald Longstreth, chairman of the unsuccessful Citizens' Charter Committee. The Coffee, Longstreth testimony came in the form of a political debate that seemed to bring to the surface many of the issues and emotions which were pervasive during this period in Tacoma's political history. Coffee, an advocate of the strong-mayor system, blasted the Citizens' Committee for a series of ads which ran in the News Tribune shortly before the May 10 election. Coffee said: "The ads reeked with falsehoods and slurs in their inference that the members of the Committee of 100 were dupes or vile creatures of the underworld." Coffee continued:

Here we were confronted by a man [Gavin Lawson] brought in from the outside to ruin our civil service system. What we need is an elected civil service board and a mayor-council form of government like Seattle's.

Longstreth replied by charging the Committee of 100 with using "dirty ads" against Dr. Humiston. Longstreth continued by stating:

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1 Ibid., p. 2.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
I favor the rule-of-three concept—it's good public administration. Also, this administration is the best yet for handling the problem of prostitution . . . we've never elected a really outstanding man as commissioner of public safety . . . and as you well know, all we have had in the past is more or less open vice.¹

Four days after the rather emotional confrontation between Coffee and Longstreth, the Central Labor Council presented its brief against the council-manager system. Labor's views were offered by Calvin Winslow, chairman of the legislative committee of the Central Labor Council. Winslow indicated that he was representing the more than 100 AFL craft unions in the city with their membership of 30,000 workers.² Winslow then formally presented organized labor's list of grievances against the council-manager system. Those grievances were as follows:

The present City Council asked the labor council for its recommendations after it narrowed down the field of prospective city managers down to five. The Central Labor Council, after research, said any would be acceptable except one. That one got the job.

No representative of labor has been given a job on any city board, commission or committee.

The council-manager system is essentially undemocratic. Proponents talk about machines, but the present government with sixty-two people appointed and not under civil service, has a better start on a machine than has been seen in a city for many years.

The city manager becomes the policy maker of the city because the part-time councilmen, who don't spend enough time on city business, must turn to the manager for decisions.³

Winslow concluded his prepared statement by saying: "We believe our only newspaper and the antics of one of our commissioners did more than anything to make our previous form of government look bad."⁴ Winslow then put the labor council on record as being in favor of the strong mayor system.

¹Ibid.


³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.
"We believe this form of government will turn out more people to vote because they will have an opportunity to vote for their mayor," Winslow said.¹

After Winslow finished his opening remarks, Mrs. Swayze, a freeholder in 1952, asked him a number of questions. The ensuing dialogue gave considerable insight into labor's attitude concerning the previous freeholders' commission and the council-manager form in general. The discussion went as follows:

Mrs. Swayze: 'Why didn't the Central Labor Council make as fine a statement to the 1952 freeholders as you made tonight? Don't you feel if you had come then the freeholders might have been talked out of the city manager form and saved some money?'

Winslow: 'Frankly, no!'

Mrs. Swayze: 'Do you think our city government should be non-partisan?'

Winslow: 'Personally, no.'

Mrs. Swayze: 'Oh, I hope that doesn't happen. I thought that was one place we would stay clean.'

Winslow: 'I feel the town is divided pretty much into two camps on the city manager issue, and the strong mayor form may be a way to unite the city.'

Murray: 'Mr. Winslow, what are the national feelings of labor against the city manager form?'

Winslow: 'Two years ago, the Central Labor Council sent letters to thirty council-manager cities and received twenty replies. Not one of the replies was favorable to the form.'

Murray: 'Do you feel that the city manager form is the only means necessary to keep a city clean?'

Winslow: 'We appreciate a clean city as much as anyone. We don't have too much objections to the way the police department is being run right now, but we've had good ones in the past.' (Italics mine.)²

C. E. Cawthorn, president of the city employees'union, and Annon May, attorney for the Machinist Union's non-partisan political league, were also present to put their two organizations on record in favor of the strong-mayor system. Cawthorn suggested that city councilmen should be nominated

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 2
by district then elected at-large under the new form. May called for ward representation and added: "We feel it is impossible for persons of modest means to carry on successful city-wide campaigns for the council, whereas they could campaign effectively by district." 

Three days after labor's presentation, the freeholders decided to consider six main points for inclusion in the new charter. The six points were as follows: (1) Study of a ward or district system for electing councilmen. (2) A full-time City Council and mayor. (3) Important city appointments made by the mayor, with approval by the City Council; but with firings for cause by the mayor alone. (4) Election of a civil service board and city controller. (5) Veteran preference points in civil service examinations; and reinstatement of the rule-of-one concept. (6) Appointment of a full-time corporation council who could not practice law on the side.

The agenda for considering the main features of the new charter were prepared by Ben Hanson, the executive secretary hired by the freeholders' commission. Hanson's role was not at all the same as his predecessor, Don Nemetz. As previously noted, Nemetz was hired by the 1952 freeholders to serve as a consultant and advisor to the commission. In his role, Nemetz offered a number of recommendations to the freeholders for their approval. He also reviewed the various features of the proposed charter and indicated if they were consistent with good administrative practice. Former freeholder Mrs. Clara Goering described Nemetz and his role as follows:

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
Nemetz's role was as an advisor and he was extremely valuable in this regard. However, he was very careful not to influence me one way or the other. He gave us the straight forward facts. I can't recall him ever giving an opinion that would influence the thinking of the freeholders. He would get us the necessary information and present it in a very non-personal manner.

Other members of the freeholder commission viewed Nemetz in a very different way. Pat Steele, for one, referred to the "advisor" as "Admiral" Nemetz. The anti-manager groups were particularly resentful of Nemetz the "outsider" coming into town to do away with the rule-of-one concept and the idea of an elected civil service board. These groups held Nemetz responsible for many of the adverse features in the council-manager charter. Thus, Ben Hanson was not an outsider. Indeed, he was a hometown Tacoman, a local attorney and potentially a young and up-coming political figure in the community. His role was simply to iron out any legal technicalities that might crop up in the new charter.

The freeholders had been fairly united in their position during the months of May, June and July. Mrs. Swayze and John Anderson were clearly in the minority and seemed to be simply serving out their terms on the commission. The first disagreements between the strong-mayor freeholders arose over the question of ward representation on the City Council. Five freeholders seemed clearly in favor of the ward system. The five were Howard Carothers, Claude Munsey, Louis Pederson, John Sullivan and A. C. Bertocchini. Carothers summed up their general feeling by stating:

The election of councilmen by districts might benefit those who want some protection for the South End and East End. Perhaps we could nominate the two highest candidates from each of five districts and then elect the five highest.

1 Mrs. Clara Goering, private interview.
2 Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
3 Don Duncan, "Freeholders Favor Strong Mayor," Tacoma New Tribune,
Mrs. Ellen Price, who expressed a neutral position on the question, indicated the same concern:

I haven't made a decision yet on this question. However, I feel that something should be done to prevent the present situation where we have seven out of nine councilmen and thirteen out of fourteen city board and commission members coming from North Tacoma.¹

Freeholders Mrs. Dawn Olson, Murray, Steele and Norman Bradley were clearly against the ward system while D. H. Ketler and J. Bruce Burns seemed inclined to support the idea.² Mrs. Olson expressed her opposition by stating: "Why should we reward the south end's failure to get out and vote."³ Murray took a different view: "The north end resident can serve because he has the means to take such part-time work."⁴

On August 1, the freeholders settled the question of ward representation by passing an alternative proposition. The new measure retained at-large elections but allowed the election of councilmen by numbered positions. Thus, a candidate would be able to run for specific seat on the council and therefore run against one individual in the final election. Bertocchini, Munsey and Sullivan voted against the proposition.⁵

The important issue that evening was the freeholders first formal consideration of a strong-mayor system. The vote was 13-2 in favor with the only two pro-manager freeholders, Mrs. Swayze and John Anderson, voting against.⁶ Other propositions passed during the evening were as follows:

¹Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
⁶Ibid.
(1) The mayor would be a full-time elected official who would serve a four-year term and receive a $12,000 salary. (2) The City Council would be made up of five members with staggered four-year terms. The salary would be set at $8,500. (3) The city comptroller would be an elected official and would receive a salary of $9,600. (4) The City Attorney would become a corporation counsel appointed by the City Council. (5) The city clerk would be appointed by the City Council. (6) The Civil Service Board would be an elected body with three commissioners serving staggered six-year terms. (7) A rule-of-one concept would be written in the charter.\(^1\)

The question of the mayor's formal appointment authority was not considered that evening and in the days ahead this question was to shatter the united front of the anti-reform freeholders.

As was previously noted in the last chapter, the issue of the Public Utilities Board became a bone of controversy during the freeholders meetings in 1952. At that time, the creation of the appointive board was the result of a compromise to satisfy public power advocate E. K. Murray, the Chamber of Commerce and the electrical workers' union. In early 1953 the first board members were appointed by Mayor Tollefson. The new members were all businessmen and north end residents. Later, during the heat of the campaign over the anti-manager ballot proposition, the Committee of 100 charged that the utilities were "being milked to benefit the city's big business interests."\(^2\) This accusation came after the board raised water and light rates in late 1954. In turn, the pro-manager forces charged that the anti-reform group wanted to "grab control of the utilities" because of the proposed $160 million Cowlitz project.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Ibid.


\(^3\)Ibid.
In early June, Murray, using his authority as freeholder chairman, appointed a utilities committee to consider the question of the role of the public utilities operation in the new charter. The utilities committee included Howard Carothers, as chairman, and John Anderson, Norman Bradley, Patrick Steele and John C. Sullivan. By the end of the summer the committee had submitted the following proposal: The Utilities Board should be abolished and the mayor should have authority to appoint superintendents of light, water and the belt-line railroad. Murray immediately and strenuously objected and the controversy began.

Murray reacted in the same way that he had reacted previously. The question of an independent utilities was not to be compromised. The only change that Murray would accept, if changes were to be made, would be for an elected board.\(^1\) Thus, Murray was more inclined to see the mayor's appontive authority in this area removed entirely rather than strengthened. This controversy put the strong-mayor freeholders in an extremely difficult position. They had appointed Murray their chairman. He was experienced as a freeholder, had a sharp legal mind and he would be a strong advocate when it came time to sell the strong-mayor concept to the citizens. Their position had been united and with the minor exception of the ward representation question, their votes had been unanimous. Yet, interestingly, they were not about to compromise with Murray. The reasons for their willingness not to compromise can be left to conjecture. Pat Steele indicated that their position had been simply: "It is a mayor-council charter and it should not have an appendage utility board."\(^2\) Perhaps some of the freeholders did feel that the

\(^1\)E. K. Murray, private interview.

\(^2\)Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
Cowlitz project was a political prize that should go to the mayor. Others may have really felt that labor and other anti-manager groups would have more influence over the policies of the utilities operation. In any case, the strong-mayor freeholders and Murray didn't budge in their position through September.

By late September local labor leaders began to move to heal the break between Murray and the rest of the group. It was labor's feeling that the charter had to have every chance at passing. Yet, Murray was now stating that he would disapprove of any charter without a separate utilities board and strongly suggested that he would campaign against it if it went on the ballot. Some accommodation had to be made; if it were not, the new charter might very well be defeated and with it the civil service revisions which had been labor's top priority.

Interestingly enough, at this point Murray was willing to sacrifice the utilities board. But his compromise suggestion was totally unacceptable to labor and particularly the police unions. Murray suggested that the freeholders write a citizens' police review board into the charter. The idea seemed to come from Roy Kerr's plea that politics and law enforcement should in some way be separated. Murray explained his startling and controversial proposal as follows.

I wanted a lay-board committee to act as a control over the police. The board would be set-up so that a citizen could make a complaint on any question of graft or corruption in the police department. Thus, we would have a continuous review of police activity.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 E. K. Murray, private interview.
The mayor would appoint the citizen board with council confirmation but he would have no control over its activities. A citizen could then feel free to go to the board for a complaint.¹

One can speculate as to why Murray made this proposal. He indicated that he was serious in making it. However, it might very well have been a strategy on his part to gain a compromise with the other freeholders. Indeed, they did offer a compromise provision which was finally written into the charter proposal. The utilities proposal called for the mayor to have the appointive power initially over the three utilities superintendents; however, if the mayor and four fifths of the council agreed, the three utilities would be placed under one departmental director appointed by the mayor.²

On October 3 the freeholders met to sign formally their charter proposal and send it to the City Council. During the meeting, Murray moved to amend the charter to create an elected utilities board. His motion died for lack of a second.³ He then stated for the record: "Insofar as the utilities is concerned, this charter is the poorest ever written in the city of Tacoma."⁴

Three days later Murray announced that he would vote against the charter and actively campaign for its defeat.⁵ The News Tribune quickly came to Murray's support and announced in an editorial that the charter would peril the stability of Tacoma City Light.⁶

¹Ibid.
²MacGougan, "City Charter Break . . . Healed."
⁴Ibid.
The campaign over the mayor-council charter

The charter election was set by the council for February 14. Yet, the campaign for its enactment and defeat began the first day of the freeholders meetings in May. Indeed, the constant newspaper coverage kept the issue before the public. In 1952, the NewsTribune had been on strike and the public did not really become aware of the political conflict over that charter until relatively late in the campaign. However, news of the second freeholders' meetings filled the front pages of the city's only newspaper for five straight months. And, it seemed that the strong-mayor freeholders were playing to the publicity. The Coffee-Longstreth debate, the appearance of Roy Kerr and the presentation by organized labor all were orchestrated to maximum affect by Murray and the others. This news coverage worked to the advantage of the strong-mayor advocates during the summer months proceeding the election. Frank Stojack, their only apparent supporter on the City Council, tried to make the most of it. On August 7, Stojack demanded that the council fire Backstrom for dismissing planning director Kenneth O. Wilcox. I Stojack said:

> I know Wilcox better than anyone on this council and this disturbs me no end. Wilcox has worked day and night and always has done what the Planning Commission told him to do.²

Backstrom replied by stating that "friction" between Wilcox and his staff plus unsatisfactory departmental operation prompted the move.³ Indeed, there was a great deal of speculation that Wilcox was working closely with the freeholders to discredit the administration.⁴ This certainly would account for the friction Backstrom referred to. During the same council meeting,

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² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Stojack criticized the council majority for holding secret "star chamber" sessions to consider the Wilcox question. Surprisingly, the council majority implied that they had been holding sessions over the question. Dr. Humiston, for example, said: "Backstrom has the responsibility to appoint the planning director. After all, he has told us that he has not been satisfied with the administration of Wilcox's department."¹

However, by late August, the strong-mayor freeholders seemed to reach their peak of political strength in the community. Up to that time, they had been united in their opposition to council-manager government, they were getting continuous front-page coverage and Councilman Stojack was putting the pressure on Backstrom during the regular council sessions. The turning point seemed to come with the defection of E. K. Murray. Murray's move was the publicity the reformers needed to start their campaign to defeat the strong-mayor charter. As was indicated earlier, the News Tribune followed Murray's denunciation of the charter with an editorial in his support.

The editorial position of the News Tribune was particularly damaging to the strong-mayor advocates. The strategy of the editors of the city's only major newspaper centered on two basic approaches. The initial thrust of the editorials was aimed at supporting the concept of businesslike government. Thus, the Utilities Board and the Tacoma Department of City Light became an area of concern. The newspaper argued that the strong-mayor concept imperiled the status of the city-owned utilities. Once the new charter came into effect the entire operation risked becoming politically tainted. On October 11, the News Tribune editors wrote:

¹"Backstrom Denounced . . .", Tacoma News Tribune.
The mayor is placed in direct charge, and their destiny is tied to
his. They the city light, city water and belt line railway along with
the rest of city government, will be on the political block at each
mayoral election. Long-term disinterested planning seems impossible,
and the gate is wide open for manipulation.1

This initial position of the newspaper, which might be described as
phase one, continued through December and January. The following editorial
probably best exemplifies the position during this period:

The council-manager plan is a simple application of good business
procedure for municipal government. What's good for big business should
be good for our municipal set-up, which, after all, is about the biggest
business here abouts . . . . Every industrial firm has a manager, and
he, regardless of his residence and strictly for his qualifications, is
appointed by vote of the directors—not chosen by the stockholders.2

However, the approach and tone of the editorials changed markedly as
the election date drew near. On February 2, a few days after the Tacoma
Labor Advocate had endorsed the strong-mayor charter, the News Tribune
editors began their second phase with an editorial entitled: "Politics
Makes Strange Bedfellows." The editorial said, in part, the following:

The Tacoma Central Labor Temple has taken the stand it has because
it believes the proposed new charter offers advantages to city employees.
That stand may be correct or incorrect; it may be shortsighted with
respect to the good of the city as a whole; but, however it may be
rationalized, it puts the Central Labor Council in the same camp with the
'underworld' and 'sinister forces' which it properly disavows. Nor
does the presence of the labor council in this camp exert any purifying
force.

The gamblers want the proposed charter adopted.
The political hangers-on who hope to profit from a return to the
patronage system do want a new charter.
The vice lords of old would welcome a return to an open city condition.
Every element in the city that might expect to profit by unscrupulous
politics does want a return to the old system.
The labor council, in taking its stand for its own legitimate
reasons, finds itself allied with the 'underworld' and 'sinister forces'. . . 3

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1"Editorial--City Light Stability Imperiled," Tacoma News Tribune,
2"Editorial--Democracy and City Government," Tacoma News Tribune,
3"Editorial--Politics Makes Strange Bedfellows," Tacoma News Tribune,
Four days later, the *News Tribune* added "liquor interests," the "pinball fraternity," those who "eye the forthcoming utilities contracts hungrily" and "city employees who can't adjust to a full work load" to the list of sinister forces.¹ On the other side, those who favor the council-manager system, the newspaper's editors listed the following:

- citizens who favor a clean city and rejoice in Tacoma's newly won reputation for freedom from vice and corruption.
- church people.
- those who believe in efficiency as compared to waste that goes with political control and patronage.
- those who take pride in street improvements, the new lights, the clean police department and general civic betterment.
- Tacoma's substantial businessmen who know that 'open town' prosperity is a poor foundation on which to build an economic future.
- Parents because of the realization that present tight controls make Tacoma a far safer place for youth than would exist in an open town.
- those in favor of fiscal fitness and cash balances that have replaced deficits.
- The fair minded who believe in giving the council-manager plan a longer trial . . . recognizing as its present enemies the same persons who fought against it in the beginning.²

The chief media support for the strong-mayor proposal came from the editorial pages of the *Tacoma Labor Advocate*. In late January, the Labor Advocate put the Central Labor Council formally on record as endorsing the charter proposal. The initial thrust of labor's argument came in the form of a brief in favor of the basic principles of Jacksonian democracy. The Labor Advocate stated:

Obviously . . . opposition forces do not believe Tacomans possess the necessary intelligence to choose their city officials. We are incapable, they say . . ., of self-government. Only an 'expert' from Kansas City or some such other place, they say, is qualified to handle the affairs of the city.

This thinking . . . violates the basic concept of democracy in government. It is a surrender of the privilege of self-government, which is the very foundation of our existence as a nation.¹

The Labor Advocate also used some of the basic charges leveled at the manager system in 1952. The editorial stated:

If the city manager form of government is not in fact a form of dictatorship, it is a step in that direction. It abrogates the authority citizens have over their own civil servants.²

The issue in a nutshell, stated the Labor Advocate, was that the new charter would re-establish "home rule" for Tacoma. That home rule would be invested in the hands of a home town mayor and home town city council.

Thus, in the beginning the two sides argued the issue from a basic philosophical viewpoint. On one side, you had the value of "business principles" in government and economic and efficient decision-making as a result. On the other side, you had the value of Jacksonian democracy and the notion that home grown common sense made better sense than outside expertise.

However, as the News Tribune began to mount its emotional attack on the motives and good will of the anti-reform group, the Labor Advocate began to respond in kind. On February 10 the Labor Advocate charged that the reform forces were a part of a conspiracy that was aimed at bringing right-to-work legislation to the state of Washington. The labor editors stated:

... There is no doubt about it: what originally started out as a popular remonstrance against the city manager form of government and grew into an outright demand for change has now developed into a clear-cut battle between labor and its enemies.

Throughout the campaign to elect freeholders last spring the Central Labor Council as well as other groups who had enough of the present system observed the rule of fair play.

Never was the integrity of the opposition impugned . . . .³

²Ibid.
³"Vote Yes to Crack Down on Unholy Alliance Between City Manager and Right-to-Work Forces," Tacoma Labor Advocate, Feb. 10, 1956, p. 1.
The "sinister forces" issue put the discussion of the proposed charter proposal purely on an emotional level and the council majority seized the opportunity to use it to their advantage. On February 4, during a debate with strong mayor proponents, Charles Battin continually referred to two main points: first, that the council-manager plan made it impossible for "special privilege" groups to take over the government and, second, that the Committee of 100 had received $10,000 from questionable sources for a special voter canvass. He finished his argument with the comment that "Tacomans are stockholders in a going concern and they shouldn't give it up." Several days later, Mayor Tollefson revealed that he had been offered four bribes since he had taken office to "allow certain things to happen." The mayor continued: "... even if I had been able to take the bribes I wouldn't have been able because under the council-manager plan I am unable to manipulate the government."

Tollefson made the startling bribes disclosure before a meeting sponsored by the carpenters' union. Thus, the pronouncement was staged to come before a potentially hostile audience just four days before the election. The whole affair made headlines on the front page of the News Tribune.

But probably the most damaging blow to the strong-mayor advocates came from the active role played by E. K. Murray in the campaign. Murray had publicly stated his opposition to the council-manager charter in 1952. However, the statement came in the last weeks of the campaign in the form of a small

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2Ibid.


4Ibid.
advertisement appearing in the News Tribune. In 1956 he went from meeting to meeting to argue against the strong-mayor proposal. His position was much the same at each meeting place: "Tacoma is going to be tremendously better off to stay with what it has--even though I don't like it--rather than to the proposed charter--which I like a lot less."\(^1\)

Although Murray would emphasize that he was not in favor of the council-manager charter and that vice was not an issue, his opposition to the strong-mayor proposal made him an important ally for the reform groups. He represented a weakness in the united front of the anti-reformers and organized labor and his position against the proposed charter could be a pivotal factor with the undecided or swing voter. In the days leading up to the election, the reformers ran full-page reprints in the News Tribune of Murray's original October 8 statement against the proposed charter. As previously noted, Murray indicated that the strong-mayor charter was the "poorest that had been written" in regards to the utilities. In the statement he was also very critical of the role of the mayor. He stated:

The proposed charter is an extremely strong-mayor, weak-council type. With his veto power, the mayor is the legislative equivalent of four-fifths of the council, and administratively he is the whole show. He is over and above every department head, and may direct and control and remove any thereof at will. I know of no similar mayor anywhere. The possibilities of abuse are tremendous.

The councilmen are made full-time; but their functions are solely legislative, and they have few brakes on the mayor. They will play only a small part in city government.\(^2\)

In effect, Murray's statement served to neutralize one of the strong-mayor proponents' strongest arguments. That argument was based on the notion that the city manager was a dictator. With Murray as their advocate, the

\(^1\)"Critics Have Field Day . . .," Tacoma News Tribune.

reformers were able to turn the argument around and put the anti-reform group on the defensive. The strong-mayor now became the potential dictator. Mayor Tollefson made the point when he indicated that under the present charter he was unable to "manipulate" the government. Charles Battin referred to the issue indirectly when he talked of "special interests" taking over the city. Murray made the point directly when he described the proposed charter as the strong-mayor, weak-council form of government.

During the campaign, the anti-reform group desperately attempted to maintain the edge they had gained the previous spring. In early January they formed the "New Charter Group," essentially an extension of the Committee of 100. Howard Carothers was named chairman, Det Ketler secretary and Claude Munsey treasurer during the first organizational meeting on January 4. The twelve freeholders who voted in favor of the proposed charter made up half of the membership of the executive board of the group. Thus, the New Charter Group included Mrs. Ellen Price, Pat Steele and Mrs. Dawn Olson--the three strong-mayor freeholders who had not been publicly identified as members of the Committee of 100. Other members of the executive board included Benjamin Hanson; H. C. McCord, member of the Democratic party Central Committee; Frank Murphy, member of the Democratic party Central Committee; Chester Delin, city employees' union; Mrs. Ada Sommer, 27th district Democratic Club; Calvin Winslow, Central Labor Council; Archie Douglas, C. E. Cathon, city employees' union; A. M. Dabroe, former business agent in the city employees' union; E. C. Bucholz, Robert G. Earley, Mrs. Hulda Ramser, 27th district Democratic Club and C. R. Noble, city employees' union. The group moved quickly to give the strong-mayor charter as much favorable publicity as

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possible. Steele, Hanson and Mrs. Olson agreed to write a series of articles outlining the virtues of the proposed charter. These articles appeared in the News Tribune and the Labor Advocate. Hanson agreed to join with fellow lawyer Carothers to form a speakers bureau so that the strong-mayor proposal could be advocated at public meetings. And finally, the group decided to publish and mail out a copy of the proposed charter to the 40,000 households in the city with registered voters.

During the public debates on the charter, Hanson hammered away at the defects of council-manager government. He would generally make four points in his presentations. Those four points were:

1. The basic weakness of the present charter lies in the fact that the part-time council does not have time to be adequately informed on complex issues.
2. The Civil Service Commission's effectiveness has been destroyed.
3. The separate utilities board sacrifices efficiency.
4. The alleged savings of $330,000 in municipal expenditures claimed by the city manager really had been accomplished at the expense of street improvements and a windfall from the state.¹

While Hanson would attack the present administration, Carothers would defend the proposed strong-mayor charter by pointing out that "this is what the people really wanted in 1952."² Carothers would add:

The closer you keep the operation of the utilities to the people the better off you are. The light superintendent's job will not become a political football under the proposed charter. Such an argument indicates that in some way true democracy is bad.³

Carothers would also point out that vice can exist under any form of government. "It's up to the people to oppose it," he argued.⁴

1 "Critics Have Field Day . . ." Tacoma News Tribune.
2 Ibid., p. 2.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
The election results

Slightly more than 50 per cent of the registered voters went to the polls on February 14 to cast ballots on the question of retaining the council-manager system. About 53 per cent of the 37,948 voters pulled the lever against the strong-mayor charter. The proposition lost by 3,256 votes. Once again, the south end precincts voted against the system. However, the negative vote was 7 per cent less than in the freesholders' election the previous spring. On the other hand, the north end precincts gave the council-manager charter a 71 per cent favorable vote. The following table shows a comparison of the two elections:

<p>| TABLE 13 |
| A COMPARISON OF THE 1955 AND 1956 VOTES IN FAVOR OF THE COUNCIL-MANAGER CHARTER |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of the City</th>
<th>1955 % Vote in Favor</th>
<th>1956 % in Favor</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26th District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(north end)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25, 27, 28, 29 D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts (south</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the reformers were able to get a 48 per cent positive vote from South Tacoma. This vote matched the percentage of support they had managed in the 1952 election. The biggest increase over the past two elections occurred in North Tacoma where 71 per cent of the voters cast ballots against the strong-mayor charter. The vice issue and the question of the independent utilities board may have had some effect in this part of town, particularly in the minds of the swing voter. Another indication that the swing voter had an effect in the outcome of the election was found in the vote totals which emerged from the precincts in the 27th district. The precincts in this section of town made up the central area or that part of the city between
the 26th district and heavily Democratic legislative districts of South Tacoma. In 1952, voters in the central area voted in favor of the council-manager charter. In 1955, they voted slightly in favor of the freeholders proposition. And, in 1956, central area voters swung once again behind the council-manager system to vote against the strong-mayor charter. This swing vote made up much of the 7 per cent difference in the south end votes of 1952 and 1956 and 1955. The change in the swing vote as represented in Tacoma's central area or 27th district can be seen in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vote (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Election Aftermath and the Resignation Of Backstrom

The charter election made the headlines; but, interestingly enough, another election was being held at the same time that was in many ways just as important. The February 14 test of power between the reformers and their opponents highlighted the ballot of the first election of 1956. That first election also marked the second primary election under the council-manager system. Five incumbent seats were up and Bratrud, Mrs. Goering, Perdue, Dr. Humiston and Colonel Hooker were all running for re-election. The other familiar face in the field of candidates was former Mayor John Anderson.

Although those in the field were well known and it appeared that council policies would remain stable, decisions were being made behind the scenes which would lead to the resignation of Tacoma's first city manager. Indeed, the day after the primary election Backstrom announced that he was considering
the position of city manager in Wichita, Kansas. In a statement released to
the press, Backstrom said:

The most important job or reorganization has been done and the
framework laid.
That's the thing about this type of government--a new manager with
experience could come in and take over and build on the present framework. 1

Backstrom could see potential trouble ahead. He had three solid votes
against him on the council--Bratrud, Stojack and Jensen. Bratrud expressed
the sentiment of the minority bloc by stating: "We were against the man
because Battin and his group were for him. That's the way it was on the
council." 2 Another trouble spot for the manager was the changing attitude of
Dr. Humiston. Both Humiston and Battin were brilliant, self-assured and
opinionated individuals. An inevitable clash of personalities soon evolved
and Humiston began to act independently of the majority bloc. Shortly
before the election, he told Backstrom that he thought a change in managers
might be good for the city. 3 The other factor was the real possibility of
former Mayor John Anderson's election to the council. Big John had done well
in the primaries and appeared to be a good bet to displace the seemingly
weak member of the majority bloc, Colonel Hooker.

The issue of Backstrom's leaving became further clouded the day after
the city manager made his statement to the press. At that time, Backstrom's
chief assistant, Mark Anderson declared that he would be interested in the
city manager position. Anderson, who formerly served as executive secretary
to Mayor Anderson during the commission days, said:

1 Denny MacGougan, "Backstrom Ponders New Job Offer," Tacoma News

2 Omar Bratrud, private interview.

3 Harold Tollefson, private interview.
If Frank leaves, I will apply for sure. The only reason I didn't apply in '53 was because of my association with the mayor-commissioner administration of John Anderson.¹

Mark Anderson had served as acting-manager before the arrival of Backstrom in 1953 after completing his two years under Big John. He was a home town resident who had managed a Richfield Oil outlet before accepting the position with Mayor Anderson. Mark Anderson was also Big John's brother-in-law.

Interestingly enough, Backstrom did not want to leave Tacoma even though the Wichita position offered more money and less controversy. His family had become attached to the area, his children were attending Tacoma public schools and he had purchased a handsome home overlooking Commencement Bay.² However, Mark Anderson's announcement made his position even more tenuous. Now, the anti-Backstrom forces had an alternative home town candidate who seemed to possess all of the strengths Backstrom lacked. And Anderson let it be known privately that if he were to win in March and brother-in-law Mark had the five votes for manager, he would resign his position on the council to avoid a possible conflict of interest.³ Thus, Backstrom was faced with a maximum of five votes of support on the council and the real possibility of only four if it came to a showdown. One week after Mark Anderson announced his interest in the position of city manager, Frank Backstrom formally resigned. On March 12, one day before Tacoma's second council election under the council-manager system, Backstrom left

²Russell Buehler, private discussions.
³Ibid.
for his new position as city manager of Wichita.

The council election saw Omar Bratrud pile up the most votes of any of the incumbents. As was expected by many, John Anderson edged Hooker for the fifth open seat. Perdue, Mrs. Goering, and Dr. Humiston were easily re-elected. However, several weeks before the final votes were tallied, Bratrud announced that a local man should be given serious consideration for the city manager post.1 Other members of the council were not quite so enthusiastic. Mrs. Goering, for one, stated that the council should choose "the best qualified man we can attract."2 She went on to say: "We should select the person who best fills our need. If it is a local man we decide on I would be pleased. But that shouldn't be the main basis for consideration."3

Mayor Tollefson, who was about to attend a Conference of Mayors meeting in Washington, D. C., stated: "If that man is from Tacoma so much the better."4 But Tollefson added that he would check with city officials at the conference to see if any "good managers might be available."5 Tollefson also suggested that the original list of candidates, prepared in 1953, be reviewed once again by the council.

By the end of February, it appeared that Mark Anderson did not have the votes necessary for appointment. On February 20, Bratrud moved to have Anderson appointed acting manager in Backstrom's absence. Mrs. Goering, who was serving as acting mayor while Tollefson was in Washington, D. C., immediately opposed the idea. She said: "Anderson is a declared candidate

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
for the position and it might embarrass his candidacy to name him acting manager."¹ Mrs. Goering suggested that Clarence Boyle, city attorney, be appointed to serve during the interim. That evening, Boyle was appointed acting manager. However, these initial moves were not the only indicators that Mark Anderson was not to be the new manager. The same evening, Mrs. Goering appointed a committee of five councilmen to "lay the ground work for a nationwide search for city manager."² One week later Anderson withdrew his name from consideration. The fact that the council majority, including Dr. Humiston, had decided to appoint an outside professional for the position became apparent from the tone of Anderson's letter to the council. In it he stated: "My general observation of the city manager occupation indicates it to be a migratory profession, which prompts me not to apply for the position at this time."³

Bratrud had failed in his attempt to get the council seriously to consider Anderson for the position. Again, it was a question of the council majority deciding that an outside professional would be the best selection for the position. In early March, the council minority attempted another strategy that would bring more local interests into the decision-making process. This time Everett Jensen took the lead by introducing a resolution that would establish a local advisory committee made up of representatives from the Municipal League, the Central Labor Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Clearinghouse Association and one other representative chosen by the four groups.⁴ The advisory committee would serve to review all candidates for the

³Ibid.
position and recommend the top applicants for council consideration.
Jensen argued that the move would mean "good public relations and it would
indicate that we are keeping faith with the people."1 Jensen, who along with
Bratrud publicly endorsed the council-manager charter before the February
election, reminded the council majority that they had pledged to keep the
government close to the people during the campaign. But the council majority
would have none of the idea. Councilman Battin scoffed: "If you give every
group in town like that representation, you'll have a Committee of 100."2
Mayor Tollefson also opposed the idea. He said:
The selection of the city manager is the duty of the council, and . . .
if a committee is set up the council would be faced with the proposition
of accepting or rejecting its nomination . . . the council is probably
better qualified than any other group to choose a manager . . . .3
Jensen's resolution was tabled on a six-to-three vote.
The council majority's next move was to close all discussions concerning
manager applicants to the public. This decision followed the practice
established by the council's first consideration of candidates in 1953.
And the decision led to the same angry reaction from the News Tribune. In
late April, News Tribune editors severely criticized the council in the
following:
This decision to resort to star chamber sessions to consider such
matters has had unpleasant repercussions for several past councils . . . .
. . . dangers of secret meetings where public business is concerned are
too dangerous to be passed lightly. What, for example, might be the
outcome should the council decide to extend the trend to include the
pinball situation? By and large an open door policy where public business
is involved is best for all concerned.4

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 "Editorial--The Public's Right to Know," Tacoma News Tribune, April 29,
1956, p. 10.
However, by May 19 the top three candidates for the manager position did become known to the press. The first was John M. Biery, city manager of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Biery was the picture of the reluctant candidate. In a News Tribune interview, he emphasized that he was not a formal candidate and said: "I don't know if I would take the job if it was offered." Indeed, his position in Colorado Springs did not make him a particularly viable candidate for a Tacoma city manager. Much like Frank Backstrom, Biery was embroiled in intense political controversy. His administration was under fire from political opponents, a grand jury was being demanded and he was being sued along with a number of other city officials. Biery did make one rather incisive comment about the local political scene. He said: "I don't think Tacoma can hire any supervisor who will solve all of its problems unless there is a city manager I haven't seen yet."

The second candidate was Elder Gunter, city manager of University City, Kansas. Gunter, described as a personable and greying forty, emphasized strong public relations and good employee relations. He said: "I always try to get to know as many of my employees as I possibly can." These comments, along with his "strong stand" on law enforcement seemed to impress the council majority. However, if hired he would be coming from a residential community that did not own any public utilities and was pretty much devoid of organized labor. Although Gunter pointed out that "where labor unions exist, you certainly have to work with them," he didn't seem to have the background needed for the Tacoma position.

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 2.
5 Ibid.
The third candidate was David D. Rowlands, city manager of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, described by the News Tribune as a "Gregory Peck type." Rowlands seemed the most enthusiastic of the three finalists. He said: "I'm strong on public relations. Back in Eau Claire, I hold regular radio and press conferences every day, because they help do the job of selling your program to the public."\(^1\) Rowlands declared that his labor relations were excellent in highly unionized Eau Claire. He also indicated that as city manager, he was given the authority to supervise Eau Claire's public utilities. However, the Wisconsin city did not own any public power facilities. Rowlands noted: "Although we have private power in Eau Claire, everybody has heard how low Tacoma's public power rate is."\(^2\) When asked about significant achievements during his administration, Rowlands said that his pet project was a series of city-owned off-street parking ramps. "The ramps are making money and easing the parking situation," he said.\(^3\)

Rowlands seemed the perfect candidate for the council. Even the council minority liked what they saw. Unlike Backstrom, Rowlands was seemingly a go-getter. Besides that, he was a sports buff serving for a time as a basketball coach in Pittsburgh. This was particularly appealing to Jensen and Stojack. His record with labor was clean—so much so that the executive secretary of Eau Claire's Central Labor Council was to write:

... Dave Rowlands has been fair and considerate on labor problems and to our knowledge had good relations with city employees ... we feel that Eau Claire has lost a good manager ... .\(^4\)


\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid.

Rowlands also had more administrative experience and a stronger educational background than Backstrom, important points to the council majority. Indeed, he had a master's degree from the University of Chicago in public administration, had served as a city treasurer, planning director and city manager in a number of cities and had not held elective office as a partisan politician. On May 23, the City Council voted unanimously and without debate to appoint him as Tacoma's second city manager.

Summary and Conclusions

During the tenure of Frank Backstrom, the city of Tacoma became a competitive council-manager community as defined by Kammerer, Farris, DeGrove and Clubok. Such a community is where:

... the level of interest conflict is high enough and interests perhaps are divisive enough so that accommodation cannot occur within a single leadership clique.

Consequently, a polarization of interests occur... making possible the rise of a competing faction or factions on a permanent basis.¹

Kammerer, et al., also note that the competitive community usually employs an outsider-professional as city manager.² Backstrom, of course, was such a manager. Tacoma was also engaged in a serious "regime conflict" during the period. A regime conflict is defined as: "... a conflict of interests of such scope and depth that it normally can not be contained within the confines of a single leadership clique."³

Kammerer, et al., point out that regime conflicts usually emerge over the question of "what kind of town shall ours be." The issue in Tacoma was


²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 195.
over the question of "what kind of form of government should our town have."
And, of course, each form of government represented certain values which had
a definite bearing on the future of Tacoma. To the council-manager adherents,
the new governmental system meant a clean town, good business practice in
government and decisions based on objective expertise. To the anti-manager
leadership clique, the system meant an anti-labor attitude, decision-making
by elite and government by a technocratic dictator.

During this period in Tacoma's political history, the anti-manager
leadership clique felt that working within the system was fruitless. Thus,
the strategy was not to run candidates for the council. Instead, efforts
were directed at doing away with the council-manager system itself. And
these efforts were not solely the fault of Frank Backstrom. Indeed, the
attitude of the majority bloc on the council was the important factor. In
this regard, Charles Adrian and Oliver Williams, in their study of four
council-manager cities in the state of Michigan, identify four roles of
government. One such role involves the arbitration of interests among
competing groups in a community.\(^1\) Adrian and Williams describe the arbitration
role as follows:

> Emphasis is placed upon the process rather than the substance of
governmental action. Although the possibility of a community good may
be formally recognized, actually all such claims are reduced to the
level of interests.
> . . . government must provide a continuous arbitration system under
which public policy is never regarded as being in final equilibrium.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Charles Adrian and Oliver P. Williams, *Four Cities: A Study in
Comparative Policy-Making* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

\(^2\)Ibid.
The discussion of events in this chapter strongly suggest that arbitration was necessary. As Adrian and Williams point out, arbitration is needed for those groups in a community who feel threatened by undesirable changes or those groups who view themselves in a psychological sense as being a minority—usually people low on a socioeconomic scale.¹ The South Tacoman, the union member and the city employee would fit into that category.

Yet, the council majority continually refused to arbitrate. They would not accommodate on the selection of the manager; and, they would not arbitrate the critical decisions dealing with civil service policies. Instead, the council majority played the traditional symbolic role of a city council in a council-manager city. They refused to become involved in the negotiations between the outside manager and the home town municipal employees. The council during this period played the role of promoting economic growth. As defined by Adrian and Williams, such a role involves:

The image of stability and regularity in city finances must be assured. Friendliness toward business in general should be the traditional attitude of city officials.²

Adrian and Williams also note that this role fits the unitary conception of municipal governance. That conception stresses centralization and professionalization of the city bureaucracy and the achievement of substantive goals.³

From the proceeding discussion, the following tentative conclusions can be drawn:

¹Ibid., p. 30.
²Ibid., p. 24.
³Ibid.
The evidence strongly indicates that political conflict over council-manager government in Tacoma evolved when major socio-political groups were excluded from the important decisions that originated that form of government. It has been shown in chapter two that political conflict did not emerge over the question of the commission charter in 1909. But then all of the major groups in the community were involved in making the decisions which brought that form of government to Tacoma. Conflict did come about in 1910 but only after the professional politicians had captured the seats of government and began to exclude the reform interests from influencing the outcome of government decisions. In 1952 organized labor was slighted during the freeholder deliberations and thus failed to gain anything from decisions that brought about the proposed charter. Later, labor was excluded from influencing the appointment of the first city manager. The city employees next were seemingly excluded from influencing the decisions regarding the civil service provisions. The strongly Republican and business-oriented attitude of the majority group of councilmen also excluded prominent Democrats from the system. None were appointed to any major board or commission of government. Labor and the Democrats accordingly coalesced, along with open town interests which were also excluded from the system, became a major faction in the community and presented a united front as an anti-manager leadership clique.

Tacoma was engaged in continuous regime conflict during this period. That conflict took the form of political pressure to make the system more responsive to the interests of the anti-manager leadership clique. Pressure was exerted on the council to appoint an acceptable city manager; pressure was exerted on the council to arbitrate the civil service policies. When this pressure failed, the anti-manager leadership attempted to change the nature of authority and power in government. This attempt took the form of
an alternative governmental system where the chief executive would be elected directly by the people and the City Council would be made up of full-time legislators. Such a system would conceivably be more responsive to labor, city employees and particularly the anti-manager clique's base of political support in South Tacoma.

During the period when the anti-reform charter was offered to the citizens, and when an exchange of power was possible in the community, each faction in the community attempted to wage their campaigns on the basis of an emotional community goal. In the case of the anti-manager clique, the issue was "dictator government" and the abolition of right-to-work legislation. In the case of the pro-manager leadership clique, the issue was vice, gambling and the "sinister forces" that were attempting to open the town. This rancorous conflict did much to harden feelings in the community and make council-manager government even more unacceptable to many people. This attitude was aided a great deal by the News Tribune, the only newspaper in the community.
CHAPTER VI

THE CHANGING NATURE OF TACOMA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

PRAGMATISM AND THE ROWLANDS' APPROACH

The intent of this chapter is to review the first two years of David Rowlands' tenure as Tacoma's city manager and to discuss and analyze his approach to administration, the response of the City Council to that approach and the reaction of anti-manager interests in the community.

The municipal elections of 1956 led to a new addition to the council--John Anderson, mayor during the last years of the commission system. Anderson quickly became a political force and in somewhat of a surprise was appointed mayor shortly after his election. The relationship of Mayor Anderson and City Manager Rowlands will be discussed. The two men were instrumental in promoting a series of major capital improvement projects for the city.

In 1958 the anti-manager coalition of 1952-56 emerged once again to rally support behind four candidates for the open seats on the City Council. Frank Stojack and Everett Jensen retired from the scene and former Mayor Harold Tollefson and Councilman Charles Battin were running for re-election for the first time. The election of 1958 marked an important turning point in the evolution of the political system and the nature of that election campaign and its outcome will be reviewed.

David Rowlands--Tacoma's Second City Manager

David Rowlands began what was to be a thirteen year tenure as Tacoma city manager with three important political advantages over his predecessor. First, he had the political support of the entire city council. As has been
seen, there was no opposition or debate over his appointment. Second, Rowlands came to Tacoma with good marks from Eau Claire's Central Labor Council. Third--this point is closely connected to the second--Rowlands had not held elective positions before entering the field of public administration. He was not, therefore, identified as an active or sympathetic member of any political party or political interest. In fact, his background was much more professionally oriented than Frank Backstrom's. While Backstrom had received formal legal training, Rowlands had completed graduate training in public administration at the University of Chicago. And while Backstrom had gained his governmental experience as a Republican City Councilman in Kansas City, Rowlands had learned the in and outs of governmental service as a city manager, an appointed city treasurer and as a planning and research director. Also, Rowlands had worked his way up in the field, progressing from smaller communities to middle size cities. Tacoma was the largest city that Rowlands had served in as an executive officer although he had taught high school in Pittsburgh. Backstrom, of course, had left a city much larger than Tacoma to assume the position of city manager.

Dave Rowlands and Frank Backstrom were also very different as personalities. The News Tribune was never to describe Backstrom in movie star terms. Yet, when Rowlands came to Tacoma he was portrayed as a "Gregory Peck" type by the local newspaper. The initial impression he made on the press was particularly good. He was quick to say that the news corps would be included during periods when important decisions were being made.

Rowlands was an activist manager who had a record of promoting major city projects. An example of this approach was the large parking garage complex he managed to have erected in Eau Claire shortly before his decision to come to Tacoma. The project had done much to revitalize the business area and Rowlands was proud of the achievement. He was to say: "The downtown
parking facilities had to be my pet project during my tenure in Eau Claire. The garages are making money and easing the parking situation downtown."

Some members of the council felt that Rowlands was even more aggressive than he first appeared. As might be expected, a number felt that his aggressiveness went a bit too far. Mayor John Anderson commented as follows:

I like Dave. Tacoma needs someone aggressive and progressive who will go all out to promote the city, and Dave has done that. He has made mistakes, but he's trying all the time. He's always running and you need a guy like that.

But I don't think Dave always tells the complete story to the council—that's his main weakness. Then something hits the council out of the blue just before we vote . . . .

Dr. Homer Humiston described Rowlands in the following terms:

I have a feeling that Rowlands looks upon the City Council as a statutory nuisance that at times gets in the way of progress.

What has happened here is that the council has been faced in most instances with a yes or no decision on an entire package—with the preliminary decisions already made by the manager's office without the background knowledge of any council member.

However, as far as Rowlands is concerned, they don't make them any more energetic—or who know the books any better.

Mrs. Goering made the following remarks about Rowlands:

He decides on a course of action and points everything that way. Dave has a blind spot to the other point of view. I don't think he realizes this—I've talked with him and he seemed shocked that I felt that way.

Omar Bratrud commented: "He's a top-notch executive—although sometimes he tries to do too much and gets a little fouled up."

Rowlands' aggressive nature and energetic personality led him to view the role of the city manager in a way much different from his predecessor.

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3 Ibid.

Rowlands was not one to delegate authority easily. He was not particularly interested in bringing in new faces to revamp and reorganize the city's administrative machinery. Most of that job and the accompanying political conflicts had been shouldered by Backstrom. For this, Rowlands was praised as can be seen in the following News Tribune editorial:

If our new manager were to arrive surrounded by a clique of hand-picked assistants as replacements for a tried and proven department head it would bespeak a lack of confidence on his part, and be evidence of poor administrative ability. It is the mark of a capable administrator, newly arrived on the scene, that he utilizes and makes even more efficient the personnel material he finds. A weak administrator lacks the ability to do this and turns to his friends for outside help. 1

Thus, while Backstrom spent a great deal of time with internal matters such as budgetary control, civil service revision and police reform, Rowlands concentrated on the "big picture" which included major projects for the city of Tacoma. And while Backstrom stressed completed staff work on the part of his assistants and tried to maintain a low public profile, Rowlands publicly announced Tacoma's aims and goals for the coming year. Rowlands' first official public pronouncement came on January 13, 1957 when he listed twelve "principal aims" for the coming year. The twelve aims were the culmination of points he had made in thirty-nine major addresses he had given during his first eight months in office. The twelve aims were as follows:

1. . . . a six to ten year plan for public improvements will be developed as soon as possible after the Brown and Caldwell comprehensive sewer report is submitted—about March 12.
2. The council should make a final determination as to the type of LID assessment policy which should be pursued in the future.
3. City officials should cooperate to the fullest possible extent with the Association of Washington Cities in seeing that proper type of legislation is enacted for the benefit of cities during this session of the legislature.

4. It is hoped that private enterprise, working with the city, will reach some conclusions concerning an expanded off-street parking program in the central business district.

5. It is hoped that the City Council and the Utility Board will reach an understanding concerning fire service charges and the eventual ownership of the city street lighting system.

6. Reports will be prepared on what rate adjustments, if any, will be required for the garbage and sewer utilities.

7. Early this year a utility advisory committee, consisting of representatives from the utilities, both public and private, the city's public works department and other interested parties will begin meeting regularly to try to coordinate the construction programs of the various utilities more acceptably.

8. The city manager will meet with representatives of the Port of Tacoma, the utilities department and the Chamber of Commerce, to organize a clearinghouse for information on industrial expansion and to coordinate efforts to bring new industry to the city.

9. . . . hoped . . . a city equipment and stores agency can be created to improve sewers without an increase in cost.

10. . . . hoped . . . additional police officers can be recruited to meet the city's requirements . . . one-man patrol cars will be tried in certain areas of the city at certain hours.

11. The Planning Commission and the public works department will work closely with the State Highways Department and plans for the new Tacoma-Everett freeway. City improvements, such as storm drains, will be coordinated with state plans.

12. Emphasis will be placed on in-service training programs in the various city departments. Also, a constant re-evaluation of the duties and responsibilities of the city employees should be conducted by department directors and division heads with the assistance of the personnel department.¹

It is important to note that changes in the police department were listed as being number ten in priority and the civil service program was listed last. These two areas were of top concern during the Backstrom administration. Rowlands, on the other hand, felt that a major capital program in sewer construction was the most important area of concern for the coming year. Rowlands also mentioned the Utilities Board three different times and strongly suggested that the board was lacking in its relationship with the City Council, the Port District and the Chamber of Commerce. He indicated in point seven that an advisory board with other city departments

be formed so that the "coordination and construction" of major programs would be more acceptable.

Rowlands, of course, had no direct authority over the Utilities Board and the utilities director. Backstrom had stayed clear of the utilities operation to concentrate on the problems of the general government. Many people felt that the integrity of the Utilities Board was the key issue in the defeat of the strong-mayor charter voted on in 1956. Yet, Rowlands made an issue of the policy and the administration of the utilities operation. The reason for this strategy and the role of Dave Rowlands as city manager must be examined within the context of the City Council during this period. The next section will deal with the City Council of 1956-58.

The Changing Nature of the Tacoma City Council
1956-1958

The six-man majority bloc on the City Council was a loose coalition at best. It began to crumble with the emerging conflict between Dr. Homer Humiston and Professor Charles Battin. Harold Tollefson, the sixth member of the group, did not consider himself as being a part of the inner circle. "I was really the man in the middle," Tollefson was to say, "and in the beginning I was never a part of the caucus sessions held by the other five."1 Indeed, Tollefson's selection as mayor indicated a minor breach in the coalition when Mrs. Clara Goering and Dr. Humiston voted for him over Battin. The election of John Anderson to the City Council weakened the coalition even more. Denny MacGougan, city hall reporter for the News Tribune, reviewed the emerging change in the City Council as follows:

1Harold Tollefson, private interview with the writer, Tacoma, Wash., Nov. 16, 1970.
Anderson, although he claims he will act independently, nevertheless is expected to side most frequently on controversial issues with Bratrud, Stojack, and Jensen—the minority trio the last three years.

This quartet expects to lure Tollefson into its camp to make it a majority. And these councilmen feel that if Tollefson comes, Dr. Humiston may not be far behind.

Such a series of events would reverse the present six-to-three council split, leaving Mrs. Clara Goering, Paul Perdue and Dr. Charles Battin in the minority.¹

One test of strength would soon come with the appointment of the new mayor set for June 4, 1956. Tollefson, the first appointee, was not to be re-appointed. His position as the council "ridge-runner" or the man in the middle gave him little backing from either side. But his support on May 14 for an ordinance which would raise the mayor's salary from $2,400 to $6,000 probably sealed his fate.

The salary ordinance was introduced by Everett Jensen and seconded by Omar Bratrud. In speaking in favor of the ordinance, Jensen indicated that the mayor should be paid enough to "allow him to devote more time to his duties."² Tollefson made a strong pitch for the raise noting the many functions performed by the mayor. Tollefson said: "I spend at least fifty hours a week at the job of being mayor."³

The ordinance was strongly opposed by former freeholders Gerrit Vander Ende and Hugh Tudor. Vander Ende said: "You are chipping away at the city manager form of government."⁴ He also maintained that if a "price tag" was put on the post, the mayor would be busy trying to earn his salary, the salary would be raised again and "pretty soon you would establish two different heads of


³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.
government.¹ Tudor noted that policy making under the city manager form was to be "largely volunteer."² The ordinance was voted down with Dr. Humiston, who questioned the ordinance's legality, Mrs. Goering, Battin, Paul Perdue, lame duck Councilman Albert Hooker voting no and Tollefson, Bratrud and Jensen voting yes. Frank Stojack was absent from the meeting. Two weeks later, when the council began to discuss mayoral candidates, Mrs. Goering, a chief supporter of Tollefson in 1953, noted that "under our governmental system, the responsibilities of mayor should be changed at every election."³

Thus, it soon became apparent that Anderson, the independent newcomer to the council, had an excellent chance of being appointed mayor. His relationship with Bratrud and Jensen was much stronger than Tollefson's since they had all held public office together before council-manager government came to Tacoma.⁴ Stojack had lost out to Tollefson the first time around and was not committed to the incumbent mayor's candidacy. Anderson's political experience served him well. During the Backstrom controversy, councilman-elect Anderson had not encouraged the first city manager to stay in Tacoma. Anderson's position along with Dr. Humiston's change in attitude were primarily the reasons responsible for Backstrom's departure. Thus, in a sense, Bratrud, Jensen and Stojack owed Anderson their support. However, during the election when support from north and interests became crucial for Anderson to defeat Albert Hooker, the former mayor during the commission days played another role. Tollefson explained Anderson's strategy as follows:

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
⁴Anderson had listed Jensen as a supporter and character reference on a form he submitted to the Tacoma Municipal League during his 1950 campaign for mayor.
Big John was pretty foxy. He was a friend of Jensen, Stojack and Bratrud and told them that he would not back Backstrom if they supported him for mayor. However, during the early days of the campaign he got a hold of Battin and told him that he should be the new mayor. Anderson told Battin, 'I will vote for you.'

But Big John had his votes counted. He knew that Humiston would never support Battin. The two had been quarreling for some time. Humiston had a unique way at getting information; he would cut through to the core of any problem. On a number of occasions, this would make Battin furious. They had it out several times.

When it came time for the council to vote, I abstained. The first vote was: Anderson three, Battin four and Tollefson one. I knew then that something was wrong—Humiston was obviously not going along. The next vote I voted for myself. The outcome: Anderson four, Battin three and Tollefson two. Another vote with the same result. I now knew someone had dropped off Battin's side and I also knew they were against me.

Our last vote we cast ballots for the top two candidates. I voted for Battin and Humiston voted for Anderson. Thus, Anderson was appointed on a five-to-four vote. After the vote, I saw Battin in the clerk's office. He cried and said, 'Harold, I was a sucker,' Big John hadn't kept his word.

The selection of Anderson as Tacoma's second mayor under the council-manager charter not only shifted the balance of power on the council, but it made it possible for the council to move in the direction of making political accommodations with alienated groups in the community. Organized labor was still bitter over the treatment it received during the charter campaign of 1956. Although Dave Rowlands' reputation with labor in Eau Claire was good, the Central Labor Council hardly welcomed the new manager with open arms. An editorial printed in the Labor Advocate in late May indicated the Labor Council's position:

> . . . thus we are once more importing a total stranger to take over the top spot in our city government.

> The new choice is . . . David Rowlands . . . As city managers go, he is probably as well qualified for the job as any of the candidates. Only time will tell whether he will be acceptable to the majority, however. After all, he is the choice not of the people of the city; he was selected by only nine of the some 136,000 persons living in Tacoma.

> We are not calling strikes on Rowlands before he comes to bat. We are, however, reminding the people of an inherent weakness in the council-manager system. That is, city managers do not necessarily

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1Harold Tollefson, private interview.
look upon towns where they find employment as their permanent homes, as witness the case of Frank Backstrom who remained here less than three years. They look on each job as a steppingstone to a more lucrative position in a bigger league.¹

Anderson and Rowlands both felt that it was important that the break with the unions be healed. In early July, Anderson expressed a desire to work more closely with labor and indicated that he would consider appointing labor people to city commissions and boards.² Rowlands also expressed a willingness to work closely with organized labor and referred to the fact that his record with labor had been good. Rowlands said:

I've always felt that we're on the same ball club and ought to work together for the good of the city. I would like to add that some of my friends in Eau Claire were active in the labor movement there.³

During September, the harmony on the City Council was disrupted for the first time since the municipal elections when Frank Stojack asked about the possibility of placing amendments to the city charter on the November, 1956 ballot. Rowlands was not a part of this controversy, but its ramifications would have an affect on the office of city manager in the years ahead.

After the defeat of the strong-mayor charter, the City Council decided to establish a commission to look into possible changes in the charter. Dr. Humiston had been appointed chairman of the group; but in reply to Stojack's query, he indicated that "not enough interest or enthusiasm was shown to warrant calling a commission meeting."⁴ Stojack asked Humiston if he had gotten any suggestions for changes. Humiston stated that he had not received

anything in writing. Stojack commented: "I suggested a number of things, but I didn't know we needed it in writing." After the council meeting, Stojack indicated that he favored having the mayor elected directly by the people every two years. Anderson also expressed general approval of the idea.

By the end of September, three amendments to the city charter had been proposed by Bratrud, Stojack and Jensen. The three amendments were as follows: (1) the mayor to be elected by the people for a four year term at the present salary of $2,400; (2) an elected Civil Service Board for a six year term; (3) transfer of the water department from the utilities department to the city manager's public works department.

The three proposed amendments were tabled and as a result not placed on the November ballot. However, the issue was far from settled. In March, Jensen, Bratrud and Stojack issued a joint statement calling for specific charter amendments to be put before the voters in May. The council trio proclaimed: "If the rest of the council doesn't go along, we are left with only one alternative--to take this, our plea, to the people of Tacoma for their early consideration." Battin and Perdue immediately responded to their three council colleagues. Battin said: "You won't intimidate me with threats, guns or smokebombs; I know that the Teamsters are behind this move." Perdue noted: "Your position on this is inconsistent; first you say you favor the

1Ibid.
2Ibid.
3Ibid.
6Ibid.
council-manager system, then you offer amendments that would sabotage it.\(^1\)

Actually, the council did pass a resolution one month earlier which set October as the month to hold formal hearings for charter revisions. But Councilman Bratrud felt that the October date meant "oblivion" for any true changes. He argued that continued stalling would lead to a new freeholder election, a new charter and "the city manager form of government will be thrown out on its ear."\(^2\) Bratrud added:

We only kept this form of government in business by a small percentage. My personal belief is that the only reason you have this form today is E. K. Murray. If Murray hadn't been dissatisfied with the utilities provisions of the charter and came out against it, I think the manager form would have been beaten.\(^3\)

Bratrud's prediction of another freeholders' campaign did indeed come true. In late March, Ted Clark, a downtown restaurant owner, appeared before the council to announce a petition drive for a freeholders' election. Clark said: "We have just about reached our goal" and then asked the council to set a date for a freeholder election.\(^4\) "If you don't set a date I will be back to demand one," Clark said.\(^5\) However, Clark did not return with his demand. Instead, the leaders and interests which made up the anti-manager faction were plotting another strategy to assume control of Tacoma's government. This strategy would become evident in January of the following year.

\(^1\) Ibid.


\(^3\) Ibid.


\(^5\) Ibid.
Dave Rowlands and his relationship with Mayor Anderson
And the City Council--1956-58

The political relationship between Dave Rowlands and Mayor "Big John" Anderson was a sound one. Both men were project oriented and talked about the "big picture" when it came to Tacoma's future development. Anderson, of course, had originally run for office on the theme of "Big John for Big Changes" in 1950. Later, as the last commission mayor, Anderson had been instrumental in pushing for the construction of the new city hall in conjunction with Pierce County. Anderson was also the prime mover in financing the city's new downtown library building. Anderson's role in appointing a citizens' committee to review the Tacoma city charter in 1952 was previously discussed. He had stressed the importance of a citizens' committee to come up with some new ideas about Tacoma's governmental system. In 1956, Anderson appointed a new committee, the Citizens' Committee for Tacoma's Future Development, to study needed improvements for the city. The appointment of this committee came at about the time Rowlands was listing his aims for the coming year. But Anderson's committee was not appointed to compete with Rowlands and his proposals. Indeed, Rowlands and his staff worked closely with the citizens' group in preparing proposals. Some councilmen, in fact, felt the relationship was too close. Mrs. Clara Goering called the Citizens' Committee for Tacoma's Future Development a "farce." She maintained that Rowlands used the group to suit his own ends. She was to say: "Rowlands decides on an action and points everything that way." Anderson, on the other hand, felt the relationship he had with Rowlands was excellent. He said: "What I try to do most is


3Ibid.
work for teamwork. I don't care if I don't get credit for individual
accomplishments."¹

In early July, Rowlands announced that he was completing work on a
six-year plan for the development of Tacoma as "a major U. S. city."²

Rowlands' rough draft proposal included plans for the following:

1. A downtown civic auditorium.
2. An end to pollution of Commencement Bay.
3. A spruced-up downtown district program.
4. A sanitary sewer project.³

Rowlands projected that the biggest expenditure would be for a $25
million storm and sanitary sewer system. Other projects would include an
urban renewal proposal for downtown Tacoma to fix up or tear down ramshackle
buildings in the area.⁴ Rowlands also viewed as critical the role that would
by played by a citizens' committee once the six-year plan took form.⁵

"Big" John's committee was to play that role.

By the middle of July Rowlands was ready to present formally his six-
year plan to the City Council. The plan, described as "a blueprint for a
bigger and better Tacoma" called for $82 million worth of capital improvements
for the city. It included the following projects: (1) A $5,000,000 civic
auditorium adequate for conventions, sports events, productions, with
construction to begin in 1961. (2) A $2,000,000 municipal airport to provide
faster services for scheduled airlines and ultimately a helicopter service to
the Seattle-Tacoma Airport. (3) A $2-10,000,000 for a major series of
urban renewal projects throughout the city. (4) An $8,000,000 to dredge,

²Don Duncan, "Big Project Outlined by Rowlands," Tacoma News Tribune,
July 1, 1957, p. 1.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid., p. 2.
extend Hylebos Waterway on the city tideflats, the construction of highways, railroads and utilities in 250 acres of industrial sites; and the development of a system of waterways to modernize the industrial port area. (5) A $1½ million for off-street parking facilities in downtown Tacoma. (6) A $300 thousand for improvements to Lincoln Bowl including a roof to cover the stadium. (7) A $250 thousand for a new aquarium and $150 thousand for a new aviary at the city zoo. (8) A $100 thousand for recreational facilities at Heidelberg Baseball field. (9) A $116 thousand for a south-end library. (10) A $40,000,000 for the sewer projects and street paving for the public works department.  

Rowlands suggested that financing take a number of forms including general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, local improvement district bonds, federal grants, state grants, the operating budget and internal borrowing.  
The first bond elections would be set for the spring of 1958. 

The Rowlands' proposals and the support of Mayor Anderson seem to coincide with the role of promoting economic growth in the community. The council in general did not object to the Rowlands plan. The disputes between the council factions focused on the charter amendment controversy. Rowlands, of course, was not involved in that fight. The six year plan received strong endorsement from the News Tribune editorial staff. Tribune editors said:

The $80 million Six-Year Plan . . . is a fine example of the council-manager form of municipal government in action . . . Progress of the kind forecast by such a master blueprint for making Tacoma a major city is what the citizens had in mind when they voted in the council-manager system. 
That is what a city manager is for.  

2 Ibid., p. 2. 
Although in 1957 there were no major disputes between Rowlands and the council, the city manager was not free of controversy. Early in the year, Rowlands, by implication, had criticized the operation of Tacoma's separately administered utilities. He was particularly concerned about the utilities' policy of charging the general government a service charge for the city's street lighting system and a rental charge for the use of fire hydrants. These charges cut deeply into the potential city revenues and created problems during the period when the city's budget was prepared. Rowlands' not-so-subtle hints in January 1957 led to open conflict with Utility Director Dean Barline in late April.

On April 22 the Utilities Board and Barline charged that the city manager and the City Council were "harassing" the utilities administration. Rowlands, in turn, announced that the utilities should be put under the authority of the city manager. In the meantime, the council under the leadership of Mayor Anderson prepared a long series of questions concerning the administration and policy of the utilities operation. In an extraordinary action, the council directed Barline to appear before it personally to answer the questions. Anderson also implied that future appointees to the Utilities Board might look at the possibility of bringing in a new utilities director. This action led several members of the board to severely criticize Rowlands and the policy of the City Council. In June, Board Chairman Gerrit Vander Ende issued his resignation from the board and publicly chastised Rowlands before

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1 Harold Tollefson, private interview.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
the council. "I am tired of seeing Mr. Rowlands continually interfere in departmental affairs," Vander Ende said. Board members Ralph Johnstone and Tom Anderson supported Vander Ende. Mayor Anderson quickly came to the defense of Rowlands and said: "I personally don't feel there was any fault on the part of the manager and I feel the council was right in requesting information from the director." A key issue in the dispute was the council's decision to fix the rental fee for hydrants at $35. In the past, the Utilities Board had fixed the fee; but the council was unified in their decision, a decision that was recommended by Rowlands. Dr. Humiston expressed the views of the council as a whole when he said that the decision was "sound." In a reply to a charge by Vander Ende that the council was acting outside the authority granted by the city charter, Humiston said that there was no violation on the part of the councilmen. "What we have here is a basic difference in philosophy as to whether water used for fire protection should be paid by the taxpayers through his water bill or through taxes paid for fire protection," Humiston added.

Supporters of the council-manager charter found themselves in somewhat of a dilemma over the utilities question. The feud made the governmental system look bad. The defeat of the strong-mayor charter was supposed to bring harmony to city government, yet Rowlands' battle with Barline and the constant bickering on the council over the charter amendments made it appear as if the new system of government inherently fostered conflict. This

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.
conflict continued even when the City Council as a whole was behind the city manager.

There were really only two alternatives open to resolve the utilities conflict. One alternative was for an amendment placing the whole utilities operation under the authority of the city manager. Dave Rowlands favored this course of action and Mayor Anderson seriously considered it. Such an amendment, however, would once again raise the question of the proper form of government and bring on more political controversy. The course of action finally decided upon by both parties was to patch up the feud internally through accommodation and compromise between the City Council and the Utilities Board.

The Strategy of the Anti-manager Leadership

Clique and the Election of 1958

The groups and interests which had originally opposed the council-manager charter and had supported the strong-mayor system were still present in the community in the early days of 1958. Indeed, the political environment, which many thought would be stabilized after the charter election of 1956, was as dynamic and as fluid as ever. The factional bickering on the council had continued and this time the conflict focused on the need to change the city charter. However, the Bratrud faction, which had promised to take the issue of the charter amendments to the people, was showing signs of breaking up. Frank Stojack decided not to run for re-election and, instead, filed for the Democratic nomination for Pierce County sheriff. Everett Jensen, a successful contractor in the community, found that his stay on the council had led to a loss of several lucrative contracts with the city. Jensen, therefore, retired from public life to pursue his private business interests. The departure of these two left a void on the council. They had joined with Bratrud to represent the interests of the South Tacoma majority. Now the
south end was faced with the prospect of having only a single voice on the council.

Other events had taken place which contributed to the dynamic nature of Tacoma's body politic. Dave Rowlands and his battle with the Utilities Board and its director had created bad feelings in an area that had been supportive of the council-manager system in the past. Rowlands had also stepped on some political toes when he had listed the aims and goals of the city for the coming year. Many elected officials who were sitting on local municipal boards and commissions such as the Port Commission and the Park Board began to feel that their area of authority was being intruded upon by the manager. The City Council had created additional hostility by passing a tough anti-pinball ordinance. The pinball machines, which were a tolerated form of gambling in most Washington communities, were tended by members of the Teamsters Union. The ordinance, in effect, eliminated a number of lucrative union jobs. Other "open town" interests viewed the hard-line position of Tacoma's Police Department as a deterrent to a potentially-booming downtown nightlife.

Within this political environment, the anti-manager leadership clique began to organize a new campaign to once again assume control of Tacoma's government. Although the personalities and interests were the same as those in 1953 and 1956, the strategy for political control was to be very different in 1958.

Walter Pray, a conservative south end Republican who had served as sanitation superintendent under commission Mayor Anderson, was the key organizer of the anti-manager campaign. Pray had helped in the campaigns

in 1953 and 1956, but his strategy this time would be very different. In the past, the anti-manager group had to fight the symbolic values of the council-manager charter. In so doing, the group was pictured by the News Tribune and other supporters of the system as being "sinister" in intent. The only real political success of the anti-manager interests came in 1955 when they ran a slate of candidates for freeholder. That group of candidates had been strongly Democratic, labor-oriented and endorsed, and had included a number of South Tacomans. It was Pray's intent to put together another slate of this kind, only this time the candidates would be running for council seats.

Initially, the anti-manager clique and Pray lined up three candidates for the four open slots on the City Council. The three included James Porter, executive secretary of the local musicians' union, a south end resident and activist in the local Democratic party organization; Forrest Easterday, a civil engineer, a former Pierce County Commissioner and Democratic party state legislator from the south end; and Frank Bartinetti, a 21-year-old advertising executive with KTNT radio and former athletic director of the Tacoma Boys Club. The fourth member of the group recruited for Pray by radio personality Burt McMurtie was Ben Hanson, a young attorney who had served as executive secretary for the 1955 freeholders' commission, assistant attorney general for the Legislative Committee on Institutions and counsel for the Washington State Association of County Commissioners. Hanson was

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2 Ibid.
also a south end resident; and after taking a whirl at running on the Republican ticket for the state legislature, switched to the Democratic party. Thus, Pray had managed to line up a potentially formidable slate for the coming council election. Porter, Easterday and Hanson were well known in the community, had strong connections with labor and the Democratic party and lived in South Tacoma. Bartinetti was the only weak link in the slate; but with a strong campaign, he could very well be swept in with the other three. However, after the filings were completed for the up-coming primary election, Pray and his slate became the recipients of an unexpected windfall which strengthened the anti-manager clique politically and solved the problem of weak candidate Bartinetti.

Pray's political windfall was the addition of Mrs. Ellen Price to the anti-manager slate. Mrs. Price's arrival strengthened the ticket in a number of ways. First, unlike the other four candidates, she was a political independent with an impeccable background which included years of service to the community. Mrs. Price had been active in the Tacoma Girl Scouts Program, the Parent Teachers' Association and sat on the local executive committee of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. Second, she had made a number of friends among the leaders of organized labor while serving on the community service boards. The union leadership had urged her to run for the freeholders' commission in 1955 and she had served that body with distinction. Finally, Mrs. Price's candidacy gave the slate political viability as far as the women's vote was concerned. In sum, she brought it a measure of political "respectability" it had not enjoyed before.

1 Ibid.
her decision to become a part of the group. Mrs. Price described her decision to join with Pray as follows:

A number of friends called me before the primary to urge me to run for City Council. I talked with a number of people about the possibility and they seemed enthusiastic. Ben Hanson, whom I had a great deal of respect for, had filed and wanted me to join with him. He said, 'let's run as a team.'

At about 5 o'clock on the last day of filing I signed up. At this particular period of time, I was very much involved in the March of Dimes campaign and hadn't thought about political organization. Frankly, I just didn't know anything about the mechanics of campaigning for a City Council seat. Yet, everyone else was in high gear.

I did know Maurice Raymond [port commissioner and Democratic Party regular] from my March of Dimes work. I went to him and asked for advice. Maury suggested that I see Walter Pray. He told me: 'Tell Pray I sent you.'

When I contacted Pray I found that Ben had already become a part of the group. Pray welcomed me with open arms even though I came in at the last moment. I guess I gave the slate some respectability. It is important to note that I did not have to commit myself as far as how I was to vote once I was elected to the council. No one told me what I was to vote for at any time.¹

Mrs. Price's addition to the anti-manager slate was in many ways more by accident than design. She was not committed to any particular policy or position and, in turn, did not commit herself once she joined the group. The key to her relationship with the slate was the influence of Ben Hanson, a man she respected and who she was to later describe as the "best mayor we have ever had."²

Porter, Easterday and Bartinetti were involved for very different reasons. Porter described this involvement as follows:

I first became active in the community with a group called the Council for Greater Tacoma. Our group sponsored summer music festivals and later we pushed for a bond issue to save the Stadium Bowl. Gradually, many people in our organization became unhappy with the direction given our city. This unhappiness focused mainly on business issues. Frankly, night life in downtown Tacoma was dead and there were no prospects for meaningful change in the situation.

²Ibid.
At about this time, I was serving as president of the local musicians' union. My band played at the Mirror Room in downtown Tacoma. The Council for Greater Tacoma sponsored a meeting to discuss the downtown situation and I spoke before the group as a representative of my union. I guess what I said must have impressed someone because not much later I was contacted by a group of people interested in the coming council elections. This group, small in number, was made up of individuals in the tavern, cocktail and pinball business. At first my role was to interview potential candidates for the council positions. Later, I decided to run myself.

Easterday, Bartinetti and I were sponsored by the group I mentioned. Personally, I felt that the people in control of the city had a small town complex. It was the intention of this group to run the city as an elite. A person's ideas really were not important to this group; the important thing was who you were and how much money you had.¹

The pro-manager faction had also lined up a slate of candidates for the coming election. Heading the group were former Mayor Harold Tollefson and incumbent Councilman Charles T. Battin. Also running were Alvin Anderson, a young attorney, a Republican and former organizer for the successful campaign against the strong-mayor charter in 1956, and Albert Hooker, one of the original councilmen elected in 1953.

The key issues in the campaign became evident from the very beginning. In late February, Ben Hanson was to say: "We are running to combat the candidates sponsored by the uninformed intellectual class from the north end."² This issue was played over and over again by Walter Pray through a front group he formed called the "Citizens' Committee for Better Government." The Citizens' Committee sponsored a number of large ads in the News Tribune which made the following point: "For the Good of Tacoma, Control by Clique Must End."

The ads continued as follows:

The form of city government is not the issue. Weaknesses can can be corrected within the framework of our present charter. Our objection is to administration by clique, and we submit to you, the voters . . . mounting evidence of failure which now stands as an indictment of municipal control by clique.³

¹James Porter, private interview.


³"For the Good of Tacoma; Control by Clique Must End," Tacoma News Tribune, Jan. 19, 1958, p. 3.
The anti-manager group suggested that the "weaknesses" in the form of government and the "failures" of the former administration could be corrected through the following six point program: (1) The election of a full-time mayor. (2) Independence of the public utilities as provided by the city charter. (3) An elective, independent Civil Service Board. (4) A definite, activated program for more industries, more payrolls. (5) Prompt and decisive steps to urban rehabilitation. (6) Opposition to the suggested increase of the state sales tax from 3½ per cent to 4 per cent as a method of increasing municipal revenues.¹

Although the slate called for an independently elected full-time mayor, it did not criticize council-manager government or the city manager. During the campaign, James Porter made the point that the slate wanted to improve the form of government to "forestall another charter fight."² He said: "I believe it can work. It should work, and can be improved so it will work more successfully."³ In reference to the full-time mayor, Hanson noted that Tollefson had admitted that the job took fifty hours of work a week. Hanson added: "Is that a part-time job?"⁴

The pro-manager clique hammered away at the motives of the interests behind the citizens' committee. The issue once again became the question of an open city and tolerance over the gambling question. During the campaign meetings, Hanson was repeatedly asked about the role of the pinball interests in the financing of the anti-manager clique's candidates. Hanson replied as

³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
follows: "Sure, they are interested in this election as any citizen has a right to be. They are against the two incumbents and Alvin Anderson as I am."¹

Hanson listed his chief campaign contributors as follows: Mayor John Anderson; Councilman Omar Bratrud; former Councilman Everett Jensen; Bill Brown, member of the Tacoma Park Board; Mrs. James Stewart, member of the Tacoma Park Board; and members of the congregation of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.²

Charles Battin, by inference, also attempted to make an issue of vice and toleration. He said: "We can point with pride that Tacoma now has the highest moral rating in the U. S. for any city near a military installation."³ He also noted that during his term the city progressed from "Seattle's dirty backyard" to an "All-American" city.⁴

Alvin Anderson used the form of government as an issue in an attempt to pin the anti-manager group down. He said:

Every one of the five was against the council-manager form of government two years ago. Now they plan for changes. I say these five candidates still are not in favor of the council-manager form of government.⁵

Tollefson remained as aloof as possible and concentrated on achievements during his term as mayor. Tollefson claimed the following: (1) Tacoma has taken the lead in urban renewal in the state. (2) Helped to persuade the legislature to give the cities a share of the state liquor tax. (3) Improved the city local improvement district laws. (4) Managed to have municipal

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 2.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
financing regulations changed so that cities could invest idle funds and receive interest on those funds.  

Hanson, in turn, made an issue of Tollefson's aloofness and attempted to make it appear that he was a part of the opposition slate. During one campaign meeting, Hanson said to Tollefson: "If you are going along with their smear campaign, say so. If not, say so. It's time to quit sitting on the fence." 

The primary election in February eliminated Hooker from the running. It was now Hanson, Porter, Bartinetti, Easterday and Mrs. Price against Tollefson, Anderson and Battin for the four open slots on the City Council. The primary results did not look good for the pro-manager forces. Four of the five anti-manager candidates finished in the top four positions in the primary. Battin's showing was particularly disappointing. Thus, the pro-manager group began to push hard on the open city issue. In the last days of the campaign, Battin charged that several options to lease property in downtown Tacoma were being taken by "former and new entertainers of lonely men." The implication was clear; the election of the anti-manager slate would bring vice and gambling back to Tacoma. 

The pro-manager forces were never able effectively to make the vice and gambling charge stick. That issue, as a value, had been a part of the conflict over the form of government. But the anti-manager clique did not attack the form of government during the campaign. They had suggested some changes were needed to make the system more workable. And these suggested

1 Ibid. 
2 Ibid. 
changes did not appear to be a threat to the charter. Indeed, the old City Council had agreed to establish a commission to review suggested amendments. The question of an elected mayor had been discussed previously. Frank Stojack and Mayor Anderson had said that they favored the idea. Omar Bratrud and Everett Jensen were to later push for a separately elected mayor and an increase in the mayor's salary.

Walter Pray had also been successful in devising a south end strategy during the campaign. His slate of candidates was particularly appealing to the Democrats, union members and lower income groups in that part of town. The addition of Mrs. Price had added strength to the ticket.

The election results found Ben Hanson finishing first with 25,772 votes; Mrs. Price slightly behind with 24,536 votes followed by Forrest Easterday, 23,883 votes and James Porter, 21,443 votes. Alvin Anderson led the pro-manager forces with 19,669 votes. The two incumbents, Tollefson and Battin, finished sixth and eighth in the field.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Probably the most notable feature of the first two years of Dave Rowlands' term as city manager was the lack of any opposition to the manager on the City Council. This did not mean that Rowlands was free from controversy, however. His very nature as an activist led him to disagreements with certain powerful interests off of the council. The Utilities Board and its director were targets for some of Rowlands' barbs and criticisms. The decision by the manager to question the utilities administration did involve some degree of risk; but, support from the council on this issue was strong. Mayor Anderson, for one, was displeased with Utilities Director Barline. Councilman Bratrud, who was strongly supported by sportsmen's groups, was particularly anxious to see the utilities operation scrutinized. Bratrud was the only member of the council to oppose the construction of the two massive power
dams on the Cowlitz River. Battin, Tollefson and Mrs. Goering had opposed the separation of the utilities departments during the freeholders' meetings of 1952. They would not have been unhappy to see the entire operation under the authority of the city manager. But Rowlands' criticisms were even more far ranging. His comments concerning the Port Commission and other political empires did not go unnoticed by the influential politicians who controlled those empires.

Another important aspect of the two year period was the apparent signs of changes that were taking place in the political system. Indeed, the very concept of a City Council patterned after a corporate board of directors and protected by non-partisan elections began to come under serious challenge for the first time. That challenge was best symbolized by the election of John Anderson in 1956 and the tremendous vote given minority Councilman Bratrud the same year. Anderson had originally opposed the charter in 1953 and was to later express doubts in some of the basic tenets of the council-manager model. For example, he continued to believe, even after 1953, that the value of hiring a local man as city manager superseded the tenet of hiring the best professional manager available in the country. Anderson, as shall be shown in future chapters, also believed in the value of an elected mayor as opposed to the principal of an appointed chairman of the board. When Anderson was appointed mayor over manager-ideologue Charles Battin in 1956, the initial modification of the system became apparent. The experienced politician was beginning to replace the "public minded policy maker" in positions of influence on the council.

The advocate role played by Rowlands during the period certainly influenced the nature of things politically. By promoting new programs, selling the form of government and assuming an aggressive role, the city manager was becoming the focal point in a policy-making sense. The council, in turn,
seemed to serve as a rubber stamp for proposals by the manager. Debates and discussions revolved around amendments to the charter, zoning questions and relatively minor policy issues. The larger questions, as outlined by the six-year plan orchestrated by the manager, were accepted without much exploration or definition by the council.

Finally, the election campaign of 1958 signaled a new direction for Tacoma politics. The open town arguments used with apparent effectiveness by the reformers in the charter campaigns of 1952, and 1956, simply did not hold during a campaign where candidates and other issues became important. The slate of candidates molded by Walter Pray was, in fact, more representative of the city's electorate. It was a politically strong group that included South Tacomans, Democrats, youth, experience, both sexes, labor representation and professionals. Within this context, the Pray argument that the pro-manager candidates were north end elitists rang true.
CHAPTER VII

THE SUCCESS OF COUNTER-REFORM: NEW POLICIES

CHANGES IN THE CHARTER AND THE RESPONSE OF

THE CITY MANAGER

The City Council election of 1958 was a significant turning point in the evolution of council-manager government in the city of Tacoma. For the first five years of the council-manager system's existence, it was protected and defended by a majority of councilmen who were truly committed to the traditional concepts of separation of administration and policy-making, part-time legislators, the municipal board of directors and objective decision-making through qualified administrators. The system, as represented by the city charter, was continually challenged during this period. Yet, each political threat was either defeated, as was the strong-mayor charter of 1955-56, or stalled, as was the case of the Bratrud amendments of 1956-57. The election of 1958 found two more members of the pro-manager coalition meeting defeat at the polls. The majority bloc of six pro-manager councilmen had been reduced to five during the 1956 election and were reduced to three as a result of the outcome of the 1958 election. The four newly elected members of the City Council had been on record as being opposed to the council-manager charter as early as two years previous to their election. It was obvious that some form of power exchange was about to take place. However, it was not at all obvious just how that power exchange would take shape. This chapter will explore that process.
New Politics in Tacoma: The City Council of 1958

The Ben Hanson-led slate of council candidates had proposed a six-point platform during the course of their election campaign. Four of the points were generally policy matters. However, the concept of a separately elected mayor and an elected Civil Service Board would require amending the city charter. Five votes were needed on the City Council to place those amendments on the ballot. It seemed that those five votes were assured since Omar Bratrud had pushed for the amendments for two years. It was even possible that six votes could be mustered since Mayor Anderson had suggested that a separately elected mayor might be a good idea. Shortly after the election, Anderson had noted that "under our new form of government, a good many things have been corrected, but we're a longshot from being perfect yet." However, the concept of a separately elected mayor posed new questions which could not be answered before the new council was formed. For example, one question concerned the extent of authority the elected mayor would have in the system. Would he have appointive powers that formerly were a part of the responsibility of the city manager? And, how much would the elected mayor be paid in salary?

In early June, shortly before taking office, the four new councilmen-elect released a public statement in which they committed themselves to the support of Hanson for mayor. The new councilmen declared the following:

The voters of Tacoma chose councilmen whose position was made clear during the campaign. Our decision to support Ben Hanson for mayor is based on the results of the election. In keeping with the expression of the voters sentiment, we shall propose and vote for election of the new mayor by roll call vote and shall resist any effort to elect our highest official in secret.


The first council session with the new councilmen did, indeed, result in a power exchange. The initial vote for mayor saw Hanson, John Anderson and Dr. Homer Humiston nominated for the position. Hanson received the votes of his fellow candidates on the anti-manager slate, Humiston found backing, as expected, from Paul Perdue and Mrs. Clara Goering and Anderson received the support of Omar Bratrud. On the second vote, Bratrud and Anderson switched their vote to Hanson and thus gave the young attorney six votes to Humiston's three.¹

After receiving the nomination, Hanson announced that he expected the council to put three amendments on the ballot that would change the city charter. The three amendments included a provision for a directly-elected full-time mayor, a provision calling for councilmen to be elected by numbered position on the ballot.² On the last proposed amendment, which had not been discussed during the campaign, Hanson made the following observation:

I believe that any council candidate wishing to take a shot at a particular incumbent councilman should have an opportunity to do so. This amendment would eliminate the present system of running in a pack or running as part of a slate.³

Hanson also suggested a loosening of the city regulations on pinball operations. He noted that the question of pinball machines was not a "moral issue."⁴ He added: "What I see here is a governmental issue, and the possible necessity of controls to avoid the corruption which would result from pinball revenues."⁵ However, Hanson was careful not to commit himself specifically on the return of pinball machines and gambling tolerance to Tacoma. He

² Ibid.
³ John Murphy, "Council Will Establish Legislative Committee," Tacoma News Tribune, June 20, 1958, p. 7.
⁵ Ibid.
said: "During the campaign we made it clear to them [the pinball interests] that we would make our own decisions on the issues, based on their merits, as they came up."¹

In late June the new council majority exerted its political power for the first time when Mayor Hanson nominated E. K. Murray for appointment to the Utilities Board. Mrs. Goering and Paul Perdue objected strongly to the move. Mrs. Goering said: "Mr. Murray held no brief for the manager form of government when it was adopted in 1952."² Perdue, in turn, criticized Hanson for not discussing the appointment with the whole council privately before the council session. Perdue said:

I presume you have discussed it with your own group on the council, but I feel it would engender more cooperation if you would discuss it with the council as a whole, as has been done in the past.³

Hanson's appointment of Murray to the Utilities Board, which was approved by the council, was a significant departure from past policies. In 1953 the council majority decided that a commitment to the council-manager system was a prerequisite qualification for appointment to city boards and commissions. This policy came to light when the council majority decided not to consider Vernie Reed for appointment to the Utilities Board. Reed had been labor's choice for the appointment, but he had publicly campaigned against the council-manager charter in 1952. The new majority, with its action concerning Murray, changed that policy.

Thus, the nature of the political power exchange in Tacoma's city government and its ramifications concerning the council-manager system soon

¹Ibid.
³Ibid.
became clear. First, the new majority committed itself to changing the basic structure of the system through charter amendments. Second, the majority coalition nominated their top vote getter for mayor and achieved enough support from independent councilmen to see him appointed to that position. Third, the anti-manager group changed basic council policy to appoint former opponents of the council-manager system to important city boards and commissions. The fourth aspect of the power exchange dealt with the relationship of the majority coalition with David Rowlands.

David Rowlands and the new council majority

Publicly at least, Dave Rowlands had not become an issue during the council campaign of 1958. Indeed, Rowlands' credibility in the community was enhanced when voters approved five major separate bond issues that were the core of his six year plan for Tacoma. While the anti-manager slate refrained from criticizing Rowlands personally during the campaign, they did, by implication, question his relationship with the Utilities Board. The four new councilmen had made an issue of the integrity of Tacoma's public utilities as a part of their six-point platform. Shortly after the election, Mayor Hanson announced that the new council members had no intention of offering a charter amendment that would call for a separately elected Utilities Board.¹ The appointment of Murray to the Board was a further expression of their attitude in this area.

In early June, Hanson indicated publicly that Rowlands' tenure was secure. He said: "As far as I know, no change is being presently contemplated."²

James Porter had very different feelings about the matter, however. He was to say: "As far as I was concerned I was elected for the purpose of firing Rowlands." Key to the decision concerning Rowlands was the former council's position on strict enforcement of gambling policies. Rowlands and Police Chief Roy Kerr had been administering those policies. The new council members favored a loosening up of the policies and the administration of them. Hanson, who had earlier been vague on the tolerance issue, said that present enforcement was "probably too tight." Porter and Easterday agreed. Porter added: "I think we should have the same policy in public places where the working man can afford to go as in private clubs."

On July 13 the News Tribune reported that Rowlands had four votes against him on the City Council. Dr. Humiston, Anderson, Mrs. Goering and Perdue were named as being in favor of the manager while Omar Bratrud was listed as undecided. When Rowlands was asked about his precarious political position, he commented that he was willing to "ride out the storm." On the question of "loosening up" the city gambling policy, Rowlands said: "I can't see giving up the war just because you've lost a battle. We have a tremendous improvement program starting in Tacoma and I think we should get on with it." The News Tribune reported that Kerr, on the other hand, would resign before any change in enforcement could be effected.

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1 James Porter, private interview.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 2.
6 Ibid.
During this period, two names were mentioned as possible candidates for new city manager. The first candidate was Port Commissioner Maurice Raymond. Raymond had several things going for him. He was from Tacoma, a Democrat and a close personal friend of Mrs. Price and Hanson. The other candidate was Marc Anderson who had been considered for the manager post in 1956. However, Anderson very quickly took himself out of the picture by declaring that he was not interested in the position.¹

The key to Dave Rowlands¹ future seemed to rest in the hands of Councilman Omar Bratrud. Bratrud, the spokesman for the minority for five years, now became potentially the most powerful figure on the City Council. It had been Bratrud's decision that swung the necessary votes for the appointment of Ben Hanson as mayor. It would be Bratrud who would cast any deciding vote that might loosen up the gambling enforcement policies in the city. On July 17, Bratrud offered his opinion on Dave Rowlands. He said:

As far as I can see, City Manager Dave Rowlands is satisfactory. As long as he is a professional man and performs the duties of his office on a professional basis and follows council policy, I see no reason to change him. If the time ever comes when he is not satisfactory, that's the time to relieve him of his duties. And that could be a long, long time away.²

The day after Bratrud's pronouncement, Hanson indicated that Rowlands¹ position was "secure."³ He added: "I believe the council should settle down and get to work on the big issues and problems the city faces, working together rather than in factions,"⁴ When asked why Rowlands was now secure,

¹Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
Hanson indicated that Bratrud's announcement had been the main factor. However, Councilman James Porter had a very different version of what really happened. He said:

During the period when Rowlands' position was in serious question I personally met with Bratrud to discuss Rowlands' future. It was a very informal meeting and after a drink or two Bratrud said that he would go along with us. I indicated to Bratrud that Hanson, Easterday, Mrs. Price and I were ready to move to fire Rowlands at the next council meeting. Bratrud was all set.

Later, Bratrud met with the four of us shortly before the council meeting. However, when it came time to discuss the Rowlands situation Hanson balked. He said that the timing wasn't right for the move. This upset Bratrud greatly and he said if the four of us were not together on the question we could count him out. From that time on, Bratrud refused to meet with us.

Bratrud, on the other hand, was to say that he never intended to vote for Rowlands' dismissal. And Mrs. Price claimed that her mind was not made up when the four newly elected councilmen met with Bratrud. Thus, the story is far from clear as to what happened between July 13 and July 17. One point was certain, however, and that was the fact that Dave Rowlands as city manager would no longer be the unanimous choice of the Tacoma City Council.

The Charter Amendments of 1958

The anti-manager councilmen had accomplished two of four important goals by the end of July, 1958. First, they had captured the mayor's chair on the City Council with the help of Councilmen Bratrud and Anderson. Secondly, they had secured the nomination of two anti-manager candidates to two important boards in city government. E. K. Murray had been appointed to Utilities Board. Again, Bratrud and Anderson joined the four newly elected councilmen. Also,

1Ibid.
2James Porter, private interview.
3Omar Bratrud, private interview.
4Mrs. Ellen Price, private interview.
Councilman James Porter had been appointed as the council's representative to the Planning Commission over Dr. Homer Humiston. In this case, the vote had been five-to-four with Bratrud casting the deciding ballot. The third goal, the firing of Dave Rowlands, had not been accomplished. The fourth goal concerned proposing amendments to the charter that would be decided in the upcoming November election. The discussions concerning these amendments formally began in late August.

The first proposed amendment called for a directly elected, full-time mayor. The key words in the amendment were "full-time." The ramifications of such an amendment were obvious. With a full-time elected administrative official, the intent of the council-manager charter would be seriously altered.

In essence, such an amendment would indirectly accomplish what the strong-mayor advocates had proposed in 1956. The argument would then become one concerned with what administrative official would really be needed—the appointed city manager or the elected full-time mayor.

The words "full-time" were removed from the proposed amendment in what turned out to be a crucial test of power on the council. The vote, which saw Mayor Hanson join Anderson, Bratrud, Humiston, Perdue and Mrs. Goering, indicated that the conflict over the manager's tenure was, for the time being, over. The words "full-time" were taken out of the proposal by a six-to-three vote.

The second area of dispute concerned the mayor's salary. In this instance, Hanson rejoined his colleagues to press for a salary of $7,200. The opposition was led by Councilman Perdue who stressed the fact that there were "no administrative responsibilities in the mayor's job" and indicated that Tollefson and Anderson had done "a creditable job on half the salary the
present mayor receives." Perdue added:

It would be foolish and a waste of the people's money to read into the job things which aren't there and don't need to be done for the benefit of the city.  

Hanson countered by pointing out that the four new councilmen had been elected on a platform which called for a directly elected full-time mayor. He said: "The salary should be sufficient to allow the mayor to spend as much time as necessary on the job."  

The council vote on the $7,200 salary saw Bratrud and Anderson join with Humiston, Perdue, and Mrs. Goering to vote no. Anderson, in turn, moved to have the salary set at $6,000. This motion passed with a six-to-three margin. Mrs. Goering, Perdue and Humiston cast the negative ballots.

The amendment which was eventually authorized by the council to appear on the November 4 ballot called for the following changes in the charter:

(1) The mayor would be directly elected by the voters of the city. (2) The office of mayor would be for two years rather than the four-year term for city councilmen. (3) The elected mayor would serve as presiding officer on the city council and as such would have one council vote. (4) The mayor would have the power of appointment for positions on city boards and commissions with council confirmation; however, three members of the city council would also have power to nominate a candidate if they so wished. (5) A councilman could run for the office of mayor without giving up his council seat. However, if that councilman should win the mayor's position, a new councilman would be appointed by the council as a whole to fill the vacant position.


2Ibid.

3Ibid.
The second amendment proposed by the four new councilmen called for council elections to be conducted as separate contests for numbered ballot positions. This measure had originally been suggested during the freeholders' hearings of 1955 and had been a part of the ill-fated strong-mayor charter of 1956. It would also change significantly the election procedures that had been established by the council-manager charter of 1953.

The council-manager charter called for a primary and final election to determine who was to sit on the City Council. The first primary under the system served to reduce the field of council candidates to eighteen. The final election was then held and the nine candidates who received the most votes were elected to the council. The nine new councilmen were then required to draw numbers to determine the length of their terms of office. Five council seats would be up for election in 1956 and four more in 1958. Thus, council elections were set for every two years with five positions up one year and four positions two years later. The terms of office would be four years.

The proposed amendment called for eight council positions numbered one through eight. Candidates for the council would then file for each specific seat. Combined with the first amendment, Tacoma voters would then elect their mayor and four councilmen every two years. The important difference under the proposed amendment was that candidates for the council could run against specific incumbent councilmen for the first time.

James Porter and Mayor Hanson led the argument for the second amendment during the council deliberations on the question. Porter made the following point:

This amendment will eliminate councilmen running as a pack. It might eliminate the necessity of spending so much money and the chance you would defeat somebody you didn't want to.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 2.
Mayor Hanson added the following comment:

This amendment would spotlight the interest of the public in certain positions and would require an incumbent to run on his record. For the first time, we could have a discussion of real issues.¹

Mrs. Goering was the only councilman seriously to question the change in election procedures. She noted that a council candidate might finish second in one council position and yet receive more votes than the winner of another position. Under such a system, she said, "the plurality of votes would mean nothing."² She added one final point:

If we could devise a system to keep people from running in a pack and spending a lot of money, as happened in the last election, I would be for it. But I don't see this preventing that.³

The second amendment passed by a seven-to-two vote with Mrs. Goering and Paul Perdue casting the negative ballots.

The third amendment, introduced by Mrs. Price, called for a Civil Service Board of three commissioners separately elected for six year terms. Mrs. Price's amendment also called for a salaried staff director and typist. Thus, the civil service amendment could potentially separate the personnel functions of city government from the authority of the city manager and the personnel director.

Mrs. Price's amendment was strongly supported by municipal employee groups. D. H. Ketley, who was still serving as secretary of the Municipal Civil Service League, argued that all civil service rules should be established by the elected Civil Service Board.⁴ Robert Copeland, attorney for the

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
Policemen's Union, suggested that the council should have some check over the board. He said: "You might consider letting the council have the authority to change the proposed rules by a two thirds vote." Copeland also indicated that if the council failed to place a suitable amendment on the ballot, the police union would attempt to do so through an initiative.

By the first week in September, the council was ready to vote on the civil service amendment. The first test vote came on the question of the independent staff director and typist. This section of the proposal was removed from the amendment by a five-to-four vote. Hanson, Mrs. Price, Porter and Easterday were on the short end of the outcome. The second vote came on the main body of the amendment which included the following provisions:

1. An elected Civil Service Board to be made up of three commissioners serving overlapping six-year terms.
2. A Civil Service Board with the powers to 'promulgate all Civil Service and Personnel Rules' and to send such rules to the City Council for their concurrence within forty-five days. The council could veto, change or amend such rules by a two-thirds vote.
3. A Civil Service Board with the power to advise the council and administrative officials on all matters relating to civil service.
4. A Civil Service Board with the power to investigate any or all matters relating to employment.
5. A Civil Service Board with the power to pass upon the claims of any person whose name appears on an eligible list and who claims that he was deprived of a position in the civil service.
6. A Civil Service Board with the power to hear appeals from any action resulting in a suspension of more than thirty days; reduction of rank or discharge . . . and whose decisions in such matters are binding.

This amendment incorporated all of the suggestions recommended by the civil service employee groups. In essence, the amendment would change the city's Civil Service Board from an advisory body, as defined in the 1952 charter,

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
to a policy-making body. Any matter dealing with civil service rules or provisions would, by this amendment, originate with the Civil Service Board. The only action the council could take in this area would be to amend or veto proposals from the board. The City Council, the personnel director, and the city manager would be devested of all authority in policy matters concerning the civil service. Thus, questions dealing with the rule-of-three concept, for example, would be decided by the elected Civil Service Board and not the City Council and city manager.

Mrs. Price's amendment, which had been a part of the ill-fated strong-mayor charter of 1956 also, carried by a six-to-three council vote. John Anderson and Omar Bratrud joined the council newcomers in voting in the affirmative. The three proposals were then placed on the November 4, 1958 ballot.

The charter amendment campaign of 1958

Unlike the rancorous charter conflicts of 1953 and 1956, the political campaign over the three proposed amendments was conducted on a relatively low key and unemotional level by both sides. There were several apparent reasons for this turn of events. Many of the important community interest groups, active in past municipal campaigns, were concentrating their efforts and energies in other highly emotional areas of conflict. The November ballot was filled with controversial state-wide measures and important partisan electoral offices. The Republicans and Democrats were contesting a U. S. Senate seat, a Congressional seat in Tacoma's sixth district and a number of state legislative offices. Organized labor and state big business interests were engaged in an emotional and hotly contested campaign over a state "right-to-work" initiative. The four new councilmen who had pushed the three amendments so strongly during their campaign in the spring and later during the council debates, were conspicuous by their silence. Also, many of the
downtown business interests that had financially supported past council-
manager campaigns were seemingly sitting this election out. There were no
major newspaper advertisements aimed at the amendments and no media campaign
of any consequence was directed to the defeat of the measures.

The City Council and the city's downtown business leaders, particularly
those leaders active in John Anderson's Citizens' Committee for a Greater
Tacoma, were spending most of their political efforts at arguing against the
merits of a proposed re-zone to enable the development of a multi-million
dollar South Tacoma town center. The leaders of the Citizens' Committee,
committed to the development of downtown Tacoma, were strongly opposed to the
re-zoning. The Central Labor Council, riding on a commitment for new jobs
during the recession months of 1958, and the four new councilmen were in favor
of the development. Members of the planning commission and the planning de-
partment were split over the issue. A decision one way or the other would
mean millions of dollars to Tacoma's economy.

The strengths and weaknesses of the three amendments were debated at
a number of public meetings held during the month of October. Once again,
E. K. Murray played a role in the charter campaign, this time as an advocate
of the proposed changes. In a debate with former Mayor Harold Tollefson,
Murray argued that the amendments would "go a long way toward ending Tacoma's
form-of-government controversy."¹ Murray maintained that the "full-time"
mayor issue was essentially a moot question because of the council's authority
to set the hours and salary of the position. "Besides," he said, "some 47
per cent of the city manager cities of over 5,000 population have a directly

¹Denny MacGougan, "City Charter Debate Airs Vote Issues," Tacoma
Tollefson stated that the appointed mayor concept was important because it was consistent with the council-manager idea. He said: "This is as close as cities can come to a streamlined corporation operation and still preserve democracy." Tollefson noted that the mayor under the 1953 charter provisions was subjected to a double test to the advantage of the citizenry. "Keep in mind that the mayor now must first be elected by the people as councilman then elected by the council as mayor," he said.

In a later public debate, Charles Battin took somewhat of a direct tack in chastising the concept of a directly elected mayor. In an obvious reference to former Councilman Frank Stojack, Battin said: "You could very well put in a conquering hero, like an athlete, who might be out of step with the council and be opposed to good government." Battin also argued that the strong-mayor charter had been defeated and added: "Now the losers are trying to slide it into the charter."

Harold Carothers, former Chairman of the Committee of 100, came to the defense of the elected mayor concept in answering Battin. He pointed out that Tacoma was one of the "biggest cities of its kind from a business standpoint." He then added: "I believe we need a mayor on hand all of the time . . . and the $6,000 salary is inadequate." Carothers suggested that

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
the council should raise the salary to $15,000 a year and set the term of office for four years.¹

In late October, the editors of the News Tribune came out as being opposed to the directly elected mayor concept. In an editorial entitled, "Direct Election of the Mayor--No!," they made the following point:

The council-manager type of government is the modern, efficient kind. The council should be directly elected, as it is, but the fewer the other officers elected the better.

This is the trend in city government. Why? Less costly, more efficient operation. This proposed amendment may be the entering wedge for the strong-mayor kind of government, which could lose Tacoma much of the gain it has made under the manager plan.

Tacoma should concentrate on good government under the present plan, rather than set-up competition for it.²

The public debates also centered on the concept of separately elected councilmen. Murray noted, for example, that the incumbent councilman would have to run on his own record for the first time. He added, "The amendment partially answers those who fear that all councilmen may come from only one section of the city."³

Tollefson answered Murray by arguing that voters should "have the opportunity to select their choices from the entire field of candidates."⁴ He also noted that several strong candidates may file for one position with only one being elected.

Battin also took the opportunity to criticize the second proposed amendment. "Let's face it," he said, "the idea is close to the ward system."⁵

¹Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Jack Pyle, "Pros/Cons of City Amendment . . . ."
Battin suggested that with a ward system government is likely to be controlled by vested interests. He added:

The only way a vested interest group can control now is to combine to elect a slate—'and people know that when you have a slate, somebody is going to write on it.'

The News Tribune editors also opposed the second proposed amendment. In an editorial entitled, "Why Change Election of the Council," they said:

When cities resort to this kind of thing, they usually do it for a reason. The reason is that they desire each council member to represent a certain district in the city. Proposition two provides no districts... thus, there is no point to it.

This proposition is a restriction of the people's choice in a way. The people could vote for an individual only for a certain position. One council department might have five candidates, none of whom the people wanted. Another might be stacked with able candidates... only one to be chosen.

As things are, people can vote for four, five as they deem fit.

Most of the political activity during the campaign was focused on the third proposed amendment. Here, the city employees became very much involved in selling the concept. A number of advertisements were run in the News Tribune sponsored by the "Charter Improvement Committee," a group supported by the employees. The ads stressed the fact that the civil service amendment was a compromise and that City Manager Rowlands had indicated that the concept was workable. "Let's bring harmony to city government," the ads proclaimed.

Horace Greer, an appointed member of the then Civil Service Board, led the opposition to the amendment during the public debates. He pointed out that an elected board was unnecessary under the council-manager charter. He said:

1 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
I could see the argument when we had commission government with five commissioners setting policy in their administrative areas. However, under our present system there is a standard personnel policy not found under the old charter. Because of this, it isn't necessary to have an elected board with the powers suggested in this amendment.\(^1\)

Greer also noted that no appeals could be made to the City Council under the proposed amendment. He added, "The City Council is the legislative branch of our government; and this amendment is a good way to duck that responsibility."\(^2\)

D. H. Ketler, representing the city employees, answered Greer by stating that the amendment had been worked out through negotiations with City Manager Rowlands. Ketler added: "I know Rowlands isn't in favor of this amendment, but he did help us draw it up so that it would be workable under the council-manager system."\(^3\)

The editorial staff of the Tribune remained consistent in their opposition to the changes in the charter. In commenting on the civil service provision, they argued:

Our city has an excellent civil service set-up, one that is harmonious, one that takes into consideration the rights of employees, of management and of the taxpayers.

It is so much better than the elected Civil Service Board plan Tacoma had in the commission government days. Then there was distrust between the council and board.

An elected board would turn the body of municipal employees into a lobbying group pressing for election of men who would grant employees favors.

An elected board would interfere with personnel direction of the city administration and out would go one of the city's best chances of economy and efficiency in government.\(^4\)

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1. Jack Pyle, "Pros/Cons of City Amendment . . . . ,"
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
The Central Labor Council endorsed the charter amendments through the Labor Advocate. However, space on the editorial pages of the newspaper was reserved for attacks on the proposed right-to-work initiative. The Tacoma Municipal League also took a stand by publicly "deploring" the amendments.

Thus, the campaign over the proposed charter revisions did not follow the pattern of the earlier conflicts over council-manager government. There was an absence of emotional attacks and smears which characterized the past campaigns. The city manager "dictator" charge was not a part of campaign rhetoric. And, the News Tribune and the other pro-manager interests in the community refrained from using the "sinister forces" issue. In essence, this campaign was marked by discussion of the issues. The advantages and disadvantages of each amendment were discussed in rational and remarkably quiet tones.

The November election brought a relatively large percentage of registered voters to the polls. Nearly 60 per cent of them cast ballots on the three amendments and each measure received a majority. The first amendment, which called for the elected mayor, achieved a 5,000 vote margin out of 45,000 votes cast. The second amendment, which established separate elections for each councilman, passed by a margin of 1,500 votes. And the civil service amendment achieved a winning margin of over 4,000 votes. Once again, the north end versus south end split became apparent as the returns were counted. The table on the following page reflects the division in the community.


TABLE 15
THE CHARTER AMENDMENT ELECTION OF 1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of City</th>
<th>Percentage of Voters in Favor</th>
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<td>Amend. 1</td>
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<td>North Tacoma 26th legislative district</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Tacoma 25th, 27th, 28th, 29th district</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Summary and Conclusions

The election of Ben Hanson and the others to the council in 1958 effectively opened up the political system to many of those groups and interests that had been closed out since 1953. For the first time, individuals who had opposed council-manager government in the past were being considered for positions on the city's important boards and commissions. The leadership of labor and the city employee groups were now in a position to influence the outcome of policy decisions. Hanson, a south end resident who had campaigned for strong-mayor government, was appointed to the position of mayor. This decision in itself represented a truly radical departure from past practices. Omar Bratrud, a man shunned by the ideologues earlier, was in a powerful position at last. It was his vote which determined the continued tenure of the city manager and it was his decision which probably made the appointment of Hanson as mayor a reality.

The response of City Manager Rowlands during this period was particularly significant. Unlike his predecessor, Rowlands chose not to resign under fire. However, Rowlands did have some options that were not available to Backstrom. First, he had not been the issue in the 1958 election campaign. Indeed, he seemed consciously to stay out of the administrative in-fighting
that characterized the Backstrom years. He did come in conflict with the leadership of the utilities operation, but quickly backed off as the issue became potentially explosive. Organized labor and the city employee groups could at least live with Rowlands. The third interest which seemed inclined to dump the manager was the "let's loosen up crowd" which was promoting the tolerance of pinball machines. In this case, the city manager shrewdly moved to neutralize their influence. While Hanson and the others were meeting to decide his fate, Rowlands publicly implied that he would be willing to go along with some changes in police enforcement policies. Losing that "battle" so that the city's major programs could be completed seemed reasonable to the manager. Again, such a position would have been considered unthinkable by the manager ideologues.

The campaign over the proposed amendments of 1958 differed sharply from the pattern established in earlier election struggles. The emotional appeal was generally held in check by both sides. It is perhaps important to note, however, that the amendments were not directly related to a power exchange. That is, the passage of the amendments would not lead to the dismissal of the city manager, significant changes in policy on the council or the direct downfall of the council-manager system. The amendments would significantly modify the structure of the government and would result in a further departure from the council-manager model. But, precedent had been established in this area as early as the freeholders' sessions of 1952. Indeed, the separately appointed Utilities Board and director was as much of a departure from the principal of "sound administrative integration" as any of the three amendments.

Two other factors were also important in the campaign to enact the charter amendments. First, the reformers had traditionally argued that the council-manager system itself would prohibit graft and corruption in government.
Once the charter was passed, they argued, clean and honest government would be a part of the Tacoma scene. Yet, in the council elections of 1958 the manager ideologues seemed to refute that contention during the heat of the campaign. The charge that the election of the Hanson slate would result in an open town appeared to confirm a point made earlier by the anti-manager faction in the community. That point was that the citizens through their elected officials would determine whether a city would be open or not. The sanctity of a pure council-manager structure of government seemed to come into serious question as a result of the 1958 campaign.

Secondly, the emotionalism which characterized the past campaigns over the council-manager charter may very well have been directed to other issues in November, 1958. As has been shown, a state right-to-work measure was on the ballot as were candidates for important partisan political offices.

Harold Tollefson suggests that a third factor was also important.

He notes:

We didn't actively fight the proposed amendments of 1958. Frankly, we thought they would pacify the dissidents in the community. Keep in mind though, they just barely won. They could very well have been defeated. However, most people wanted them passed just to get peace.

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1 Harold Tollefson, private interview.
CHAPTER VIII

THE FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL ALLIANCE

THE ELECTED MAYOR AND THE

APPOINTED CITY MANAGER

The 1958 municipal elections ushered in a new period in Tacoma's short five-year history of council-manager government. The old guard led by Professor Charles Battin no longer controlled the political decision-making of the city. Ben Hanson, a man who campaigned actively for strong-mayor government in 1956, became mayor. Three of Hanson's running mates during his successful 1958 campaign were elected to the council. They too had supported the ill-fated strong-mayor charter.

In 1960 the pro-manager coalition attempted to assume a position of political prominence in the city once again. Their rather dismal failure at the polls led to the election of three more former opponents of the manager plan. Mrs. Dawn Olson, a strong-mayor freeholder in 1955, was appointed by Hanson and the others to fill an open seat on the council after the 1960 campaign. Remarkably, after seven years under the council-manager charter, Tacoma's government was firmly in control of the very politicians who campaigned the hardest against the reformers in 1952, 1955 and 1956.

This chapter will look at the role played by City Manager Rowlands during this period. The manager soon found himself under terrific pressure. Once again, there was a concerted effort to dismiss him from office. The fact that Rowlands survived the challenge was the result of the strong relationship which grew between him and Mayor Hanson and, later, Councilwoman Ellen Price. The reasons for this emergent political alliance will be reviewed.
in the following chapter.

Two other areas of some import will be discussed in this section of the study. As was indicated in past chapters, the relationship between Rowlands and Police Chief Roy Kerr was not particularly warm. Indeed, the strong-willed personalities of these two men did clash. This conflict led to an open break in 1961. The reasons for this break will be examined. Secondly, the election of 1962 saw the north end reform coalition score a sweeping political victory. Much of the success of that victory was the direct result of political events and decisions which immediately preceded that election. Those events and decisions will be covered in this chapter.

The Changing Nature of the City Council
And the Elections of 1960

The council election of 1958 and the appointment of Ben Hanson as mayor seemed to indicate that Tacoma's government would be plunged into a period of renewed political conflict and turmoil. But this was not to be. Instead, the first two years of Mayor Hanson's term of office became a time of conciliation and the development of a strong bond between the mayor's office and City Manager Dave Rowlands. There were many opinions as to why Hanson and Rowlands decided to work together. James Porter maintained that it was a "sell out to the downtown interests." But the evidence does not appear to support Porter's contention. Indeed, Hanson supported the rezoning measure for the development of the South Tacoma shopping mall. The mayor's decision came in the face of strong opposition by the downtown bankers and the Citizens' Committee for Future Development. Rowlands' city planning staff also questioned the wisdom of the re-zone. Hanson had reappointed Marshall Riconosciuto to the Planning Commission over the adamant objections of Paul Perdue, Dr. Homer

1James Porter, private interview.
Humiston and Mrs. Clara Goering. Riconosciuto and Rowlands had become bitter enemies during Rowlands' first two years as city manager and his appointment led Perdue to exclaim: "You are trying to run a dictatorship, Ben."\(^1\) Mrs. Goering added: "You're not a strong mayor yet under the present charter. You may be one after the next election, but you are not one now."\(^2\)

Omar Bratrud described Hanson's apparent change of heart as follows:

Why did Hanson change his position? It was simple. Once Ben got into the backstage operation of government he saw that Rowlands was doing a good job. Really, no one knows what's going on until they become involved deeply. Despite what some people were telling him, Ben found out that Dave was honest.\(^3\)

From the very beginning it appeared that Hanson's mind was open over the question of Rowlands' tenure. Once it became obvious that there would not be five votes for the manager's dismissal on the council, Hanson announced publicly that the factional in-fighting over the question had ended as far as he was concerned. "Let's get to work on the big issues and problems," he said.\(^4\) Rowlands had also expressed a willingness to compromise. On the question of a return of pinball machines to Tacoma, he said: "I can't see giving up the war just because you've lost a battle."\(^5\) Rowlands also stressed the need to consider the big issues and problems in the years ahead. Later, when the three proposed amendments to the charter were considered by the council, Hanson voted to take out the words "full-time" from the

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\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Omar Bratrud, private interview.


measure calling for a directly elected mayor.

Hanson's attitude concerning the city manager was probably best expressed by the mayor himself during a council debate which took place in late 1959. James Porter had moved to remove Rowlands from the city's pay and compensation plan. Under the plan, the city manager received automatic step pay increases along with the other city employees. If Porter's motion had succeeded, the manager's salary increase could be reviewed as an individual item by the council and perhaps blocked if Porter had four more votes on the council. Hanson opposed the motion and made the following comment about Rowlands:

After working with our manager for a year and a half, I think we are getting a bargain.

I have had the opportunity to compare Dave with other administrators and as far as I am concerned, we are extremely fortunate he likes Tacoma, because we couldn't keep him long if he decided to leave.

I think this vote on Councilman Porter's motion will give us all a chance to reaffirm our confidence in Dave's ability.¹

The vote on the Porter motion was six against and three for with Mrs. Price, Porter and Easterday on the losing side.

Mrs. Price's position on the council also began to shift away from Porter and Easterday after the election. In the last weeks of December 1958 Councilman Forrest Easterday proposed an ordinance that would have repealed the city's two year ban on pinball machines. The pinball ordinance was the first overt move by the council newcomers to loosen up the city's tight gambling policies. If the motion could be passed, it would be likely that Police Chief Roy Kerr would resign from office.

Mrs. Price joined with Omar Bratrud to cast the deciding votes against the Easterday proposal. She indicated that the pro-pinball interests would

have to prove to her that the machines were not gambling devices as outlawed by the state constitution. 1 "They have not proven their case as far as I am concerned," she said. 2

Mrs. Price's position on the pinball ordinance indicated the independence of her stance on the council. Porter, Easterday and Mayor Hanson felt an obligation to support the ordinance as a means of repaying the interests that had supported them during the council campaign. Mrs. Price, on the other hand, felt no obligation. She was to later say:

I always felt I was elected by the people to serve the people. After all, they had confidence enough in me to trust my judgement. While on the council, I weighed every problem and in the end I feel I put personal feelings aside. My decisions were based on what I thought was best for the city as a whole. I didn't waver in this regard. No one person or group on the outside could tell me what to do. 3

Ironically, as Rowlands and Hanson, and later Mrs. Price, began to work more closely together, two of the manager's original supporters on the council, Dr. Humiston and Mrs. Goering, began to change their opinion of him. The feelings of the two councilmen became publicly known upon their retirement from office in 1960.

Dr. Humiston was sharply critical of Rowlands' close working relationship with Mayor Hanson. He explained as follows:

What we have, in essence, is a one man committee system on the city council. Rowlands confers only with Hanson before presenting something to the council. As far as I am concerned, this violates the intent of the charter and is worse than no committee at all. 4

Humiston suggested that the new council explore the possibility of reinstating the formal committee system so that each councilman could "dig

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Mrs. Ellen Price, private interview.

deeper for information before making decisions.\(^1\) He admitted that when the old council had established committees it led to charges that certain councilmen were being left out of the decision-making process. However, Humiston added: ". . . the way we've been operating, we end up with nobody knowing anything and that's duck soup for Dave Rowlands."\(^2\)

Mrs. Goering was particularly critical of the Citizens' Committee for Tacoma's Future Development which she termed a "farce." Mrs. Goering felt that the citizens' committee was controlled by Rowlands and that the decisions of the committee were "predigested before they hit the group." She added: "Any members of the committee who asked questions were shushed, but quick, and I've been told that by two different people."\(^3\)

Mrs. Goering believed that Rowlands was not playing the proper role as a city manager. "It's his responsibility to appreciate the views of the council members and not just give them lectures," she said.\(^4\) In this regard, Mrs. Goering was in rare agreement with James Porter who described Rowlands as follows:

> Why did we have our conflict with Rowlands? Well, he wanted the public limelight as well as his administrative position. I really think he wanted to be mayor too. Frankly, he took too much power; more than usual even with our charter.

> The proper role of the manager is to stay in the background and do what the council tells him to.\(^5\)

\(^{1}\)Ibid., p. 2.  
\(^{2}\)Ibid.  
\(^{3}\)Ibid.  
\(^{4}\)Ibid.  
\(^{5}\)James Porter, private interview.
The council election of 1960

The council election of 1960 found new political coalitions forming around the chief candidates for mayor. Ben Hanson declared as a candidate and marshaled support from labor and the Democratic party organization.\(^1\) James Porter also declared his candidacy and, with the help of Walter Pray, put together a new slate of candidates committed to loosening up the tight gambling enforcement policies of the council.\(^2\) Pray's slate included George Cvitanich, a retired police officer. The third coalition was headed by former Mayor John Anderson and included Mrs. Bethel Schneebeck, active in the League of Women Voters; Hal Murtland, a former freeholder, an active Republican, and an attorney; G. Hamley Barker, a well-known businessman active in the Chamber of Commerce and John W. Swan, a north end businessman. Several other well-known self-starters entered the field of candidates. Gerry Bott, a South Tacoma fuel dealer and unsuccessful candidate for public safety commissioner, City Council and the state legislature, filed against Swan. Patrick Steele, freeholder in 1953 and 1956 and former Republican Pierce County prosecuting attorney, filed against Barker. Both Steele and Bott had been endorsed by the Committee of 100 in 1955 in their campaign for the freeholders' commission that year and in that regard had much of the same support given Hanson. Some well-known figures from Tacoma's political past also entered the race and these included James Kerr, former public safety commissioner, and Al Farrar, a controversial police detective who served during the Kerr era.


The primary election became a running battle between the Porter slate and the group of candidates headed by Anderson. During the heat of the campaign, Pray released a tabloid entitled The Truth which became the subject of a heated exchange between Porter and north end Councilmen Perdue and Mrs. Goering. After Perdue charged that the tabloid was libelous and attempted to pin the blame on Porter, Porter exclaimed:

... the entire discussion was a prearranged scheme to smear and discredit me over something I had little knowledge of or control over ... 
... if the facts stated in the publication called The Truth were not true, the people involved could sue. If the statements are true, then they have to live with the truth.¹

Porter also used council meeting time to charge that he was the candidate that was being slandered in the campaign. In a reference to a statement made by Anderson, Porter said:

I am presently investigating Mr. Anderson's alleged statements, and if they were made as reported to me, they are untrue, maliciously slanderous and unexcusable, and I have been advised to sue Mr. Anderson.²

In somewhat of a surprise, Porter and three of his running mates on the Pray slate met defeat during the primary. George Cvitanich was the only anti-manager candidate to survive. On the other hand, Anderson and the north end, pro-manager candidates won nomination and garnered the most votes during the election. Incumbent Mayor Hanson also won nomination but trailed Anderson by 2,500 votes. Gerry Bott and Pat Steele also emerged on the winning side.

With all of the council candidates except Cvitanich in apparent support of the city manager, the final election seemed anti-climatic. The only excitement centered around the arrest of Mrs. Schneebeck's son by the police

¹City Council of Tacoma, Minutes of meetings of the council, meeting of Feb. 15, 1960. (Typewritten.)

²Ibid.
for pulling up Civitanich campaign signs. ¹ Although a general sign war had been going on from both sides, the arrest seemed to focus the blame on Mrs. Schneebeck. Civitanich won the election in somewhat of a mild upset. Mayor Hanson also won re-election over Anderson. Other winners included Bott, Steele and Murtland.

Hanson, Steele and Bott managed to win their seats on the council by sweeping south end precincts and doing reasonably well in the north end. For example, Hanson captured 63 per cent of the vote from the South Tacoma precincts while garnering slightly less than 45 per cent of the vote in the 26th district. The overall turnout was low, however, with about 45 per cent of the registered voters casting ballots. The turnout meant that 12,000 voters who had cast ballots on the three proposed amendments offered in November 1958 failed to make it to the polls in the first election where those amendments had an affect on the electoral process.

The election outcome meant that Mayor Hanson had to resign his seat on the City Council to accept the new mayor's post. Thus, a council seat was left vacant to be filled by the remaining eight councilmen. Easterday, Porter and Civitanich were considered to be anti-administration in their thinking. If given a chance, the three would probably vote for Rowlands' dismissal. Mrs. Price was somewhat of an unknown quantity. She had voted against the pinball ordinance but had supported Porter's attempt to take the city manager position out of the employee pay and compensation plan.

Pat Steele, Hal Murtland, and Ben Hanson appeared to be definite supporters of Rowlands. Gerry Bott also seemed to be inclined to support the manager. Thus, the new appointee could be a pivotal force on the council, particularly

if Mrs. Price or, perhaps, Gerry Bott could be persuaded to join an anti-
Rowlands bloc.

Private discussions among the councilmen concerning a potential council
appointee began in early June, 1960. The first session was arranged by new
Councilman George Cvitanich and the discussion centered mainly on how the
appointee should be announced to the public.\(^1\) Cvitanich and Steele felt that
any disagreements over the possible candidates should be ironed out in private
with a public announcement showing unanimous consent by the council.\(^2\) After
the meeting, Mrs. Price indicated that "not a single name was mentioned."\(^3\)

However, Mrs. Price and Pat Steele had both been considering the
appointment of former freeholder, Mrs. Dawn Olson, during this period. Pat
Steele describes his discussion with Mrs. Price as follows:

One evening Ellen called me to say that she had heard that Dawn
Olson was interested in being on the council. At this particular time,
Dawn was running a coffee shop along the waterfront at the foot of
Carr Street. I suggested to Ellen that we stop by the next morning to
talk about the position with Dawn.

In my discussions with Dawn, I emphasized the importance of the
the city's airport project, the Center Street urban renewal project
and the proposed downtown parking garages. I also pointed out that I
was against anymore tinkering with the form of government. Dawn told
us that she could buy all of those programs. Thus, Ellen and I decided
to support her.\(^4\)

Two weeks later the council took their first straw votes on the
appointee question. Mrs. Olson received four votes--Mrs. Price, Steele,
Easterday and Porter. However, three other candidates were also proposed.
Hal Murtland suggested that the council appoint Bradley Bannon, a south end

\(^1\)Denny MacGougan, "Secrecy to Cloak Council Act," \textit{Tacoma News Tribune},

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
insurance agent and member of the musicians' union. Murtland stressed the fact that Bannon was not closely connected with any political party and was a "non-controversial figure" in the community.\(^1\) Gerry Bott offered the name of Maurice Finnigan for consideration. Finnigan, a vice president of a local business concern and a past grand exalted ruler of the Elks Club, was described by Bott as being a "dignified gentleman."\(^2\) Bott added that Finnigan was also not connected with partisan politics. George Cvitanich nominated Frank Charleston, business agent of the building service employees' union. Cvitanich said: "Frank is a much bigger man than anyone sitting on the council today."\(^3\)

The next evening, Mrs. Olson was appointed to the council on a split five-to-four vote. Mayor Hanson, who had received critical support in the past election from members of the Democratic party Central Committee, cast his vote with Easterday, Steele, Mrs. Price and Porter. The remainder of the council refused to join with the five pro-Olson councilmen. Murtland expressed their mood by saying: "I for one refuse to join in a unanimous vote because I always oppose the idea of a unanimous vote to express something that does not exist."\(^4\)

Publicly at least, Mrs. Olson tried to give the impression that she would be politically neutral as a member of the council. The day after her appointment, she indicated that she had no qualms concerning council-manager government even though she had formally supported the strong-mayor proposal.


\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid.

of 1956. She said:

I don't feel the form of government is an issue at this time. The people have twice voted their opinion at the polls and the present form seems to be what the people want. I will be happy to work within the framework of the existing charter.

On the question of Dave Rowlands' continued tenure as the Tacoma city manager, she made the following observation:

David Rowlands is our neighbor and our friend. As long as he's doing the job the way it should be done, I have no desire to see him replaced.

My only concern really is whether the city manager is overguiding the council. The council should set the policy and the manager should act as the administrator.

Mrs. Olson also declared her opposition to any council policy aimed at "opening up" the city. On the question of the return of pinballs, she said:

"Naturally, as a mother of three children growing up in this city I am opposed to the return of pinballs." Mrs. Olson also indicated her general support of the construction of a Tacoma Airport and the concept of publicly owned off-street parking garages as a means of revitalizing downtown Tacoma.

The Council in Conflict and Turmoil (1960-62)

With the appointment of Mrs. Dawn Olson to the council, it appeared on the surface at least that Tacoma city government would be in for a period of stability. Mrs. Olson had given the impression that she would support the form of government, the city manager and two of the city's biggest capital improvement programs. She had also indicated that she would oppose pinballs and "open city" policies. This position seemed to place her with Mayor Hanson,


2 Ibid., p. 2.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
Hal Mortland, Gerry Bott, Pat Steele and Mrs. Price on the council. The anti-manager faction, on the other hand, would be reduced to the three councilmen that had been sponsored by Walter Pray in the elections of 1958, 1960--Forrest Easterday, James Porter and George Cvitanich.

However, the political nature of the Tacoma City Council had changed greatly since 1953 and 1956. The first City Council under the new charter found a solid majority of its members committed to the values of council-manager government. However, this group of councilmen were not in any way representative of most of the population of Tacoma. They were Republican in general political persuasion, but were inexperienced in the hard realities of politics. Tacoma, on the other hand, was a highly partisan, Democratic town. The low level of public interest in municipal elections, particularly in the south end precincts, allowed the political neophytes to gain control of the government.

The municipal elections of 1956 changed the political complexity of the council and signaled the possibility of even more significant changes in future elections. John Anderson, an experienced politician and former city commissioner, was elected as councilman and soon maneuvered himself into the office of mayor. The decisions which led to Anderson's selection to the mayor's post stunned the city manager ideologues on the City Council. By all rational and objective considerations, Charles Battin deserved the position as chairman of Tacoma's board of directors. Harold Tollefson had had his turn as chairman, Paul Perdue and Dr. Homer Humiston were not interested in the position, Mrs. Clara Goering did not seem appropriate and Professor Battin truly wanted the post. And Battin, who had expressed interest in 1953, served his apprenticeship well. For three years he had faithfully served his turn as deputy mayor not once wavered in his support of the principles of the council-manager system. But Dr. Battin had one glaring
weakness that made it impossible for him to serve in the position he coveted--he was simply politically unacceptable to the majority of the City Council.

The City Council of 1956 had unanimously appointed Dave Rowlands as Tacoma's second city manager. But that council was still controlled by north end Republicans. And eight members of that council had actively campaigned against the strong-mayor charter of 1956. By 1960, however, a complete turnover on the council had taken place. Everett Jensen had retired from public service to pursue his lucrative fuel and contracting business. Mrs. Goering, disillusioned and embittered by the administration of Dave Rowlands, also retired from public life. Paul Perdue had stepped down from his council post and assumed a teaching position at the University of Puget Sound. Omar Bratrud quit his council seat to run for a position on the Park Board—a post he had resigned from in 1953 to run for the council. Frank Stojack and Dr. Humiston pursued their political careers in the partisan political arena. Stojack was elected Pierce County sheriff on the Democratic ticket while Humiston won a legislative seat as a Republican representative from Tacoma's 26th district. Harold Tollefson and Battin had been defeated in their attempts to run for re-election to the council in 1958. John Anderson had also met political defeat in his race for mayor against Ben Hanson.

The council election of 1958 resulted in the first real attempt to inject partisan considerations into the contests for council seats. Walter Pray successfully used a south end, pro-labor, Democratic party strategy to elect his slate to the City Council. By 1960, just four years after the defeat of the strong-mayor charter, eight former supporters of the Committee of 100 were sitting on the City Council. Five members of the council, Mrs. Olson, George Cvitanich, Forrest Easterday, James Porter, and Ben Hanson, were active, and partisan Democrats. This period signaled the temporary end of Republican, business-oriented control of Tacoma's City Council.
Mrs. Olson, as the newest member of the City Council, was probably the most experienced political professional ever to sit on the city's legislative body. At the time of her appointment, she had been serving as executive secretary of the Democratic party Central Committee. In the late 1940's she had been secretary to John M. Coffee, Democratic Congressman from Tacoma's 6th Congressional District. Later, she was to be a delegate to the Democratic National Convention and was to sit on the State Executive Committee of the Democratic party. Thus, Mrs. Olson was a shrewd political operative and what she had to say publicly had to be judged within the context of her background. For example, she did say that she would not move to replace Dave Rowlands if she thought he was doing a good job. However, when asked if she thought Rowlands was doing a good job, she replied that she would be in a better position to answer that question when she had "put some time in on the council."¹ She indicated that she was opposed to the return of pinball machines to Tacoma. But when pressed on the issue, she said: "Until the matter comes before the council, I think any further discussion is premature."² She seemed to suggest that she would support the proposed construction of the downtown parking garages. However, when reviewing her statement in detail, her position on the matter seemed vague. She said: "I have followed in general the plan for the parking garages and I am in favor of anything that will help bring the people back downtown."³ Did she really think that the parking garages would help bring people downtown?

Mrs. Olson was following the common political practice of keeping her options open. However, soon after joining the council she began to associate

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
herself with her three fellow Democrats--Porter, Easterday and Cvitanich. The issue was the retention of Dave Rowlands as city manager and the swing vote was Mrs. Price's.

James Porter was the key figure in the second attempt to dump the city manager. This time around, however, he had three solid votes with him. Mrs. Price was the obvious fifth vote possibility. She had maintained her independence throughout her term of office. On occasion she sided with Porter and the others, particularly during budget hearings. At other times, she voted against the Porter bloc, particularly on the pinball machine issue. Her central position always remained the same, however; and that position was, in her own words, the following: "I will weigh every problem, put personal considerations aside, and do what I think is best for the city."  

Porter felt that Rowlands had to go for several reasons. First, of course, Porter had originally run for council with the commitment to change the manager. This commitment was tied up in the question of an open city versus a closed city. However, this reason was not enough to persuade Mrs. Price to join the Porter faction. The second reason concerned Rowlands' role as city manager and his political relationship with Mayor Hanson. It was Porter's contention that Rowlands had far exceeded his authority as manager and that he had been primarily responsible for Hanson's success in the 1960 election. To Porter's way of thinking, Rowlands was a "practical politician" who really wanted to be mayor.  

Porter had chosen to run for mayor as the leader of an anti-manager slate put together by Walter Pray. During the campaign, the slate candidates

1 Mrs. Ellen Price, private interview.
2 James Porter, private interview.
directed their political attacks primarily at John Anderson and the group of north end candidates committed to the manager system. Porter claimed that the reason for this strategy was based on polls and political indications that showed the anti-manager slate winning in the primary. During the heat of the election campaign, Rowlands left the city to attend an International City Managers' Association meeting in Chicago. When he got back, Hanson began running a much more intensive campaign with a number of ads in the *News Tribune*. Porter had heard from "reliable sources" that Rowlands had been able to raise campaign funds for Hanson while in Chicago. Porter also believed "from good authority" that Rowlands was using listening devices to spy on council members. If these charges were true, of course, Rowlands would be in violation of the city charter. And that violation would be reason enough for Mrs. Price to swing to the Porter side on the council.

Shortly after Mrs. Olson's appointment to the council, Porter arranged a meeting with the four anti-Rowlands councilmen and Mrs. Price. Mrs. Price describes the meeting as follows:

I remember the meeting vividly. It was a Monday evening and I was watching the Academy Awards on television. Jimmie called and asked me to come over to his place for a drink. I said that I was a bit tired, but that I would try to get over. Later he called again, then again.

Finally, I did go. When I walked in there was Cvitanich, Easterday and Porter all sitting there. I was really surprised to see them. Then, in walked Dawn Olson and they got started. They said: 'We want to fire Dave Rowlands.' There were two papers there to sign. One was for firing Rowlands outright and the other was to give him two weeks notice.

I asked them: 'Has he been dishonest or what?' Porter kept saying yes and we have proof. He indicated what his reasons were and I asked him for documentation. He had none. Then I asked the group: 'Where's the rest of the council?' Dawn said: 'We have a majority here.' With that I left the meeting.


4 Mrs. Ellen Price, private interview.
The other members of the council knew of Porter’s strategy and the pressure that was being put on Mrs. Price. By the middle of July the situation was beginning to reach a head. Pat Steele relates the circumstances as follows:

Those four people had Ellen almost wild . . . they were pushing her to join with them to fire Rowlands. They had two propositions; one, to fire Dave out-of-hand. If Ellen didn’t want to go along with this, then they had proposition two, to give Dave two weeks notice.¹

In the meantime, Rowlands was using a strategy that would force Porter’s hand. The News Tribune was reporting that Rowlands was seriously considering two job offers. The first was city managership of Spokane, Washington. The News Tribune indicated: “Rowlands appears interested in the job.”² The second position concerned the newly created Dade County, Florida metropolitan government. Two weeks later, Spokane’s City Council offered the managership to Rowlands.

Rowlands was now in a position to request a show of confidence from the council. On July 26 he asked to meet privately with the council members. The only absent member was James Porter who had apparently failed to swing Mrs. Price to his side. Rowlands got his endorsement, but several of his supporters, including Pat Steele and Ben Hanson, offered suggestions that would lead to an improved relationship with the council.

The suggestions centered on Police Chief Roy Kerr and his vice squad headed by John Hickey. Hickey’s zealous enforcement of the council’s anti-gambling policies had led to charges of “gestapo tactics” by several tavern owners in downtown Tacoma.³ The old council ignored the charges, but

¹Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
Hanson and Steele had friends among the critics. There were also charges that Kerr had built himself up as a "political symbol," that he had developed an "alarming" personal following and he was using wiretapping for his own political reasons.\footnote{Ibid.} Rowlands indicated that he would talk to Kerr about the matter.

During the fall and winter months Rowlands discussed the matter of the vice squad with Kerr. But Kerr, who viewed Hickey and the vice squad as a "symbol" of a clean town, refused to relent. As the pressures built up against vice squad activities and Hickey, Kerr toughened his stand. Kerr's position on the question was stated as follows:

\begin{quote}
our tough policies didn't make the vice squad and myself popular among certain elements of the city, but that was to be expected. Such a squad is never popular with the people whose activities are curbed and even closely policed by the vice squad.

Its members are constantly under pressure by those elements. Lt. Hickey and his squad never submitted to those pressures. Because of this, they could never be qualified candidates in any popularity contest.\footnote{"Acted on Orders, He Declares," \textit{Tacoma News Tribune}, April 3, 1961, p. 1.}
\end{quote}

By spring, the issue had reached a critical stage for Rowlands. He had several big projects in the works including a major downtown parking garage project which could bring a multi-million dollar urban renewal project to Tacoma. Earlier, in the fall election, Tacoma voters authorized the purchase of the city's beleaguered transit system. This too required a great deal of administrative attention on the part of the manager. And Rowlands was attempting to put the finishing touches on his six-year plan. Finally, important decisions had to be made concerning the site location of Tacoma's proposed Industrial Airport. At this point, Rowlands was not willing to win the battle concerning Hickey to lose the war over what he considered to be
Tacoma's top priority items.

During the first week in April, Mayor Hanson, Gerry Bott, Pat Steele and Hal Murtland met with Rowlands to discuss the Hickey issue. By this time the complaints had been coming to the council regularly and Hanson had heard that the downtown interests were putting together their biggest campaign yet to elect an anti-manager slate to the council.¹ Since the council members, by the city charter, were prohibited from interfering with departmental administration, Hanson and the others had to convince Rowlands to direct Kerr to rotate Hickey off the vice squad. Rowlands agreed and sent Kerr a memo directing him to that effect.

The next day, Kerr responded to the Rowlands order by issuing a general police directive disbanding the vice squad. He explained: "It is my understanding that I should get rid of the vice squad, so I did."² Rowlands responded quickly by accusing the chief of "insubordination" and demanding a public apology.³ Rowlands said:

Sure, I told Kerr to reorganize the squad. We have received a lot of complaints about their enforcement. However, I set no deadline and certainly did not direct Kerr to disband the squad.

There will be no change in the level of enforcement and that wasn't implied by the memo. If the council decides to open this town up, I will be the first to leave.⁴

The next day, April 4, Roy Kerr resigned as chief of police. He made the following observation:

This resignation . . . does not come easily. I have made many fine friends in this city. I have enjoyed my work. I do not believe my administration has been in error. I would like to remain. Such is not possible under the present conditions.⁵

²"Acted on Order . . .," Tacoma News Tribune.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid., p. 2.
The resignation of Kerr and the complicity of the mayor, members of the council and Rowlands in the Hickey memo produced a degree of rancor and dispute on the council that seemed to characterize this period in Tacoma's political history.

Councilman James Porter used the opportunity publicly to chastise Rowlands from the council podium. Ironically, Porter seemed to be actually defending Kerr, a political target since 1958, as he made the following comments:

I should like to note that Chief Kerr has been lauded for cleaning up the city, yet, in a move which has been reported by some to be politically inspired, he has been forced to resign in order to protect his integrity . . . .

As manager of this city, Mr. Rowlands must be equally responsive to all members of the City Council. To use his position of authority in an attempt to collaborate with the mayor and several members of the council, to direct the composition or activities of the police department morals squad, is far afield from Mr. Rowlands' duties as an impartial administrator . . . it smacks of disloyalty.¹

Porter then directed his barbs at Mayor Hanson and asked if it were true that the vice squad change was intended to "take the wind out of the sails" of himself and Easterday in the upcoming elections.² Hanson replied by admitting it was true and added:

I want to make it very clear that the principal reason for me urging the vice squad change was to eliminate an area where troublemakers have grounds to cause trouble.³

Porter responded by stating that he wished to remain a member of the entire council. Hanson replied: "Anyone who would try to sell the city down the river on the Tidehaven matter doesn't belong on the council."⁴

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
Councilman Forrest Easterday then accused the mayor of a "right about face" in his three years on the council. Easterday added: "You admit you associated with evil people and evil causes . . . and now you've seen the light?" Hanson responded by indicating his "disappointment" in the lack of concern for the city by certain members of the council and noted: "The forthcoming elections will be a battle to the death and either Mr. Porter and his supporters or I will go down on this issue."^2

Chief Kerr's resignation served to bring out much of the growing hostility that had emerged among the former members of the anti-manager slate of 1958. However, the clash between Rowlands and Kerr was, in many ways, inevitable. From 1953-56, Kerr and the Tacoma Police Department were the focus of attention. Kerr, the aggressive advocate of the hard-line approach in police enforcement, basked in the public limelight. Frank Backstrom, Tacoma's first city manager, wanted it that way and gave Kerr pretty much what he asked for in terms of budget requests. But when Dave Rowlands arrived on the scene, other city goals became more important. Kerr and Rowlands were both strong-willed and inevitable clashes emerged during the annual budgetary review. In 1956, Rowlands had listed the police department eighth in his list of priorities for the year. In 1958 and again in 1959, Rowlands failed to mention the police department in his projected aims and goals for the city.

Kerr had also gained enemies on the City Council; and the blunt police chief made it known that he didn't like certain city legislators.

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1^Ibid.
2^Ibid.
The feelings were mutual. Pat Steele, for one, referred to the chief as the "biggest hum-bug around." It so happened that several of these enemies were also supporters of the manager. Thus, Rowlands was in a bind. The attempt to rotate Hickey was a way out, a compromise for the city manager. To Kerr, the move represented political interference in the administration of the department. Kerr had made his feelings in this area well-known during his appearance before the 1955 freeholders' commission. He had said then:

... I became disenchanted with the strong-mayor system in Topeka when the mayor developed political ambitions and put heat on me to lessen up on enforcement.

Attempts to amend the city charter (1960-1962)

Shortly after it became apparent that the five votes needed to fire Rowlands were not available on the council, the Porter bloc began to offer proposed amendments which would weaken the authority of the city manager. The first two amendments were proposed by council newcomer George Cvitanich. They called for the following changes in the city charter: (1) The city clerk would be appointed by the city manager with council confirmation. (2) The city attorney would be appointed by the council along with tenure and would serve continuously under the provisions of a 'good behavior' clause.

The second amendment was the most controversial of the two and would essentially establish the position of city attorney in much the same way as an appointive federal judge. These two proposals were defeated by the

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1Patrick M. Steele, private interview.


4Ibid.
council on a six-to-three vote. Mrs. Olson joined the prevailing side on the vote.

The two most hotly contested amendments were proposed by Mrs. Olson in October, 1961. These amendments were directed at reshifting the authority over Tacoma's proposed downtown urban renewal program from the city manager to the mayor and City Council.

In 1956, Dave Rowlands came to Tacoma proudly proclaiming the success of Eau Claire's public parking garages. The city-owned project had been described by the new city manager as his "pet project" while serving as manager of the Wisconsin city. The garages had been instrumental in revitalizing downtown Eau Claire and Rowlands felt that the same concept could be applied to Tacoma. In 1956, Rowlands had mentioned the parking garages as a part of the six-year plan. By 1959, he had listed the garage project as the top priority item of his administration.

The success of the parking garage project became even more crucial when viewed within the proposed downtown urban redevelopment program. The garages, and two public escalades or "walking sidewalks" proposed by Rowlands, would serve to meet the federal requirements for urban renewal matching grants. The downtown project called for over $10 million of development for Tacoma.

But political opposition to the garages soon became evident in the city. The opposition was led primarily by the Teamsters Union which saw the project as a threat to private parking facilities, an area covered by the Union's jurisdiction. The Teamsters executive secretary Louis Hatfield soon enlisted the aid of Mrs. Olson on the council.

1 Patrick M. Steele, private interview.
From October of 1960 to October of 1961, the garage project was delayed while the council debated the merits of different methods of financing the project. A key figure during the hearings and debates became Councilman Gerry Bott who succeeded in delaying final approval by casting a series of crucial negative votes.

By October, 1961 Mrs. Olson had readied two proposed resolutions which, if enacted, would dramatically affect the authority of the city manager and seriously restructure the role and intent of the City Council. As it turned out, neither resolution would require a formal vote of the people or the addition of a new amendment to the charter. However, if passed by the council, the resolutions would have as much of an impact on the nature of government in Tacoma as the charter amendments of 1958.

The first resolution called for designating the mayor as the "local public agency" to carry out the urban renewal program. Thus, under the resolution, the mayor would be given the administrative powers specifically reserved to the city manager by the charter.

The second resolution proposed that six formal council standing committees be established for the purpose of investigation into policy areas. The six committees would be given authority to review policy in the following areas: urban renewal, armed forces, public relations and special events, airport, budget and finance.

The editorial staff of the News Tribune called the two amendments "another bold-faced attempt to emasculate the powers of the city manager in his role as chief administrator."¹ In commenting on Mrs. Dawn Olson and the Porter faction on the council, the News Tribune editors made the following observation:

The two resolutions are sponsored by Mrs. Dawn Olson, the doe-eyed councilwoman whose fertile mind and restless spirit combine to make the faction she represents in the council a formidable one indeed. This faction has been nipping at the heels of the city manager ever since the present council was constituted. The objective is to weaken his powers, alter the division of authority so the council directly can step into the administration of city affairs.  

In what appeared to be the opening round in the upcoming municipal elections, the News Tribune editors concluded their editorial with the following comment:

What's on the horizon, no one knows. But it is possible that a bead next will be drawn on the police department. The pressures for an open town are still present.

But to accomplish all this the city manager must go first.

It's time for the public to rise up and speak.  

The resolutions concerning the parking garages were passed by the council. Mrs. Olson's proposals concerning the authority of the city manager were defeated when Pat Steele's motion to have them tabled was approved by the council on a 5-to-4 split vote. Mrs. Price's vote became the deciding factor.

The only victory of sorts by the Porter faction came on a series of votes concerning the granting of a city franchise to a private firm for the construction of bus benches. The owners of the firm were used car salesman Julio Grassi, who was to later become a candidate for mayor on an anti-manager slate, and Eugene Reardon, a retired police officer and former vigilante during the police controversy of the late 1940's. Mayor Hanson and the other Rowlands supporters vigorously opposed the franchise proposal. However, the key vote during the debate concerned an ordinance which would establish a council committee to review citizens' complaints concerning the placement of the benches. Hanson, and the others, maintained that such a function should

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
fall under the authority of the city manager. The measure passed when Porter managed to swing the support of Mrs. Price to his side.

**Political events leading up to the 1962 council election**

The Kerr controversy and the conflict over Tacoma's proposed urban renewal project for the downtown seriously raised the level of hostility and rancor on the council. The city manager, the mayor and the Porter faction were at the center of the power struggles which took place over these two issues. However, other issues, not directly related to the city manager, heightened the conflict even further. One such issue was the Tidehaven affair and another was the proposed salary increases for the mayor and City Council.

The Tidehaven issue concerned an obscure amendment which had been added to a major piece of legislation passed by the State Legislature in Olympia in January, 1961. The amendment would have allowed fourth class cities to incorporate with municipal boundaries extending beyond a one square mile limit provided for by state law.

The issue was critical to Tacoma because attempts had been made to incorporate a large stretch of valuable land east of the center of Tacoma's industrial port facilities. The attempts to incorporate this land, called the Tidehaven area, had been declared unconstitutional by the courts because of the one mile restriction concerning fourth class cities. The "Tidehaven amendment," added at the last minute during the closing hours of the state legislative session, would have allowed the incorporation.

The commissioners of the Tacoma Port Authority immediately moved to have the measure vetoed by Governor Albert Rosellini [in the state of Washington the Governor is given the authority of the item veto]. The county commissioners, who took the view that the amendment and proposed incorporation would "take the heart out of the industrial port area," concurred. Thus, it was up to
the City Council to also take a stand on the issue. This they did on March 13 when Mayor Hanson moved to put the city of Tacoma on record as being in favor of the Governor vetoing the amendment.

However, the council was far from unanimous on its stand. The Tidehaven area included large holdings of U. S. Oil and Refining Company, a company which advocated the incorporation proposal; and Paul Olson, husband of Mrs. Olson, was a vice president of the company. When the vote was taken on the Hanson resolution, Mrs. Olson voted no and was supported by Porter, Easterday and Cvitanich. Hanson immediately charged Mrs. Olson with a conflict of interest. The debate went as follows:

Mrs. Olson: 'I see no conflict of interest as far as I personally am concerned, . . . because I think there is a principle involved that we are overlooking--I think Tacoma is gaining enemies and fewer and fewer friends, not only in the area that surrounds us but amongst the people in the legislature.'

Mayor Hanson: 'You feel the fact that your husband is engaged in some operation which has some connection with the U. S. Oil and Refining Company does not give rise to conflict of interest.'

Mrs. Olson: 'I do not . . . because if I decide not to vote, I would be recorded as a 'no' vote under the rules of the council at which I was not present nor had anything to do with establishing. There is no such thing as remaining neutral on this council since a vote to 'pass' is a no vote . . . .'

'I am voting to concur with an almost unanimous vote of the Senate and the House and I am not going to ask to put the Governor in a position--and I happen to be a member of his political party--I am not going to put him in the position of vetoing almost unanimous action.' (Italics mine.)

The council, on a five-to-four vote, passed the Hanson resolution.

However, the issue was far from dead. The four minority councilmen continued to lobby against the veto. They attempted to enlist the aid of the Executive Board of the Association of Washington Cities and the Young Democrats.

1City Council of Tacoma, Minutes of meeting of the council, meeting of March 13, 1961. (Typewritten.)

2Ellen Price, private interview.
Several colleagues of Mrs. Olson's on the Democratic Central Committee plugged for the measure as did Marshall Riconosciuto, chairman of the Tacoma Planning Commission.

The action of Mrs. Olson and the others led Mayor Hanson to charge the Porter faction with trying "to sell the city down the river" during the debates on Roy Kerr's resignation. On March 21, the mayor requested the resignation of Planning Chairman Riconosciuto for his role in the Tidehaven affair. Hanson said:

I am requesting your resignation for the following reasons: (1) I felt that this is an issue where the Governor had more, a broader aspect, to consider with reference to the welfare of our community . . . this is one of those issues where there is only one reasonable position . . . (2) . . . a short time ago in open council . . . Riconosciuto indicated that if his policies and mine radically parted, he would submit his resignation . . . .

. . . this issue . . . is so decidedly coextensive with the welfare of the community that I felt that this was certainly evident that our policies had come to such a point of conflict that I would accept his offer of resignation.¹

Mrs. Olson came to the defense of the planning chairman with the claim that his devotion to "countless hours of work . . . without pay" was indication of his dedication as a public servant.² She added: "I urge the mayor to modify his stand in regard to Mr. Riconosciuto . . . ."³

Hanson and the council majority won their battle over the Tidehaven issue when the Governor did veto the amendment.

The second area of controversy concerned the council's attempt to raise their salaries to $4,800 a year and the mayor's salary to $12,000.

This proposal was initiated by Councilman Gerry Bott and supported by the

¹City of Tacoma City Council, Minutes of council meeting, March 21, 1961. (Mimeo Transcription.)
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
Porter faction on the council.

The proposed salary increase came during an executive session of the council and was announced to the public with no forewarning. The reaction of the press was immediate. Political reporter Jack Pyle, of the News Tribune, called the move the "political boo-boo of the century." He observed:

> It is almost impossible to imagine anybody involved in partisan politics raising his own salary just a few months prior to election—not even at a public meeting, and much less at a secret session.2

The News Tribune editorial staff also chastised the council. They made the following observation:

> The real point at issue here is less the money than its implication in terms of good government. Stripped of the woolly reasoning offered for public consumption by the backers of the increase, what is laid glaringly bare is another attempt to subvert the city charter. Judging from the words of a few, there are those on the council who seem to be chafing at the bit to expand the council's function beyond policy making, the role fixed by the charter.3

The council, now faced with a political controversy shortly before the council elections, chose to place the question of the salary increases before the voters in the form of a referendum. The proposals were defeated by nearly an eight-to-one margin during the February, 1962 primaries.

The Reform Slate for the City Council (1962)

The council election of 1962 saw the north end reform groups take a page from the election strategy of Walter Pray. Accused of running as an elitists slate in past elections, the north end reformers decided to do just that in council election of 1962.


2Ibid.

The key to the reform effort was a new interest group called the United Citizens for Sound City Government. The United Citizens group was organized by a number of downtown bankers, including former freeholder Garret Vander Ende, for the purpose of finding candidates for the City Council dedicated to the concept of council-manager government. The chairman of the group, banker L. Evert Landon, described the group's political goals as follows:

The political idea of all this is that since the council is non-partisan, there is no party organization to back candidates. . . . members of the group have felt that in the past, better candidates have gone down the drain in city elections chiefly because of a lack of organization. This time these citizens aren't going to let it happen. They aren't going to lose without a fight.¹

By December, 1961, the United Citizens had lined up their slate for the coming election. Harold Tollefson, former mayor, was selected to be the group's candidate for mayor. Other candidates included Richard Haley, president of the Tacoma Municipal League; Maurice Finnigan, once considered for appointment to the council after the election of 1960; Dr. Arnold Herrman, president of the Pierce County Medical Association; and Mrs. Ellen Price.

The formation of the United Citizens group differed from past reform efforts in a number of ways. First, this group was willing to raise the money necessary to finance a competitive campaign. In the past, the reform groups had been out-spent and out-organized. Secondly, the group was willing to meet the slate charge head on. They could afford to do this because of the past slate campaigns of the anti-manager groups. The United Citizens could hardly be criticized by the other side for forming a group much like Pray's Citizens' Committees.

Mayor Hanson, who successfully played the independent role in 1960, found himself politically vulnerable in 1962. Mrs. Price had been endorsed by United Citizens and Hanson had not. Landon explained the move as follows:

Hanson appears to feel that the city should have a full-time mayor while the majority of the United Citizens group feels this position, like other council positions, should be filled by a member of a board of directors determining policy. As far as Mrs. Price is concerned, public opinion surveys have shown that she has a 50 per cent higher public acceptance than any other incumbent.1

Hanson's campaign manager, Neil Hoff, a member of the United Citizens, charged that the entire membership of the group had not expressed their views. He added: "We can't compete with their money; all we can do is lay out the record and ask public support for it."2

In January, the United Citizens group further clarified their decision to support Mrs. Price in the council elections. In a statement to the press, Landon said:

Ellen Price was selected because of her consistent support of council legislation supporting a clean city, her support of council-manager government and her determined action as council member to remove the impediments and conflicts found in past councils. She has proven her ability by intelligent appraisal and favorable action on projects before the council affecting the progress of the city of Tacoma.3

The anti-manager slate soon formed with George Cvitanich filing for mayor and Porter and Easterday filing for re-election. Mrs. Olson resigned her council seat to begin an ill-fated campaign for U. S. Congress. John R. Hill, an operator of a private parking lot and an outspoken foe of the parking garages, and John Nagle, owner of a coffee house, also filed.

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2 Ibid., p. 2.
In the primary, Hanson found himself severely criticized from both sides. The key issue was the amount of money that the city spent sending him as a lobbyist to Olympia. Cvitanich and Tollefson won spots in the finals as did the other slate candidates.

The final election centered on the issue of the proposed salary increases and the continued conflict on the City Council. The United Citizens slate won in the greatest political landslide since the inception of council-manager government. Tollefson and the others carried nearly 70 per cent of the vote in the north end precincts while winning slightly more than 50 per cent of the south end vote. The council election also saw 54 per cent of the registered voters cast ballots making the 1962 turnout the largest in the history of council elections under the 1953 charter.

Summary and Conclusions

The emergence of the Hanson-Rowlands political alliance was a new phenomenon. Such a relationship had never been seen before and, of course, its ramifications were new to Tacoma government. Rowlands had gotten along well on a personal basis with Mayor Anderson prior to the 1958 elections. Before that, Harold Tollefson had expressed his admiration of Frank Backstrom. However, the earlier associations between manager and mayor did not have the political overtones of the Hanson-Rowlands alliance. There were a number of reasons for this noteworthy change in the nature of the political system.

Two of the most important reasons can be traced to the structural changes in the organization of government. The office of mayor became a prize that could only be won in the political arena. Thus, the mayor had to build a

1Mrs. Ellen Price, private interview.
political coalition of support in the community. Hanson chose to build that coalition by successfully playing the middle ground between the manager and the more extreme elements of the anti-manager faction. This strategy, as risky as it was, paid off in 1960 and failed in 1962. The second factor was the transformation of the election of councilman. Under the 1958 amendment, the council candidate was forced to run more as an individual and therefore build a personal political following. In all likelihood this led to the success of the independent candidates in 1962. The new pragmatism on the council led to a more pragmatic attitude on the part of Hanson and Rowlands.

There were a number of other contributing reasons for the emergence of the alliance. First, Mayor Hanson was willing to move toward conciliation with Rowlands once it was established that the five votes for dismissal were not on the City Council. Rowlands, in turn, moved deftly to accommodate any fundamental political differences with the mayor. For example, the manager made it clear that the hard-line police attitude concerning minor gambling could be eased if it became necessary. Rowlands felt that there were other community goals that were simply more important than an "unreasonable position" by the police. The attitude of the manager made it easier for the mayor to back off on any strident demands and at the same time maintain his political support in the community.

Mrs. Ellen Price played an important role in this regard. Her stand against the Easterday pinball ordinance eased the mounting pressure on Rowlands. If the pinball ordinance had passed, Police Chief Kerr might very well have resigned in 1958. Rowlands would then have been forced to appoint a new chief and would have been faced with a decision on just how hard-line the police enforcement policies would be in the years ahead. The city manager could only stand to lose from having to make such a decision at that particular time.
Thus, Mayor Hanson and Councilwoman Price were important figures in the easing of the regime conflict which began with the election of the Pray slate to the council. However, as James Porter was to indicate in an interview, Hanson and Mrs. Price were not really a part of the original anti-manager slate formed by the "let's loosen up crowd." As has been discussed, Mrs. Price was added at the last moment to give the group an image of "respectability." Hanson, a young attorney interested in a political career, also was a late addition.

Councilmen Porter and Easterday truly believed that they were elected to office for the purpose of influencing a change in police tolerance policies and, just as importantly, for the purpose of appointing a new city manager. A segment of the anti-manager coalition in the community supported the two councilmen for those very purposes. Hanson and Mrs. Price, on the other hand, apparently viewed their political commitment differently. They felt that the priority goal was to modify the governmental system in such a way as to allow for the influence of those groups that had been alienated in the past. A significant segment of the anti-manager faction supported them for that stand. When the three amendments were passed and Rowlands indicated a willingness to be accommodating in his attitude, Hanson and Mrs. Price believed that their goal had been reached. Porter and Easterday saw that attitude as representing a sell-out to the other side. The results of the 1960 municipal elections seemed to confirm Hanson's position.

As a result of the 1960 elections, however, the Porter bloc did gain a measure of strength on the council. Although Porter lost his bid for the mayorship and three of his running mates were defeated in the primary, the election of George Cvitanich added one more anti-manager vote to the council. When Mrs. Olson was appointed to fill the open seat, the Porter faction was increased to four solid votes. Thus, the City Council of 1960-62 represented
a highly unstable situation for the manager and mayor. Mrs. Price became a key figure in the early political maneuvering, but her decision to support the manager headed off the possibility of a direct council confrontation over the manager's tenure. Rowlands' strategy in this regard was to suggest to the press that he had pending job offers elsewhere. The timing of the trial balloons was perfect for it allowed the manager to call for a show of support and, in turn, to settle the issue in private and ease the pressure on Mrs. Price.

After failing to dump Rowlands, the Porter-led faction moved to weaken the power of the city manager through a number of new amendments. In an apparent attempt to swing Hanson to their side, the anti-manager bloc suggested that all urban renewal powers be invested in the expanded authority of the mayor. This effort and the others were defeated on five-to-four votes.

The Kerr affair represented just one controversy during the period. However, the incident did demonstrate the implications of the Hanson-Rowlands relationship and the thoroughly pragmatic attitude of the council. The manager was forced by political necessity to move into an area that involved a great deal of risk. Kerr had been adamant over the question of chain-of-command concerning police administration. He had also expressed a great deal of concern over the question of political interference. Rowlands moved cautiously as a result; but as far as Kerr was concerned, any move was intolerable and his resignation was to be expected. The fact that Rowlands was forced to make such a decision indicated that the manager's political support on the council rested with individuals who were influenced by interests that had not been in positions of power in the past.

The political controversies which became headlines during 1961-62 led to the landslide victory of the reform slate headed by Harold Tollefson. Ben Hanson had been a success in walking the middle ground during the campaign of 1960. However, with each controversy he seemed to lose political support from the coalition that had elected him in past campaigns. The Tidehaven
issue and his refusal to support the appointment of Democrat A. A. Adams to the Utilities Board and Teamster Lewis Hatfield to the Planning Commission cost his backing from the labor groups. The Kerr affair and his endorsement of a raise in council salaries cost him backing from the pro-manager interests.
CHAPTER IX


The Tacoma municipal elections of 1962 and 1964 resulted in a renewed ascendancy of pro-manager interests in local government. Harold Tollefson and his fellow north end reformers on the City Council brought new hope to the advocates of council-manager government. There would no longer be any fears of an open town controlled by "sinister forces." City Manager David Rowlands would no longer have to play an arbitrating role to preserve his tenure as manager. On the surface, at least, political calm seemed to return to the city. Tollefson, realizing the past council's difficulties with organized labor, began to appoint labor officials to important boards and commissions. Well-known Democrats who had opposed the council-manager charter in the past also received appointive positions. Louis Hatfield, a prominent Teamster Union official, was appointed to the Planning Commission. Leo McGavick, a leader in the Democratic party and a past critic of the charter, was appointed to the Utilities Board. Later, L. H. Pedersen, the secretary-treasurer of the Central Labor Council, became the chairman of a special mayor's citizens committee to review the goals and objectives of Tacoma.

However, controversy and dissension seethed beneath the surface. The city of Tacoma had become a part of the changing urban scene. Social issues encompassed the nation and Tacoma was no exception. New interests, inactive but latent in past political campaigns, began to emerge to positions
of influence. New governmental institutions were created to satisfy the needs of low-income and minority groups in the community. And the leaders of Tacoma's government were in the forefront of the important changes which were taking place nationally. Mayor Tollefson, by 1966, had become president of the National League of Cities (NLC). In that capacity, he helped to lobby for a number of key legislative packages including the Model Cities Act. During the same period, Dave Rowlands became president of the International City Managers' Association (ICMA). In his new role, Rowlands became an important adviser to the top level administration of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The relationship between Rowlands and Tollefson was not a positive one. Towards the end of his second term, Tollefson began to act and sound more and more like a strong mayor. This change in attitude was not taken lightly by the manager. One of the purposes of this chapter will be to discuss and analyze the reasons for the emerging conflict between Rowlands and Tollefson. The discussion will focus on the methods used by Tollefson to increase his authority as mayor and the reactions of the city manager to them.

Although the year 1962 brought new hope to the advocates of council-manager government, the reform interests by 1967 were in a state of political disarray. Once again the anti-manager forces scored an overwhelming victory at the polls. But the 1967 elections were different from the elections of 1956, 1958 and 1960. This time around, the leaders of organized labor had been included in the decision making processes of local government. They had no particular axes to grind, but new social issues had activated new forms of alienation among the rank-in-file union men of South Tacoma. Their champion became State Senator A. L. "Slim" Rasmussen, candidate for mayor in 1967. And Rasmussen, who spoke to their fears, won an astounding
political landslide over the incumbent Tollefson. Thus, the second objective of this chapter will be an analysis of the political impact of the social issue on Tacoma politics and the resultant impact of this issue on the council-manager system.

The Tacoma City Council, 1962-67

The municipal election of 1962 marked a new political beginning for Tacoma's north end, pro-manager forces. The new council included three of the original 1952 freeholders, a former president of the Municipal League and five members endorsed by the pro-council-manager United Citizens' Committee. Eight of the nine members of the council were north end residents, six were Republicans and five had always been committed to the concept of council-manager government. The election also meant that Tacoma's urban renewal programs were assured of seven affirmative votes on the council [i.e., Tollefson, Mrs. Price, Steele, Murtland, Finnigan, Haley and Dr. Herrmann] and it also meant that, for the time being at least, Dave Rowlands' position as city manager was secure. The following table provides basic information on the council of 1962:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councilman</th>
<th>Public Offices Held</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tollefson</td>
<td>Freeholder,</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>BA, LLB</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mayor)</td>
<td>Councilman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haley</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnigan</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herrmann</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>BA, MD</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Price</td>
<td>Freeholder,</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Ind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Councilman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information for the above table was gathered through a number of interviews with the councilmen and people who know them.

The residence designations mean north end (NE) or North Tacoma or south end (SE) or South Tacoma.
TABLE 16 --Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councilman</th>
<th>Public Office Held</th>
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<th>Education</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Party</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Bott</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>GOP</td>
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<td>Cvitanich</td>
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<td>HS</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Dec.</td>
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<td>Murtland</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The council elections of 1964 resulted in a second landslide for the pro-manager candidates. Tollefson rolled up the largest margin in the history of Tacoma mayoralty elections by defeating Julio Grassi, a south end used car salesman, by nearly 10,000 votes. Tollefson received 70 per cent of the vote in North Tacoma and 62 per cent of the vote in South Tacoma in his smashing political victory. Three of the four candidates endorsed by the United Citizens also won handily. Gerry Bott, who swung to the pro-manager side after the 1962 election, defeated Jack Gamble, an anti-manager candidate from the south end. Hal Murtland defeated Bob Griffin, an attorney, and C. Morrison Johnson topped Mason Halligan, an insurance agent. The only anti-manager candidate to survive the election was council incumbent George Cvitanich who edged businessman Wally Starkey by 500 votes.

The council newcomer was C. Morrison Johnson, a north end businessman, a Republican and a former member of the Utilities Board. Johnson was strongly committed to council-manager government and gave the pro-manager forces one more solid vote on the council. Patrick Steele retired from the council to run in an ill-fated campaign for the U. S. Congressional seat from Tacoma's sixth congressional district.

Although the intense political dispute over the council-manager system had, for the time being, come to an end, the City Council of 1962 found itself faced with potentially an even more difficult issue. That issue centered on social situations and those social situations included
questions of law and order, backlash, malaise, change and alienation. The issue has been defined by some authors as the "social issue."\(^1\)

The social issue had first been considered by the City Council in 1960 when the unlikely political coalition of Mrs. Clara Goering and Forrest Easterday proposed an open housing ordinance for the city. The open housing ordinance had been rather handily defeated during this period. However, with the election of 1962, the ordinance finally succeeded in obtaining the necessary five votes on the council. The ordinance was supported by newly elected Mayor Harold Tollefson and Councilmen Steele, Murtland, Herrmann and Haley.

The Tacoma Board of Realtors was quick to react to a measure described by one local official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as "one of the most advanced in the country."\(^2\) The Board of Realtors sponsored a referendum which forced the council to put the open housing ordinance on the March, 1963 ballot. The measure was voted down by an overwhelming three-to-one vote.

The defeat of the open housing ordinance was an embarrassment to Tollefson, but the political damage was apparently short-lived. The anti-manager slate headed by Julio Grassi was unable to gain politically in the following council elections in 1964.

The defeat of the open housing ordinance did not deter Tollefson and the ordinance's other supporters on the council from advocating expanded city participation in social programs. Tollefson was to say later: "We are in the midst of a whole sociological change," and "we had no idea several

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years ago cities would be involved in semi-welfare functions."¹ In 1965 the city joined in support and sponsorship of the Tacoma-Pierce County Opportunity and Development, Inc., the regional agency in charge of the poverty program. The same year the council authorized city participation in the Neighborhood Youth Corps, a program designed to give summer jobs to disadvantaged young people.

The following year Tollefson established a "Citizens' Community Development Advisory Committee" chaired by L. H. Pedersen, secretary-treasurer of the Tacoma Central Labor Council.² The committee was charged with the task of reviewing areas of social concern in the community and making recommendations to the mayor and the council. By early 1967 the committee had recommended the creation of a human rights commission for the city.

David Rowlands and the social issue

David Rowlands was first confronted with the social issue in March of 1964 when William Muse, president of the Tacoma Branch of the NAACP, appeared before the City Council to ask that more Negroes be hired in the city departments.³ Rowlands' response was sharp, hard-line and to the point. "I don't know how many Negroes are employed by the city and I don't care," he said.⁴ Rowlands continued by saying that there was no color designation of employees on job application blanks, civil service test papers or city personnel records. "The top person on the civil service scores are almost always chosen and I don't know of any occasion where a Negro has been passed

⁴Ibid.
over when he was on the top of the list," Rowlands pointed out.1

Almost three years to the day that Rowlands made the angry response to the charge by the local NAACP official, he was praised by Jack Tanner, national board member of the NAACP, as one of the nation's leaders in the field of race relations. Tanner, who compared Rowlands to New York's Mayor John Lindsay, made his remarks before the national convention of the International City Managers' Association in New Orleans. Tanner said:

To truly communicate with minorities city officials must go into the Negro community itself, rather than invite Negroes to the white man's city hall. Mayor John Linsay, and Dave Rowlands . . . are leaders who have gone to the Negro and achieved progress in race relations.2

During the same period that Tanner was making his comments, Rowlands was promoting a new "trainee corps" for the city. The trainee corps, which was authorized by city ordinance in November 1967, was established to accomplish the following objective:

... to provide positions in city government for employment of limited duration to persons in order to provide work experience and training in job work skills under appropriate supervision.3

In sum, the measure allowed the city's personnel department to hire Negroes and other minorities without civil service examinations, train the minorities in city positions and prepare them so that they might have a better chance at becoming eligible under the civil service regulations. This ordinance, which was recommended by Rowlands and passed by the City Council, represented almost a complete turnabout in Rowlands' attitude. Indeed, the creation of the trainee corps represented a recognition by the

1 Ibid.
3 City of Tacoma, Annual Budget for 1968 (Published by City of Tacoma: Jan. 1968), p. 52.
city manager that the civil service system itself was discriminatory.

However, Dave Rowlands' apparent hardline position on the social issue didn't begin to change with the new trainee corps program. In January, 1965 Rowlands first referred to programs aimed at solving social problems in his "state of the city" address. Although the address stressed physical improvements, it did mention the new county-city poverty program. Rowlands said:

I am hopeful that a number of constructive local projects will result from the federal anti-poverty program. I think you'll be quite pleased with the way the local program is administered.1

The following year Rowlands was selected to serve as president of the International City Managers' Association. This achievement thrust him into the national limelight during a period when Watts became a household word and the nation's cities were faced with violence and insurrection in the ghettos. Late in the year, Rowlands was named to an advisory board created by the National Institute of Public Affairs (NIPA) to study the problems of the cities. In January, 1967 his "state of the city" address emphasized the social issue for the first time. In his address, Rowlands called for the creation of a human rights commission and listed the commission as one of the city's top seven goals for the coming year. Rowlands said:

It is anticipated that the Citizens' Community Development Advisory Committee will recommend to the mayor and the City Council that a human rights commission be created in the city. Many cities throughout the United States now have such a commission in existence and this approach to solving the basic problems involving fellow human beings has been well accepted throughout the United States . . . .2

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During the spring of 1967, Rowlands recommended that the city apply for a $500,000 planning grant from the federal government for the purpose of converting Tacoma's "Hilltop Area" into a "model neighborhood."¹ The designated Hilltop neighborhood would include most of the city's Negro population and the final planned project, to be financed under the Model Cities Act, would stress social as well as physical rehabilitation.

Thus, Rowlands' position as a hardliner began to change as early as 1965. During this period, he first began formally to recognize the social issue as an area of concern for the city. However, he was also quick to say privately that some of the "liberal programs" of Robert Kennedy and others were extreme.² By 1967, however, Rowlands' was committed to finding solutions to the social problems of the city. His experience as president of the ICMA and his participation with NIPA and other national groups exposed him to a new perspective and appreciation of the social issue. This new perspective was probably best described by Rowlands in an interview in 1969, ten days after his resignation from office. When asked about his philosophy of government, Rowlands said:

... I think that the next decade, the decade of the 70's will be the most exciting in the history of our country.

... urban problems then will not be settled on the premise that we are going to improve the physical environment, the streets and the buildings. I think we are going to have to take care of our social and you might say our environment itself as far as air pollution and water pollution is concerned; I think we are going to have to come to grips with pollution abatement in general.

However, the most important area of concern is the area of human resources, human values ... And I will make this prediction right now: by 1980, the federal government will be underwriting all of the costs of welfare and education programs because your local communities do not

²This opinion was expressed to the writer on a number of occasions by Rowlands.
have the financial resources to meet these problems head on. I think you are going to have that happening. I think you are going to have more money to spend . . . a kind of a Marshall Plan or a mass of Marshall Plans aimed at the resurrection of cities throughout the country; with opportunities such as welfare programs, training programs, educational programs and jobs for the people . . . this will be the big arena . . . .

If we don't meet that challenge; if we don't come up with those answers, then I say the democratic way of life could be in jeopardy.¹

The nature of political conflict—1962—67

Serious political division emerged on the City Council with the proposed open housing ordinance. Indeed, the measure barely passed on a five-to-four vote. However, the passage of the ordinance and the eventual defeat of it at the polls did not end the divisions on the council over questions relating to the social issue.

In April, 1967 City Manager Rowlands recommended to the council that the city apply for a $500,000 planning grant under the federal Model Cities Act. Mayor Tollefson, who as an officer with the National League of Cities lobbied for the act, strongly supported Rowlands' recommendation. The other members of the council were far from unanimous over making the application. During council discussions on the matter, Gerry Bott expressed the opinion that he was "scared" by the magnitude of the proposal prepared and presented by Rowlands' staff assistant, David Stevens. Bott said:

It almost looks like a grandiose urban renewal deal and it begins to scare me. It seems to me it has grown beyond our original intent. I thought we were just going to offer a helping hand for a self-help program to spruce things up in the area.²

Tollefson replied sharply to Bott's concern by saying: "I didn't hear anything that made me shiver with horror—that we are going in and take

¹David Rowlands, news interview, KIRO-TV, Seattle, Wash., Nov. 16, 1969.
over the area." Councilman Arnold Herrmann concurred with Tollefson's statement and said: "I think this is a thrilling thing to think about and I'd hate to see any delay which might prejudice the application." C. Morrison Johnson also spoke in favor and said:

I'm not in favor of just remodeling homes. We need to go deeper, to motivate people and get them involved in a better way of life. I feel this proposal tries to do this.

The council authorized the application on a six-to-three vote with Maurice Finnigan, Gerry Bott and George Cvitanich voting no.

The following month the council formally considered the creation of a human relations commission for the first time. The proposal was presented to the council during a study session by Lynn Hodges, pastor of the First Baptist Church and member of the Community Development Advisory Committee. Hodges, who served as a chairman of the CDAC's sub-committee on social welfare, appeared before the informal meeting of the council with E. S. Brazill, pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church and a spokesman for Tacoma's Negro community.

The proposal to create a human relations commission included an eleven member advisory board, appointed by the mayor and council for four year terms, and a full-time executive director to be appointed by the city manager. The proposal also included seven main purposes of the commission. The purposes, as eventually outlined in the formal ordinance presented before the council, were as follows: (1) Identify and study human relations needs and seek solutions. (2) Within limitations of staff, to collect and interpret

1 Ibid., p. 2.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
pertinent information and statistics relating to matters involving racial friction and tension or discrimination. (3) Identify and study existing potential areas of interracial friction and tension. (4) Institute and conduct educational programs. (5) Investigate complaints. (6) Hold public hearings when deemed necessary to ascertain the status and treatment of minority groups. (7) Perform other functions as directed by the council.1

The initial reaction of the council was far from favorable. Maurice Finnigan was led to say: "Nobody's going to shove this down my throat."2 Even C. Morrison Johnson, who was so much in favor of the Model Cities application, expressed caution concerning the commission and the proposed powers of investigation. Johnson said:

If this makes it possible for the commission to go out and start digging up trouble, I feel it would be bad. Investigating powers, in the hands of the wrong type of people, are dangerous. Trouble can be stirred up where no trouble exists.3

E. S. Brazill pressed strongly for immediate council action on the proposal and noted that the CDAC had first recommended the measure the previous November. Brazill added:

This is designed to help solve problems and bring about good relationships. If you bypass this it may lead to greater problems; it could allow things to happen here which might hurt our present relationships.4

Lynn Hodges also urged the councilmen to act with reasonable dispatch and pointed out that the commission proposal was not the same as the open housing ordinance. Hodges commented: "I appreciate the fact that the rug was pulled out from under you on the open housing ordinance and that tends

1City of Tacoma, Ordinance Number 18301, "To Establish a Human Relations Commission for the City of Tacoma," May 31, 1967.


3Ibid.

4Ibid.
to make one watch his rugs more carefully."¹

Four weeks after the initial informal discussions, the City Council voted eight-to-one to create the Tacoma Human Relations Commission. During the four week period, Tollefson and Rowlands worked hard at allaying the fears of Finnigan, Johnson, Mrs. Price and Bott. Their arguments were essentially the same; they both had been back East when trouble first hit the urban centers there. "Let's not have this happen in Tacoma," they would say.² The forewarning by E. S. Brazill and other Negro leaders in the community reinforced the argument. When the vote came, the only dissenter was Councilman George Cvitanich, a former police officer and only anti-manager councilman remaining on the council. It was Cvitanich's feeling existing agencies had the powers granted the Human Relations Commission and that the ordinance would take away work already being done by those agencies.³ After the vote, Tollefson was led to say: "This will give people an arena in which to be heard."⁴

After passage of the ordinance, the council moved slowly to implement the commission. The municipal elections were coming up in the fall, and Tollefson and three of the incumbent councilmen were planning to run for re-election. The defeat of the open housing ordinance, plus the intense emotions in the country over the social issue indicated that caution was the wise course of action. Three months went by as Tollefson carefully considered candidates for the commission. In the meantime, Rowlands was also moving slowly in the selection of the executive director. By early

¹Ibid.
²David Rowlands and Harold Tollefson, interviews with writer.
⁴Ibid.
September, Tollefson had completed his list of commissioners. The first Human Relations Commission (HRC) included E. S. Brazill plus three other Negroes, a Catholic priest, a medical doctor, an executive member of the Tacoma Board of Realtors, two businessmen and a masseur. Tollefson explained the delay in appointing the commissioners by saying that a tentative list of names had been developed during the summer but that he and the rest of the council had to discuss each individual and their personalities. "We wanted to get a well-balanced commission," he added.¹

By the third week in September, Rowlands had appointed Lynn Hodges as first executive director. Rowlands indicated that Hodges would be:

...charged with implementing programs of the city and the Human Relations Commission in the interest of identifying and studying human relations needs and welfare of the community and to promote and enlist the cooperation of all groups both public and private, in programs and campaigns for the betterment of such relations.²

Rowlands also indicated that the Human Relations Commission and its director would be empowered to investigate and resolve grievances without having to refer them to the State Board Against Discrimination.³

The authority to investigate and resolve grievances was the most controversial and most misunderstood aspect of the legal powers granted the commission. Councilman Johnson had expressed serious doubts over the questions of the investigatory authority. Those doubts were centered on the issue of the commission going out into the community to drum up "trouble." During the four weeks between the time the commission was first formally proposed and the time it was finally approved by the council, Rowlands and Tollefson

³Ibid.
did much to placate the fears of the council critics. This led several members of the council to the belief that the commission would serve a passive role. The extent of council misunderstanding on the matter emerged in October when Lynn Hodges formally asked the council to authorize the position of field-worker secretary to serve as his paid administrative assistant. This request led the council into a lengthy discussion of the meaning of the commission's power to "investigate alleged injustices." Mrs. Ellen Price expressed the feeling that the creation of a second administrator was "moving too fast."¹ "If you send people out in the field you create problems; I understood that the commission was going to be a sounding board only," she argued.² Mrs. Price continued by stating that she didn't like the name administrative assistant as the new position was referred to by Hodges. She suggested that the position be called secretarial assistant and asked: "How can she do field work and still be around to answer the phone?"³ The issue was settled when Gerry Bott suggested that the position be called field-work coordinator. The council approved Hodge's request by unanimous vote.

During the period between 1962 and 1967 there had been other issues which had caused a degree of political conflict and dissension. Periodically, Dave Rowlands would find himself in a dispute with city employees. Such a dispute emerged in the spring of 1964 when long-time council-manager foe, D. H. Ketler, charged Rowlands with "retaliation" and "reprisals" for a decision to charge the Municipal Civil Service League rent for the use of

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
office space in the County-City Building. Ketler made his accusations in an editorial printed in the Tacoma Civil Service Bulletin shortly after the municipal elections. Ketler claimed that Rowlands had informed him after the elections that the Civil Service League had to pay rent because of their activity in the political campaign. Ketler wrote:

I answered Mr. Rowlands, stating that if by retaliating against the employees by imposing the cost of rent he thinks employees will bow to his will, 'go ahead'; you are making a big mistake.

This was my new experience. If anyone had told me the manager would stoop to this petty type of reprisal, I just would not have believed it.

The league had been active in the election especially in support of a city-wide proposition which would have reduced city firemen's working hours and increased the manpower of the fire department. Rowlands had opposed the proposition but denied that his action was aimed at the league's efforts on the measure's behalf. Rowlands said:

I didn't criticize Ketler for his support of the firemen's proposition, but I was upset that he used the league's office space as campaign headquarters for certain candidates.

I informed Ketler that rent would be charged for the office beginning April 1 at the rate of $12 per square foot per year—the same rate as anyone would pay.

And, if Ketler doesn't stop his political activity on behalf of candidates, his office will be taken away—rent or no rent.

Formal opposition to the city manager and the council-manager system did emerge in the community between 1962-67. By the summer of 1965, a new anti-manager interest group was formed for the purpose of forcing the City Council to call a new freeholders' election. The new group was called the


2Ibid.

3Ibid.
Civic Improvement Alliance and in June of 1965 its founder, Karl Beaty, a retired south end real estate salesman active in the Democratic party, announced that more than 100 volunteers were beginning a petition drive so that a date could be set for the freeholders' election.¹ Beaty noted that goal of the group was to "elect freeholders so that a new charter can be drawn up."² When asked who the founders of the group were, Beaty said that he was the only member and temporary chairman. However, another anti-manager activist, Fred L. Crisman, claimed that Beaty was really a frontman. Crisman wrote the following in a book he had published in 1970:

The Civic Improvement Alliance was originally the brain child of Burt McMurrye and . . . Virginia Shackelford, long-time enemies of the form of . . . government that Tacoma had fallen into. Some years before 1970 there had been the need of a set of petitions concerning some local matter and it was felt that some type of local organization could best carry on the fight. The Civil Improvement Alliance had been formed and it was fronted . . . by Karl Beaty . . . .³

Mrs. Shackelford, a self-proclaimed conservative and a former member of the John Birch Society, was to become a public leader of the anti-manager movement which began in earnest after the municipal elections of 1967. McMurrye, a local radio commentator, had been a long-time foe of the council-manager charter. While other anti-manager advocates had swung around to support the system, McMurrye's dislike for council-manager government was intensified by a personal dislike of Dave Rowlands.⁴ McMurrye was perhaps even more opposed to the system in 1965 than he had been as an active supporter of the Committee of 100 in 1955.

²Ibid.
⁴This point was mentioned on several occasions during off-the-record discussions the writer had with city officials. On several occasions, Rowlands had the opportunity to ameliorate the disagreements but he refused. He personally disliked McMurrye in turn.
The Civic Improvement Alliance did succeed in collecting enough signatures for an election; however, the group's efforts failed when the courts determined that the petitions used to collect the necessary signatures were defective.

The political relationship between Mayor Tollefson and City Manager Dave Rowlands

In late October, 1966 David Rowlands was appointed as the new president of the International City Managers' Association. Six weeks later, Mayor Harold Tollefson was elevated to the post of president of the National League of Cities. Thus, Tacoma became the first city to have its city manager and mayor hold down two of the most important national urban posts in the country at the same time. Yet, this dual achievement signaled the continuation of a growing, strained relationship between two aggressive and talented municipal leaders. By 1967, Mayor Tollefson was to say:

My experience as mayor has led me to one conclusion: with the complexities of city government as it is now and the importance of the role of mayor, this city should incorporate a strong-mayor-general administrative officer form of government.1

The key to Tollefson's feelings about the council-manager system was his view of the role of mayor. As early as 1956, Tollefson had supported a council move to increase the mayor's salary to $6,000 over the strenuous objections of his former colleagues on the 1952 freeholders' commission, Gerrit Vander Ende and Hugh Tudor. During his first three years as the council appointed mayor, he has been an active supporter of key municipal programs including urban renewal. In an interview after his final term as mayor, Tollefson described his early years in office:

1Harold M. Tollefson, private interview.
Before 1952 this state did not have the necessary enabling legislation which would allow local municipalities to participate in urban renewal programs. I found this out after attending my first National League of Cities Convention in New Orleans in 1953 and then later a National Conference of Mayors meeting in Washington, D. C.

When I got back to Tacoma, I asked Frank Backstrom his opinion on the merits of urban renewal. He said that by all means we should have it. So I asked our legal department to draft a model state act which would enable us to apply for funds. As a result of my request, the Port Commission wanted to be a part of the Act. Their attorney, Leo Teats, thought the idea was great because the port wanted the power to condemn land. Thus, they offered to join with us to propose a joint city-port bill to the state legislature.

When I presented the bill to the Association of Washington Cities, they opposed it. I realized then that the association was not about to be influenced by a city-manager mayor. I then returned to Tacoma and asked Teats to redraft the bill with my help and return to Olympia to personally propose it to the legislature. The port bill got through, but the section on urban renewal failed.

I stuck with it and by 1955 I had been elected President of the Association of Cities. This time when I personally brought up the bill there was no opposition from the association. All they said was that it was a good bill.

During this period, I managed to develop a good liaison with Pierce County legislators. They would pledge to do certain things. As a result, later on the cities got a larger share of the liquor taxes. Then, because of our hard work earlier, we got a direct share of the state sales taxes.¹

Thus, Tollefson perceived the role of mayor in truly political terms. To his way of thinking, the mayor was obligated to go beyond the role of a "chairman of the board" to a role more in tune with the politics of local, state and national government. During his term of office, Tollefson was led to say: "This job never ends . . . morning noon or night and it wouldn't make any difference what type of government we had."² However, Tollefson did feel that the council-manager system placed a burden on the effectiveness of the mayor. His experience as a council-manager mayor in the early 1950's was a telling one. It was obvious to Tollefson that full-time elected officials were far from enthusiastic over the prospects of working with a part-time

¹Harold M. Tollefson, private interview.

councilman. So in 1956 he pushed strongly for an increase in the mayor's salary to $6,000. This move grated against the values of the council-manager ideologues on the council and Tollefson was not reappointed mayor in 1956.

Ironically, Dave Rowlands and Harold Tollefson held the same general philosophy of municipal government. Rowlands viewed the decade of the 1970's as a turning point in the nation's history and suggested that a vast new Marshall Plan for the cities was needed to solve the problems of the urban complex. Tollefson was to say essentially the same thing as indicated in the following:

City government in the last few years has changed tremendously. Formerly, we were the mere custodians of the operation of handling the old, established tasks of police and fire protection, street maintenance and so forth... but now we find ourselves in a great, new, difficult, social-problem complex, forced to provide services we were never geared to perform. We've also entered an era of tremendous inter-governmental relations, necessitating cooperation at all levels of government.¹

However, Tollefson believed that the mayor was the key figure in meeting the problems confronted in the urban complex. Tollefson was quick to point out that there were more than 200 federal programs in which a city may want to become involved. "The mayor should be generally conversant with them because he is the legislative authority," Tollefson added.²

Rowlands was resentful of this attitude and particularly any suggestion that the council-manager system should be relegated to smaller, less urbanized communities. He was to say the following:

²"Growing City in Complex Urban Society . . .," Tacoma News Tribune.
... this form of government is geared towards larger cities. There are more cities in the United States with populations of 10,000 and over with council-manager government than any other form. Many of our cities. Cincinnati, Kansas City, San Diego, Dade County with over 1,000,000 population, Long Beach, Miami, etc. these cities are all over 200,000; so, it works well in larger cities as well as medium size cities and small cities. So, that any statement which suggests that the system is geared to smaller cities is absolutely not the truth.

The growing conflict between Rowlands and Tollefson was exemplified in Tollefson's belief that the city should embrace a modified strong-mayor system. Tollefson was particularly disturbed that Rowlands would do things without touching base with the mayor first. He was to express admiration for Rowlands' predecessor Frank Backstrom because Backstrom didn't "surprise the mayor." He added: "The manager sometimes steps out of his role as an administrator and tries to fill the gaps by being a manager plus a mayor and this is wrong." Tollefson also maintained that in a strong-mayor system the mayor needed administrative assistants who were, in effect, city managers. This last statement particularly unsettled Rowlands who saw no correlation between council-manager government and a mayor-administrator system. For an elected mayor under the council-manager system to suggest that there was a correlation was dishonest in Rowlands' view. He was to say: "If you take your oath of office to operate as a mayor under the council-manager system, you should observe that responsibility and observe the charter." Policy disputes or personal differences between the mayor and city manager were not discussed in public. Dave Rowlands still sat up on the

1 David D. Rowlands, news interview.
2 "Growing City in Complex Society . . .," Tacoma News Tribune.
3 Ibid.
4 David D. Rowlands, news interview.
podium with the City Council as he had while serving with Mayors Anderson and Hanson. On the surface at least, everything appeared to be calm. However, the personal dispute between the two continued in private. Tollefson explained one incident in his continuing conflict with Rowlands as follows:

Well, it's obvious that there is apt to be conflict between the top two officials of the Tacoma city government. On certain issues when differences did arise, Mr. Rowlands would either come to my office or I went to his in an attempt to straighten the matter out. For example, at one time, I thought that Rowlands was too slow in his move to get the urban renewal program under way. I personally felt that the project should begin immediately, whereas Rowlands preferred to wait until the federal funds were, without a doubt, in Tacoma's hands. There wasn't any public mudslinging over the issue, however.¹

The issue concerning the mayor's role came to a head in July 1967 when Councilman Dick Haley, who ran as a part of the Tollefson-led slate in 1962, introduced an ordinance which would raise the mayor's salary to $24,000 a year. During the week between the ordinance's first and final reading, Tollefson discussed his feelings concerning the salary increase in a lengthy interview with the News Tribune. Tollefson explained that he supported the measure because the job of mayor meant being continually alert and concerned with the "growing complexity and growing seriousness of the problems of urban dwellers."² Tollefson noted that "city business doesn't stop inside city limits anymore; it means traveling to Washington and Olympia and conversing and sometimes cajoling with state and federal officials."³ Tollefson continued by stating the following:

The city cannot isolate itself— it is a part of the entire nation and the involvement has been growing faster and faster, particularly in the last five years.

²"Growing City in Complex Urban Society . . .," Tacoma News Tribune.
³Ibid.
Throughout the nation, I find mayors exhausted from just keeping up and trying to make a living besides, and many good ones are leaving. And that's too bad.

You can give up 10 per cent of your time and get by, but when you give up 90 per cent, you can't live on 10 per cent. ¹

One week later, when the council was ready to vote on the salary increase, Tollefson was out-of-town as a part of his duties as president of the NLC. Councilman Haley was left to support his ordinance before a potentially hostile city electorate. Ironically, it was Haley who had been one of the city's chief critics of the proposed salary increase for the mayor during the Hanson administration. As president of the Municipal League, Haley had deplored the City Council's action and later used the issue as a key plank in his platform during his campaign for a seat on the council.

In discussing his ordinance, Haley attempted to justify his apparent turn-about by pointing out that the demands on the mayor's time had increased tremendously since 1962. He argued:

It is wrong to ask the mayor to put in the necessary amount of time without adequate compensation. For anything less, the citizens of Tacoma are getting short changed. ²

In an apparent attempt to calm some of the more vocal critics of the original $24,000 salary level, Haley amended his ordinance to allow for a $12,000 salary, the same salary level proposed by the Porter faction in 1962. Haley's motion brought immediate support from most of the rest of the council.

Hal Murtland, a freeholder in 1952, indicated that the new figure was more appropriate. He added: "There's more to this job than was contemplated 15 years ago." ³ Mrs. Price also offered her support with the comment that the

¹Ibid.
³Ibid., p. 4.
amended salary was a "fairer amount." "I felt $24,000 was exorbitant," she said. Councilman Maurice Finnigan noted: "We have to realize that we are no longer a small city." Reluctant support came from C. Morrison Johnson and George Cvitanich. Johnson said that he thought the initial figure was better, but acknowledged that "the citizens may not be ready to appreciate the job the mayor does." Cvitanich, who finally joined the rest of the council to cast a unanimous vote in favor of the amended ordinance, made the following comments:

I felt that $24,000 was proper at the time it was introduced and I can't see compromising at 50 per cent just because pressure was generated. If it was right two weeks ago, it's right today. . . . (we shouldn't go) for $12,000 to pacify people. I don't feel a $24,000 salary will pose a threat to the council-manager form of government. I feel it will be a tragic mistake if we compromise on what we think is right.

The Tacoma Municipal Election Campaign of 1967

The municipal elections of 1967 found the pro-manager forces in a state of some confusion. Tollefson's attempts to boost his salary, with the aide of Dick Haley, and his apparent displeasure with Dave Rowlands and the council-manager system left many of the chief contributors to the United Citizens organization embittered. At the same time, rumors were circulating that Tollefson had five votes on the council for Rowlands' dismissal. In late July, Tollefson left the city to attend another meeting of the National League of Cities--one week before the filing deadline. Although Tollefson had

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 This rumor was confirmed through discussions with several public officials.
taken a declaration of candidacy with him, there was some speculation that he might not run for re-election.¹ For the past year Tollefson had been fighting a painful attack of arthritis that left him partially crippled. The disease would make it nearly impossible for him to conduct the aggressive campaign that would be needed to defend his position on the social issues and the salary increase.

Mrs. Ellen Price, an important addition to the slate in 1962, was seriously wavering over the question of seeking a third term. The illness of her husband plus the grind of eight long years on the council were taking their toll. She was to say: "All I needed to convince me was a good woman candidate who would be willing to take my place."² Such a candidate did arrive on the scene when Mrs. Ellen Pinto, president of the League of Women Voters, expressed her willingness to run for the council seat.

A. L. Rasmussen, candidate for mayor

The first week of August saw self-starter Councilman Gerry Bott file for mayor. Under the provisions of the amended charter, Bott could run for mayor and not have to give up his council seat. By August 3, Tollefson's declaration of candidacy had arrived in the mail. The next day, former Mayor Ben Hanson had filed for the post along with State Senator A. L. "Slim" Rasmussen.

Rasmussen had run for local municipal office before--back in 1952. At that time, he had been Jim Kerr's candidate for public safety commissioner. As has been seen in previous chapters, Rasmussen was one of Kerr's supporters during the controversy over the council firing of Police Chief Hans Kabel.


²Mrs. Ellen Price, private interview.
When Kerr attempted to reappoint Kabel, the other commissioners ruled him out-of-order and Mayor John Anderson gavelled him down while he attempted to read a report in praise of Kabel's accomplishments. Rasmussen, who at that time was serving a term of office in the State House of Representatives, arose from the audience to shout that the council was imposing a gag rule on public debate over the question. The next year Kerr resigned from office the day after impeachment proceedings against him had been filed by Mayor Anderson. In a special election for public safety commission set by the council, Kerr ran for re-election and finished first in the primary. However, when it became apparent that the council wouldn't certify Kerr's election even if he were to finish first in the finals, he threw his support behind Rasmussen in a write-in campaign. Ironically, Gerry Bott was a write-in candidate in the same election.

Rasmussen was the only public official of note to defend the controversial Kerr during the hectic 1950's. And yet, Rasmussen's unorthodox involvement in controversial municipal issues, an area that other legislators sought to avoid like the plague, represented the man's nature. He was expected to do the unexpected. While serving in the state legislature during the late 1940's, Rasmussen championed the cause of the consumer against the powerful farm bloc by pushing through repeal of the law which forbade oleomargarine manufacturerers from coloring their product. After battling unsuccessfully for several sessions to get the oleomargarine bill out of the House Rules Committee, Rasmussen, in 1952, resorted to a tactic no legislator had ever tried before: he wrote up his proposal in the form of an initiative, and at the polls, the electorate voted overwhelmingly for colored margarine.  

memorable Rasmussen crusades including the following: an unsuccessful battle to force the governor's office to stop rewarding the party faithful by appointing them state appraisers; an abortive bill to require lawmakers to conform to the code of ethics for state employees; his fight to force candidates to reveal campaign expenses before election.¹ All of these activities resulted in Rasmussen acquiring a substantial list of political enemies in the state legislature and among the powerful vested interests in the capital. In 1965, when the legislature grappled with the problems of the court induced redistricting of that year, Rasmussen's enemies came back to haunt him.

In one of the most remarkable examples of gerrymandering in the state's history, the Democrats and Republicans joined forces to create the "Rasmussen stovepipe." The stovepipe was a gerrymandered extension of the district lines in suburban Lakewood, into the heart of the strongly Democratic precincts in the center of Tacoma. The stovepipe was drawn to extend beyond the backyard of Slim's Tacoma home, on beyond and around his property, and out once again to the 28th district. Rasmussen quickly moved back to his old district to run for an open seat in the State Senate. However, the legislature had also passed a series of tough laws which required incumbent candidates for state office to establish a residence in a legislative district for one year before running for re-election. The law was aimed at Slim and was upheld in a number of court cases. Rasmussen, taking a page from the political strategy used by Alabama Governor George Wallace, had his wife file for the open seat. This strategy failed when Mrs. Rasmussen lost in the primary.

Thus, in 1967 A. L. Rasmussen found himself saddled with a lame duck term as a senator from a strongly Republican legislative district. The next

¹Ibid.
senate election would not be held until 1970 and Rasmussen had nowhere to go politically at the state level. However, several anti-manager activists were looking for a viable candidate for mayor. Rasmussen was their man and he agreed to run for the office and the $12,000 salary that went with it. The salary was more than he could possibly earn as a machinist in the roundhouse of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Another figure from the Kerr era filed on the same day as Rasmussen. Anthony M. Zatkovich, former police chief, vigilante and close advisor to Kerr in the early 1950's, signed up to take on incumbent Councilman Dick Haley. Two members of the anti-manager slate headed by Julio Grassi in 1962, Jack Gamble and Mason Halligan, also entered the fray. Mrs. Pinto was opposed by Mrs. Becky Banfield, the candidate of Tacoma's local chapter of Pro-America.

It became apparent from the opening rounds of the campaign that the unorthodox Rasmussen was going to make an issue of Tacoma's form of government. On August 15, he leveled his first direct attack on the system. "Let's throw it out, it's too expensive," he said during a debate before the Young Republicans.¹ Rasmussen suggested that a charter calling for a full-time council and strong-mayor be placed on the ballot. "It's my belief that it would be far less expensive," he added.²

During the same debate, Ben Hanson, who said he supported the present charter, directed his attacks at Tollefson. The former mayor reminded the audience that Tollefson had criticized the incumbents in 1962 for their attempts to raise the mayor's salary to $12,000. Hanson noted:

²Ibid.
I can remember the present mayor saying that as soon as the mayor is paid such a large salary the administration deteriorates. I can also remember Mr. Tollefson criticizing me for attending a Conference of Mayors' meeting . . . stating that most people regard this as a social affair, and a nice private vacation at the citizens' expense.

Will the real Harold Tollefson please stand up?1

Gerry Bott also supported the form of government but added: "I have sensed there is a feeling of a desire for a change." Bott continued:

We should have a closer liaison between the mayor and the council. The present mayor does too much on his own. We should have a closer relationship with the other public officials too.2

As the campaign progressed, Rasmussen began leveling more and more charges at the system of government and the elected officials who represented it. "The present government has run up taxes to where they are among the highest in the nation, and they are now asking for more," he argued.3 He continued:

. . . the present government officials asked the legislature for a 5 per cent sales tax so the cities could have more money, and it asked for a two-cent increase in the gasoline tax.

I am concerned about your local officials appearing before these legislative committees asking for exorbitant tax increases. They say they can spend the money. I believe that. They have shown it.4

Towards the end of August, Rasmussen began to refer to Dave Rowlands for the first time. "The city manager is telling the council and the mayor what to do; this will not be possible if you elect Rasmussen mayor," he said.5

1Ibid.
2Ibid.
4Ibid.
Council candidates pro and con

The other candidates also began to make their positions known. In
the race for council position number one, the seat held by Maurice Finnigan,
three anti-manager candidates found themselves battling for a position in
the finals. Mason Halligan, who ran with Julio Grassi in 1964, John Hill,
who was on the slate with George Cvitanich in 1962, and Karl Beaty, the public
spokesman for the Civic Improvement Alliance, all advocated similar anti-
administration positions. Hill criticized Rowlands and the city's transit
tax. "Councilmen should go up and see that Dave Rowlands runs the city
right," he maintained.¹ Beaty commented: "The form of government has brought
the area a lot of problems and no solutions."² Halligan called the transit
tax "one step in the history of mismanagement."³ He also criticized the urban
renewal program, the downtown parking garages and the construction of the
city airport. The fourth challenger in the field was John Williams, a
Negro pastor.

Jack Gamble, running in position number two against Dr. Arnold Herrmann,
called for a vote on the city charter as did John O'Leary, who filed against
Dick Haley.⁴ A. M. Zatkovich, another Haley opponent, said he favored the
present charter but added: "The council-manager system really hasn't been
tried in Tacoma. I favor a strong City Council instead of a strong city
manager."⁵

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Jack Pyle, "Form of Government at Stake in Election," Tacoma News
⁵Jack Pyle, "Candidates Speakers Lash . . . Form," Tacoma News
Tribune.
He also implied that the administration was advocating the lowering of law enforcement standards. "This is cheap economy," he said.  

Mrs. Becky Banfield, who had filed against Mrs. Sherman Pinto, also implied that she was dissatisfied. "This system has led to surrender of controls over government by the elected officials," she said.

By the end of August, former Mayor Ben Hanson had pulled out of the primary race. He said: "It's time to get out of politics and continue my practice of law--I can't do both." This left Bott, Rasmussen and Tollefson in the running. However, Tollefson and his challengers had not had a direct confrontation as of yet. Their first meeting took place on September 8 before the Young Men's Business Club, a group which should have been sympathetic to Tollefson.

Rasmussen dominated the meeting by continuing to level charges from every direction. Concerning Tollefson's travels as president of the National League of Cities, Rasmussen said: "I did not file for mayor to see the world at your expense." Rasmussen also proposed that all controversial city ordinances be placed on the ballot in the form of a referendum. He suggested that the city have an annual independent audit, evening council hours, open meetings and an end to Monday study sessions. On the latter subject he said: "We don't need any more sandwich sessions where the council get its instructions."

1 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
Tollefson, who was described by city hall reporter Jack Pyle as a "rough-tough campaigner who pulls no punches," was a disappointment in his first encounter with Slim. He appeared defensive and at times evasive. In referring to Rasmussen's call to change the form of government to a strong-mayor system, Tollefson said: "It takes a vote to change it. Mr. Rasmussen is not going to change it by getting elected." That comment was the extent of Tollefson's apparent half-hearted defense of the charter. He went on to define the role of the mayor as the "executive head of the city" regardless of what the charter said. "He has to help enact state and national legislation affecting the cities," he argued.

At the conclusion of the discussion, members of the club took a straw vote in which Rasmussen received twelve votes to Tollefson's eleven and Bott's ten. This vote was just one expression of discontent by an interest group which should have been strongly supporting the incumbent mayor. Action Committee for Tacoma (ACT) an association of young professionals organized by State Senator Larry Faulk and his supporters, was also far from enthusiastic in their feelings about the mayor. Although ACT had been organized by Republican Faulk, its membership had been expanded to include the president of the Young Democrats and several former activists in the civil rights movement. ACT was to later endorse Mrs. Pinto and Rev. John Williams but failed to back Tollefson strongly.

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 The writer sat in on several meetings of ACT during this period and later became a formal member of the group.
The minority community was also disenchanted with the mayor, even though Tollefson had been a positive supporter of social programs. Lynn Hodges, director of the Human Relations Commission from 1967-1969, explained the disenchantment as follows:

During our discussions concerning the formation of the commission, leaders of the Black community asked Tollefson to sit-in on several meetings. He continually put them off and in the end failed to attend any of our meetings. When the campaign began, I was so disgusted with Tollefson's apparent disinterest that it was tough for me, or anyone else interested in the commission's success, to publicly back him. It got to the point where I had to tell people how bad Rasmussen was and that Tollefson was the lesser of the two evils. Frankly, I came very close to voting for Slim in the primaries.1

The primary election results

The primary election results confirmed that Tollefson and incumbent Dick Haley were in serious trouble. Rasmussen polled nearly 50 per cent of the vote for mayor and led Tollefson by 3,500 ballots. Bott, Hanson and another candidate who withdrew the day after filing, tallied about half of the total vote cast for Tollefson. A. M. Zatkovich rolled up nearly a 2,000 vote edge over Haley. Council position number three, the seat left by Mrs. Price, also showed a weakness in the slate of reform candidates. Although Mrs. Pinto led the group of candidates in that position, her vote total was less then 34 per cent. She received 1,500 votes less than incumbent Dick Haley, badly defeated by Zatkovich for position number four. Arnold Herrmann showed a strong lead over Jack Gamble for council seat number two. In position number one, the anti-manager candidates found their support spread between Halligan, Hill and Beaty as expected. Negro Pastor John R. Williams, a supporter of the charter, edged into the finals as a result of the absentee count.

1Lynn Hodges, discussion with writer, Tacoma, Wash., March 1, 1972.
The north end, reform interests were stunned by the primary results. The turnout at the polls was surprisingly low—slightly more than 25 percent. Yet, the incumbents had not done well. Tollefson, Haley and Mrs. Pinto, who faced opposition from Mrs. Banfield in the finals, did not show as expected. A similar situation had occurred in 1960 when incumbent Ben Hanson trailed John Anderson in the primary. However, Hanson benefited in the finals when the south end labor groups swung their support his way. The 1967 primary was a different story. Rasmussen had tremendous strength in South Tacoma—from the same labor groups that had supported Hanson in 1960. Also, Rasmussen had polled a much larger percentage of the primary vote than had Anderson. It became obvious to the reformers that the political climate of the city had to change significantly if the control of the council was to remain in the hands of the pro-manager leadership clique.

In early October the former leaders of the United Citizens' Committee began to try to rally community support for the reform slate. In a letter sent to the members of the United Citizens group, L. Evert Landon wrote the following:

Deep concern has been expressed by many informed individuals within our community that candidates currently running for public office pose a real threat to the programs which are making Tacoma a national leader in community betterment for the benefit of its citizens, whether businessman or wage earner.

Control of our local government in the hands of such leadership would soon produce chaos and put Tacoma back where it was five or ten years ago . . . do you remember the petty bickering, the graft and corruption with which our officials were faced?

To date no organization has been formed to solicit community-wide financial aid to re-elect the mayor and City Council incumbents and to elect Mrs. Pinto, who is running for position three presently held by Mrs. Price. In the opinions of most people with whom I've discussed the matter, these individuals are proven civic-minded public servants capable of intelligent action in your personal interests.

With your financial help the voters will prove November 7 that these individuals are best suited to represent you and me. I've
written this letter to you and a number of other individuals whom I feel are able to send a check of at least $25 to support these candidates.¹

One week later, Gerrit Vander Ende sent out a second letter asking the United Citizens group for support. Vander Ende wrote:

Should Mayor Tollefson NOT be re-elected, I believe Tacoma is in for major problems. Many years' work have gone into programs--private and public--which are being threatened. Proposals being advanced by Mayor Tollefson's opposition are such that, in my opinion, they will seriously affect Tacoma's growth and progress.²

The efforts by the United Citizens seemed to spur Rasmussen and the other anti-manager candidates to an even more aggressive campaign. On October 17 Rasmussen established a new precedent in Tacoma politics and at the same time grabbed front-page headlines in the News Tribune. Before a meeting of Young Republicans at the University of Puget Sound, he suggested that Dave Rowlands resign from office if he should win the mayorship.

Rasmussen said:

I have said the city manager might be looking for greener pastures and more fertile fields if I am elected. He could even jump over the fence. I would not stop him from looking. But I need a council that will support me in giving the government back to the people. It would take five votes to send him to those greener pastures.³

Rasmussen and election controversy

During this period, Tollefson's supporters were giving Rasmussen an even greater share of the front page. Rasmussen had filed for the office of mayor while he was still formally a state senator. This action, on the surface at least, appeared to violate the charter restriction against

¹Letter from L. Evert Landon to the financial contributors of the United Citizens' Committee. (Sent out the first week in Oct., 1967).

²Letter from Gerrit Vander Ende to United Citizens contributors. (Sent out the second week in Oct., 1967).

candidates for the council holding another elective office while running for a council seat. The restriction did not apply to councilmen running for mayor, but it did apply to all other elective positions. The question, of course, was whether the position of mayor was the same as the position of city councilman. Under the original charter provisions, the position of mayor and councilman were one-in-the same. However, with the passage of the 1958 amendments, the issue was somewhat in doubt.

By mid-October Carl Berglund, a local certified public accountant active in the movement that brought council-manager government to Tacoma, filed a suit in the State Superior Court through attorney Patrick M. Steele, former councilman and freeholder. The suit was aimed at removing Rasmussen's name from the ballot on the basis of the charter provisions concerning council candidates holding other elective positions. The timing of the suit was particularly inappropriate for the reform forces. By this time, it had become crucial that the reformers change the mood of the electorate. Yet, the suit only gave Rasmussen additional ammunition to use in his debates with Tollefson. Slim, who had won the primary with ease, was now put in the position of being the underdog. He played this role to advantage as we can see from his comments:

"I am still in the race. I will be a candidate for mayor. I have instructed my workers to not touch my opponents' signs. I want to let the public have every opportunity to see the signs, to hear the speakers and to give you the people a chance. I have never at any time attempted to throw a legal technicality in your way. Those people who would raise subterfuges will have this on their consciences. I have every confidence in the American courts, and I hope you people do too."

1 Ibid.
By late October, Rasmussen had won his case in the courts and with the victory he had also won more front-page headlines in the News Tribune. During arguments before Superior Court Judge George Stuntz, Rasmussen's attorney Louis Muscek referred to the mayoral candidate as an "Abraham Lincolnian type of individual." These remarks brought a round of applause from the Rasmussen supporters who had filled the court room and led Judge Stuntz to exclaim: "I have heard Senator Rasmussen many times make his speeches. I was wondering if you wrote those speeches." The banter by the judge, the showmanship of Muscek and the by-play between the contending sides made excellent news copy. However, when Judge Stuntz ruled that the office of mayor was held by the people of Tacoma to be distinctly different from the office of city councilman, the story became a front-page item. Rasmussen's victory added fire to his campaign and made the reform interests look like poor losers even before the ballots for mayor were cast.

Rasmussen's win in Superior Court increased his aggressive campaign style. In one meeting he angrily referred to the letters sent out by the United Citizens Committee as the "dirtiest act of the campaign yet." In one of their letters, the United Citizens had used the slogan: "You and I Face a Real Challenge . . . to Maintain Clean Government in Tacoma." Rasmussen, who held a copy of the letter up before the audience, said:

I feel this is the dirtiest act of the campaign yet. How could anyone say after I represented you for twenty-two years that if I represent you in a different category I would be for a return of graft and corruption? How could anyone say that Becky Banfield, the mother of six children, a registered nurse and wife of a prominent doctor, is for graft and corruption?

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2 Ibid.

corruption? How could anyone say that Tony Zatkovich who spent twenty-five years fighting crime is for a return of graft and corruption? ... and Jack Gamble, one of the leading insurance men in the city.\(^1\)

During a later meeting, Rasmussen charged that Landon and Vander Ende should be "ridden out of town" because the letters made "an attempt to twist people's minds to indicate those of us who are running for office suddenly have turned corrupt."\(^2\)

Rasmussen also continued his criticism of Tacoma's federal programs. He charged that members of the City Council had not read the Model Cities application prepared by the city manager's office before it was submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. "What we need in the area is low cost housing and none is being proposed," he said.\(^3\) He implied that the city's urban renewal department was attempting to influence the election by publishing an expensive brochure, entitled "Impact," outlining the success of the city's renewal projects. "This is nothing but an impact on your pocketbook," Rasmussen argued.\(^4\) He added:

The only endorsement comes from the president of a monument works. This is probably dedicated to the fact that a number of businesses in Tacoma have gone dead.\(^5\)

Rasmussen also charged that a city planning department policy of designating areas of the city as being "blighted" endangered the property values of the city's homeowners. He suggested that the policy was in some way connected with the city's urban renewal programs and added:

1. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. a.
5. Ibid.
I don't want anyone coming out in my neighborhood telling me my home doesn't have the right siding, or it doesn't have the right kind of paint or my wife doesn't have the kitchen sink cleaned out. Where I was raised is a working man's area, yet they call it a poverty area. On McKinley Hill they said it was a poverty area, and immediately knocked the property value down on every home. Who's going to buy a home in a "blighted" area?1

Rasmussen called for a public vote on all urban renewal programs so that people's homes would not be "bulldozed down."2 "I know that the minorities in this city are as disturbed by urban renewal as anyone," he noted.3 Rasmussen expressed opposition to urban renewal in business areas as well and aimed his barbs at the parking garages. "If I were a businessman, I wouldn't want my building taken down to provide parking for my competitor," he said.4

Tollefson's initial response to the Rasmussen barrage of charges was to point out that the "form of government is not at issue in this campaign."5 He added that "we have done a rather outstanding job in Tacoma" and listed his accomplishments as well as the accomplishments of every other city official--with the exception of City Manager Dave Rowlands.6 To most of the specific charges, Tollefson would respond with "this simply isn't the truth."7 However, as the campaign began to heat up, Tollefson became more active and attempted to put Rasmussen on the defensive. In one encounter, Tollefson argued that most of Tacoma's problems were caused by the inaction of state legislators such as Rasmussen. Tollefson noted:

1Jack Pyle, "Candidates Tempers Flare . . . ." 
3Ibid. 
4Ibid. 
6Ibid. 
7Ibid.
Many of these things could have been accomplished in the state legislature before they booted him out of there. Now, as mayor, he says he's going down there and deal with these same people who got rid of him. The doors will not be open for Mr. Rasmussen.¹

In a direct reference to the form of government, Tollefson said:

We have done an outstanding job in Tacoma, and there's a lot more to be done. If Mr. Rasmussen says the council-manager form of government is a dictatorship, when we have a separation of boards and powers, then how much stronger would the dictatorship be if we had the mayor form of government Mr. Rasmussen wants.²

This change in approach by Tollefson came late in the campaign. His earlier posture of defensiveness, evasiveness and, as one commentator noted, a "bad attack of feeling unappreciated" led to frustration and despair almost leading to panic on the part of the reform interests. This led City Manager Rowlands to break a self-imposed silence during the campaign and enter directly into the fray. In a council study session held the last week in October, Rowlands spoke out in defense of the city's urban renewal programs and noted that "certain political candidates" were making untrue charges concerning Tacoma's federal projects.³ Urban renewal director Corey Richmond was on hand to explain the "Impact" brochure that Rasmussen had referred to during the previous week. Richmond said: "The brochure is nothing more than our usual quarterly report we make to the council."⁴ Rowlands then released a memo to the council and the press listing the benefits of Tacoma's federal programs for the previous five years.

The final days of the campaign found both candidates for mayor picking up key support. Incumbent Tollefson received the endorsement of the AFL-CIO

²Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
Committee of Political Education (COPE); but in a victory for the anti-manager forces, Rasmussen activists managed to get enough support from COPE to obtain a co-endorsement for the controversial state senator. The labor committee also threw its support behind incumbents Maurice Finnigan, Arnold Herrmann and reformer Mrs. Ellen Pinto. In a mild surprise, COPE endorsed A. M. Zatkovich over Dick Haley. The endorsement was a victory for the Rasmussen forces and a defeat for the Tollefson supporters on the Executive Board of the Central Labor Council.¹

Ray Johnson, a Rasmussen campaign strategist, managed to give the anti-manager slate a boost through arranging an endorsement from the machinists and aerospace local union at Seattle's Boeing Company.² Johnson, the secretary-treasurer of the local, had the union send out a special edition of its news publication, the Aero Mechanic, to Boeing's Tacoma area workforce. The edition ran a front-page editorial endorsement of Rasmussen, Jack Gamble, Mrs. Becky Banfield, and A. M. Zatkovich.

The move by the aerospace machinist local led to a strongly worded editorial response by the Tacoma Labor Advocate. Miffed by an apparent violation of COPE regulations [the local COPE organization did not endorse the right-wing Mrs. Banfield and Gamble], the Advocate editorial staff made the following remarks:

There are rules and regulations governing endorsements by any group affiliated by the AFL-CIO, as laid by the national COPE. Any endorsements by local individual unions must be in conformity with local COPE endorsements in order to bear the stamp of validity.

From time to time, of course, there may be a temptation by a local group to kick over the traces because of a particular COPE endorsement or endorsement, but the only way there is going to be an effective labor


political program is for all of the groups to work together once a course of action has been agreed upon.

Aside from having violated COPE rules and regulations, the Aero Mechanics lodge has behaved presumptuously in endorsing a separate slate of candidates from that recommended by Pierce County COPE. 1

The editorial in the Labor Advocate and the special publication of the aerospace machinist union represented a deepening division within the leadership or organized labor in Tacoma. L. H. Pedersen, the secretary-treasurer of the Central Labor Council, was a Tollefson supporter. He had served as chairman of the mayor's Citizens Advisory Committee, was a member of the policy board of the local poverty agency and was a personal friend of Dave Rowlands. Pedersen believed that the labor unions should endorse candidates committed to bringing federal programs, and jobs, to the city. 2

But Rasmussen and the other anti-manager candidates had strong support from some segments within the labor organization. Ray Johnson was involved in the Rasmussen campaign as was Anthony Passanante of the bartenders' union. The two groups attempted to compromise with the co-endorsements of Rasmussen and Tollefson. The compromise failed, however, with the endorsement of Zatkovich and later the support given Mrs. Banfield and Gamble.

Other groups and individuals were also lining up on one side or the other. In a surprise move, George Cvitanich, an opponent of Tollefson's in 1962, publicly endorsed the incumbent mayor. 3 Rasmussen picked up the endorsement of the Teamsters Union. However, Louis Hatfield, local Teamsters leader and candidate for the Civil Service Board, came out for Tollefson.

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Another Tollefson endorsement came from John Williams, Negro pastor, after Rasmussen called for the mayor's office to have police powers during riot situations. 1 Williams noted: "Dave Rowlands is in Tacoma and he has the situation well in hand." 2

Tollefson also received unprecedented public support from the members of the Utilities Board. The board members did not formally endorse the incumbent mayor, but they did strongly support his trips to the East Coast on behalf of the city. Board Chairman Jay Grenley said he had been along on several of the trips and added:

... from my personal experience, they could hardly be called pleasure trips. I never found any waste of the taxpayers' money. We're an extremely big business, and many of these things have to be handled on a national level. If I were running a private business, I'd have the best possible expert represent me--and that's what we've done. 3

The editorial staff of the News Tribune also began to state its position during the last weeks of the campaign. In late October, the editors came to the defense of City Manager Rowlands in the following editorial:

Tacoma's political air needs clearing. Mother Nature clears her air with a good clap of lightning. So far the political thunder in the mayor's race has brought only dark, impenetrable clouds to the horizon. What's needed is a good shot of ozone—that penetrating, pure, clean air—so voters can see the issues. Specifically, we're speaking about the cloudy issues raised by State Senator A. L. Rasmussen, mayor candidate, in recent public appearances. And we're dismayed at his suggestion that 'the city manager (David Rowlands) might be looking for greener pastures and more fertile fields, if I am elected.' 4

Late, the News Tribune editors formally endorsed Tollefson and the other pro-manager candidates for the City Council. The editors wrote:

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2 Ibid.
... it is well to take note of the fact that Tacoma's form of government is not a genuine issue in this election despite the efforts of several new candidates to make it appear so. While they have been complaining and kicking up dust, Tacoma has been going forward, progressing, even showing leadership in many fields.

Therefore the voters should support those who have been doing the job. These are Mayor Harold M. Tollefson and, on the council, Maurice Finnigan, Arnold J. Herrmann and Richard G. Haley. The other council spot has no incumbent running, and Ellen Pinto looms as the candidate with the better qualifications.¹

The week that the News Tribune issued its endorsements, Action Committee for Tacoma urged Tacoma voters to cast their ballots against Rasmussen.

Thomas Fishburn, ACT's chairman, noted that his group supported Tollefson with "reluctance" but added:

ACT believes that Senator Rasmussen should not be elected mayor of Tacoma because he has demonstrated a negative approach to the problems facing Tacoma government. His positions have been incompatible, and in some cases he has shown a lack of information in his statements.²

The Downtown Merchants' Association also criticized Rasmussen severely in a public statement shortly before the election. Warren Brown, president of the association, noted that the members of the group were "irritated at the irresponsible statements" made by Rasmussen concerning the city's urban renewal programs.³ He stated:

The urban renewal project for downtown Tacoma, despite the fact it has been delayed by several things, is the best and most feasible method of modernizing the central business district and making downtown a place all citizens can be proud of ... Many downtown people resent the candidate's statement that 'urban renewal stinks,' when he offers no alternative ... ⁴

Brown also said that the merchants' organization strongly opposed a Rasmussen proposal to reroute the city's bus routes and to add a cross-town


⁴Ibid., p. 2.
service. Brown added, "abolishing present routes would . . . affect numerous businesses which have been established along existing bus routes . . . ."¹

He continued:

Transit officials can cite sad experiences in the past with cross-town routes, all of which had to be discontinued because they did not pay the cost of operation. The Downtown Association was among the organizations which supported the transit tax, as did a majority of Tacoma people . . . . Now that there is more revenue available to apply to the cost of providing service, this is not the time to add unprofitable routes to the transit operation.²

Rasmussen replied to ACT and the downtown merchants by charging that the former group had been "hastily thrown together" to save the mayor and city manager and that the latter group had "misinterpreted" his position.³ "I was never asked to appear before any committee, nor did any member of ACT attend any meeting where I spoke and offer to introduce himself," Rasmussen claimed.⁴ He added: "This group's only previous act was to work in Larry Faulk's campaign against Senator John A. Petrich."⁵ In regard to the statement by the merchants' group, Rasmussen argued that he was in favor of expanded service to downtown Tacoma through a cross-town system.⁶

The election results

Less than 50 per cent of Tacoma's registered voters cast their ballots in the 1967 municipal elections. The low turnout surprised even the most seasoned political observers. County Auditor Jack Sonntag, known and respected for his accurate pre-election forecasts, predicted that over 45,000 voters

¹Ibid.


⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.
would be going to the polls—a record-breaking 65 per cent of the electorate. Sonntag missed the count by over 7,000 votes. The News Tribune headlined the race for mayor as a "torrid battle" and in the following story Jack Pyle described the election as determining the future of the city and its form of government. Yet, 1,600 more voters had turned out on election day during the municipal elections of 1964—one of the most lackluster campaigns in the city's history.

However, the most surprising aspect of the election was Rasmussen's landslide victory over Tollefson. Many of the political commentators who were following the campaign truly believed that Tollefson was making some inroads into the lead that Rasmussen had built up during the primary. Murray Morgan, author, former reporter and political analyst, wrote:

The mood of the electorate, which in September seemed certain to carry Rasmussen to triumph, is clearly changing. Whether the Senator's negative campaign has snatched defeat from the jaws of victory remains to be seen.

Jack Pyle, court house reporter for the News Tribune wrote:

Many feel that the final decision has not been made, and will not be made by many of the voters until the moment they tuck the green curtain behind them and begin to pull the levers.

A reporter for the Labor Advocate noted:

The race for mayor of Tacoma has clearly stirred up top interest in the election next Tuesday, with the outcome of the contest between incumbent Mayor H. M. Tollefson and his opponent, State Senator A. L. Rasmussen, being largely a matter of conjecture at this point.

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4 Jack Pyle, "Torrid Mayoral Battle Hits Climax . . . ."
Thus, the general feeling seemed to be that the contest would be close. Indeed, Tollefson was the incumbent, he had been endorsed by most of the key groups in the community and in his past two campaigns he had rolled up resounding margins in the final election. Yet, Rasmussen defeated him by 6,701 votes—a margin greater than the Tollefson defeat of George Cvitanich in 1962. An examination of the results by legislative district showed just how remarkable the election really was, as can be seen in the following table:

TABLE 17

ELECTION RESULTS OF THE 1967 MAYORAL CAMPAIGN
BY STATE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Tollefson</th>
<th>Rasmussen</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tollefson's overall vote in South Tacoma was slightly less than 32 per cent of the ballots cast there [South Tacoma is represented by the 25, 27, 28, 29 legislative districts]. In 1964, he had received 64 per cent of the vote from that same area. Against Cvitanich, Tollefson was able to capture 52 per cent of the vote outside of the north end's 26th legislative district. The incumbent mayor's poor showing in South Tacoma undoubtedly had some impact on Mrs. Ellen Pinto's surprising loss to Mrs. Becky Banfield. Mrs. Pinto was the only labor-endorsed candidate to meet defeat.
Dick Haley was the other incumbent who lost a seat on the council. A. M. Zatkovich, who continually hammered away at the issue concerning the mayor's salary increase, rolled up a margin of 8,538 votes over Haley.

Dr. Herrmann managed a relatively narrow win over Jack Gamble while Maurice Finnigan easily defeated John Williams.

There were a number of possible reasons why Tollefson, and the reform interests, had received such a jolting defeat at the polls. After the election, Tollefson was asked why he lost. His reply was as follows:

Well, there were three items which stand out foremost in my mind. First of all, the form of government was the issue that my opponent based his complete campaign format on. By doing this, he challenged the present city manager, David Rowlands; exploiting the matter into an entirely personal confrontation. Slim failed to challenge me, personally, throughout the entire campaign, but made Mr. Rowlands and the council-manager form of government the personal issue.

Secondly, the fact that Slim had long been identified with the Democratic party was also a primary concern. The local press and radio had always publicized his actions in Olympia and thus the voters were aware of his straight-line association with the Democratic party. Since Pierce County is traditionally a Democratic stronghold, this gave him the decided edge. I have long been an independent, never following any party lines. Admittedly, Tacoma voters have associated me with the Republican party because of the fact that my brother, Thor Tollefson, was a U. S. Congressman under the Republican banner.

And finally, new faces moved into Tacoma from 1962-67 which always leads to these newcomers wanting a new face as their mayor. ¹

Tollefson believed that the proposed salary increase had nothing to do with his defeat. "I am positive the salary increase wasn't a campaign issue and I don't believe it had any effect on the voter," he said. ² When asked if his many trips to Washington, D. C., hurt his re-election chances, Tollefson replied, "most certainly not." ³ However, other observers on the scene took a

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
very different view of the election. Hal Murtland, elected to the council in 1960 and 1964 and an observer of the 1967 campaign, outlined the following reasons for Tollefson's political downfall:

I can recall two reasons why Tollefson lost so much political support. First, the issue of his traveling. He was continuously out of town and the News Tribune and local radio stations brought this fact to all Tacomans' attention. Although as a public official myself, I realized that Tollefson was trying to secure federal funds for the people; the middle-class voter viewed these expeditions as pleasure trips and a showing of lack of concern for the community as a whole. The second issue was the proposed salary increase. In my opinion, the people just didn't want to pay a mayor $12,000 because they already had a city manager who was making over double that amount. In this day and age, money is becoming tighter and tighter and thus, the typical voter does not view salary increases for public officials as cautionary procedures to curb the inflation problem.

... Also he lives in constant pain with an arthritic illness. Since he has this unfortunate problem, he wasn't able to stage an aggressive campaign.1

When asked if Dave Rowlands was an issue in the campaign, Murtland said that he wasn't, but added that the council-manager form of government was a key issue. He said:

Rasmussen believed that this type of government was undemocratic and unresponsive to the wants of the people. He believed that the city of Tacoma should be run by elected officials and not by some anonymous bureaucrat. Many individuals in the community followed this line of thinking and consequently threw their support to Rasmussen.2

Another viewpoint was expressed by Ensley Llewellyn, a professional campaign manager and important organizer of the United Citizens' efforts in 1962. Llewellyn made the following comments when asked why Tollefson lost:

There were two distinct reasons why Harold Tollefson lost in the the 1967 election. First, he tried to run both his and David Rowlands' positions from his own office. In a sense, Tacoma was operating under a 'two-headed' city manager. Many eligible voters who had cast their ballots earlier for him were looking for a new mayor who could administer

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2 Ibid.
his political views in a way that was compatible with the council-manager form of government. Slim, being the poor man's friend, was easily mistaken for this person. Secondly, I believe the salary increase was a critical issue. Haley's salary proposal would have made the mayor's position almost co-equal with the city manager's position. The people became annoyed with this proposal because they were already unsure of the type of government being administered in the city and their taxes were going up. The easiest way to stop such a move was to get Mr. Tollefson out of office.¹

When asked about Tollefson's many trips to Washington, D.C., and the East Coast, Llewellyn replied:

A lot of people weren't impressed with Tollefson's attempts at securing federal funds for the city of Tacoma. The John Birch Society became very active against these political tactics and called the projects communistic boondoggles. This worked in Rasmussen's favor because he had many friends in the predominantly working class section of Tacoma who were radical right-wingers who promised to support Slim's candidacy in return for political support of their policies once he was in office.²

There is no empirical evidence to prove or disprove the contentions of Tollefson, Murtland and Llewellyn. A number of political surveys were taken later, but no polls were taken right after the 1967 election. However, the election returns do suggest that many of the contentions may very well be valid. For example, Tony Zatkovich's overwhelming defeat of Dick Haley suggests that the salary proposal was an issue in the campaign. Zatkovich's margin was actually 1,837 votes greater than Rasmussen's. Also, Rasmussen's tremendous margin in the Democratic precincts of South Tacoma gives weight to the argument that partisan considerations had a bearing on the outcome. Tollefson did lose massive support from North Tacoma. His margin of 78 per cent in 1964 was cut-back to 55 per cent in 1967—a difference of 23 per cent of the vote. However, the difference in South Tacoma was more than 32 per cent. Indeed, in the precincts that Rasmussen had carried as a state senator he rolled up margins of 70-80 per cent of the vote.

²Ibid.
Tollefson's traveling and his strong support of federal programs may have also cost him some backing. The issue may very well have carried over to the contest between Mrs. Pinto and Mrs. Banfield. The campaign of Mrs. Banfield centered almost entirely around her opposition to federal programs. She was strongly supported by the local chapter of Pro-America and her campaign literature stressed the theme of "large and so-called managed government." She joined with Rasmussen in criticizing Tacoma's urban renewal programs and the model city proposal. And, in what many felt was the major upset of the campaign, she defeated Mrs. Pinto by 4,249 votes.

Whether Dave Rowlands was an issue in the campaign must be left to conjecture. However, Rasmussen did call for the manager's resignation during the height of the campaign between the primary and final elections. Rasmussen's position resulted in banner headlines in the News Tribune and, later, editorial rebuke by the newspaper. Rasmussen consciously made Rowlands' retention an issue at a time when there could very well have been a turning point in the campaign. Yet, Rasmussen was able to increase his margin over Tollefson by 3,200 votes between the primary and final elections.

Summary and Conclusions

Writing in 1890, reformer Andrew White noted that because a city is legally a corporation it has "nothing whatever to do with general political interests." It was White's contention that the important questions of city government were not political questions. Instead, the city, and its administration, must deal with such things as "laying out streets, the erection of buildings, the development of sanitary arrangements, sewerage, water supply,

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gas supply, electrical supply, the control of franchises . . . provisions of public health . . . etc."\(^1\) Thus, White believed that the work of city government was the creation, control and management of property. White felt that the success of the cities of Western Europe could be attributed to one thing: the affairs of government were conducted upon the "principles observed by honest and energetic men in business affairs."\(^2\) From White's writings and the efforts of other reformers such as Frank Goodnow emerged the concepts of efficiency in government, non-partisanship in municipal elections, part-time city councils and administration by qualified city managers.

The majority of those councilmen who sat on Tacoma's City Council during the 1950's viewed the role of municipal government in much the same way as Andrew White. Dr. Battin, for example, referred to Tacoma's citizens as stockholders in a growing concern. When asked why he thought he was qualified for a council seat, Paul Perdue said:

> The city is a big business. My background in business is such that it would help. You know, judgements on policy matters must be sound. Thus, when I made decisions I always viewed the interests of the city as a whole first.

> The system (council-manager government) and the job of councilman seemed a natural, logical process. If it didn't work for corporations they would have changed the form long ago. The council sets overall policy and the manager carries it out much like a corporation president.\(^3\)

However, Harold Tollefson began to believe that the traditional concepts of council-manager government had built-in weaknesses as early as 1955. He was Tacoma's first appointed mayor under the council-manager system and as such he was to play the role of "chairman of the board." As the chairman of the board, Tollefson was to preside over council sessions, hand out the key to

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Paul Perdue, private interview.
the city, cut ribbons and remain, above all, a part-time councilman.

The prevailing mood of the council during this period was expressed cogently by Councilman Perdue who was to say: "Part-time is plenty if you tend to business." Yet, Tollefson found that as he spent more time "tending to business" he found himself spending more time with partisan politicians at the state legislature. The council wanted to pursue the development of Tacoma's economy and soon realized that a means to that end could be realized through the tools of urban renewal. But the state legislature had not passed the necessary enabling legislation to allow the city to apply for an urban renewal grant. Thus, Tollefson was off to Olympia to help lobby for the passage of the enabling legislation. The council also realized that sources of revenue for cities were severely limited by the rural dominated legislature. Once again, Tollefson, the symbolic head of Tacoma's government and a trained lawyer, found himself spending time at the state capital lobbying for changes in the state's tax structure.

By 1956, Tollefson had come to the realization that the office of mayor was truly a political office. To be effective at persuasion and political influence, Tollefson needed time to deal with partisan politicians at their level. He tried to sell the council on that idea by suggesting that the mayor's salary be raised to $6,000 to compensate for the "fifty hours a week" needed to tend to business. But the council-manager ideologues were not willing to accept Tollefson's viewpoint.

When Tollefson ran for mayor in 1962 as the head of a reform slate of candidates he was still committed to council-manager government in a modified sense. In Tollefson's view, the mayor could serve as an advocate of the

\[1][Ibid.]
political interests of the city at the state legislature and still coexist with a city manager who tended to the administration of the city's business. However, by the 1960's the role of the federal government in urban matters had also changed significantly. The President was calling for a cabinet level department of urban affairs, new programs in metropolitan development and new commitments to the abolishment of poverty in the cities. Tollefson soon directed his energies to Washington, D. C., where his brother was serving as a Congressman. The mayor's effectiveness in Olympia carried over to the nation's capital. On a political trip to Tacoma shortly before his death in Dallas, President John Kennedy made special note of the political acumen of the Tollefson brothers. Three years later, Tollefson was selected as president of the National League of Cities.

The attitude of the City Council had also changed by the mid-1960's. There was general agreement that the mayor's new role was justified and a salary nearly equal to that of the city manager was a necessity. "He should be paid for his time," Dick Haley argued. When the salary increase was cut back to $12,000, Councilman Johnson grudgingly supported the measure after noting that the people were not ready to "appreciate the job the mayor does."

Tollefson's changing role and his desire to increase the authority and influence of the mayor's office led him into sharp conflict with Dave Rowlands. But there was more to the conflict than the issue of the changing role of the mayor. Tollefson was quick to praise Rowlands' predecessor, Frank Backstrom, for his willingness to "keep the mayor informed" and stay as much as possible in the background. Indeed, for all of his difficulties with organized labor, Backstrom continually sought to assume the role of city manager in the traditional sense. That traditional role was defined in 1927 by Leonard White who wrote:

It ought to be possible in this country to separate politics from administration. Sound administration can develop and continue only if
separation can be achieved. For a century they have been confused, with evil results beyond measure... managers have unparalleled opportunity and a deep obligation to teach the American people by their precept and conduct that their job is to administer the affairs of the city with integrity and efficiency and loyalty to the council, without participating in or allowing their work to be affected by contending programs or partisans. 1

Tollefson would have been comfortable with a city manager who wished to remain as much as possible in the background and out of the policy-making area. This led the mayor to the conclusion that a general administrative officer appointed by the mayor would be more appropriate for the city. In Tollefson's view, a general administrative officer would assume a role more in keeping with the pattern established by Backstrom. The political leadership of the city could then rest with the mayor and the City Council.

However, Dave Rowlands looked at the role of city manager in a different way. By the early 1960's advocates of council-manager government had recognized that the city manager must, by his very position, assume a role of leadership in the community. Indeed, as early as 1952 the "Code of Ethics" of the International City Managers' Association had affirmed that the city manager was a "community leader" who "submits policy proposals to the council and provides the council with facts and advice on matters of policy to give the council a basis for making decisions on community goals." 2 Rowlands obviously recognized the more modern approach as the role he should assume. Almost from the first day he arrived on the job, Rowlands was outlining goals and objectives for Tacoma. This position agreed substantially with the role defined by City Manager Steve Matthews writing in the National Civic Review. Matthews described the "ideal manager" as first of all a "good salesman" who should

1 Leonard White, The City Manager (Chicago, 1927), p. 301

2 International City Managers' Association, "Code of Ethics" (Published by the ICMA, 1952).
be able to "set goals and to determine the final objectives which underlie any successful program."\(^1\) Rowlands followed this role and, in the end, the wrath of the traditionalists on the council and, later on, Harold Tollefson.

Slim Rasmussen's successful arrival on the political scene can be attributed to a number of factors. His opposition to council-manager government did give him support in the community. However, this support alone did not necessarily result in his success at the polls. Other anti-manager candidates had run for mayor in the past--James Porter, George Cvitanich and Julio Grassi--and had lost by large margins. In 1953, 1955 and 1956 the leadership of organized labor marshalled their political forces to defeat the system and failed. Rasmussen obviously had other things going for him during the campaign.

Harold Tollefson's political vulnerability in the campaign was one factor. The incumbent mayor was physically unable to wage the kind of aggressive campaign necessary to defend and advocate the controversial policies enacted by the council during the period. Also, Tollefson was out of town serving as president of the National League of Cities during a time when he should have been mending the political fences at home. On the other hand, Rasmussen could conduct the tough, hard-hitting campaign he had been noted for in past legislative elections. And Slim, a popular Democratic state senator in a Democratic town, was the picture of the political underdog. He was the "hometown boy" shunted by the political power brokers in Olympia. When Carl Berglund and Pat Steele filed their law suit, this picture was made even more vivid.

But the deciding factor could very well have been the social issue and what it meant to the thousands of blue-collar workers in Tacoma's south end. Rasmussen constantly referred to wasteful spending in government and the increase in taxes it meant to Tacomans. Shortly after the election, a local political scientist reviewed Rasmussen's emphasis on issues as they were reflected in his literature, speeches and stories which appeared in the News Tribune. The political scientist came to the following conclusion:

... an examination of the campaign, as reflected in the News Tribune, indicates that if Rasmussen's election was a mandate for anything, it was a mandate for a reduction in property taxes.

A study of Rasmussen's pre-election statements and advertisements shows that the property tax issue was mentioned far more than any other. A change in the city's form of government was not proposed in any of Rasmussen's eight campaign advertisements in the Tribune.¹

In many ways, Rasmussen was speaking to the needs and wants of Peter Schrag's "forgotten American."² All of the alienated Tacomans who had been slighted in past campaigns, who had been insulted on the editorial pages of the News Tribune and who had been frustrated by a changing society they could no longer control seemed to coalesce in one group behind the Rasmussen candidacy. Higher taxes, new welfare programs and human relations commissions had become a part of local government. As Schrag notes, to the forgotten American "suddenly the rules are changing--all the rules."³ Rasmussen, with his attacks on taxes, the mayor's travels out of the city, urban renewal and model cities, became the working man's friend because he was a working man. And Rasmussen was the one candidate who could set "the rules straight" once again.

The next chapter will focus on the Rasmussen era in Tacoma city government and the impact of that era on the city manager and the council-manager system.

³Ibid., p. 31.
CHAPTER X

THE RASMUSSEN ERA: COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT
AND THE POLITICS OF REACTION

David Rowlands had faced many trying political situations in his long tenure as Tacoma's city manager. On more than one occasion he found himself up against a bloc of councilmen committed to his ouster. In 1958, Ben Hanson had led a group of anti-manager candidates to positions on the council. But the aims of Hanson were limited to changes in the structure of government. In point of fact, Mayor Hanson and City Manager Rowlands shortly became political allies and good friends. Hanson was a professional man. As a lawyer, he had been trained in the art of compromise. And, as a young politician, he benefited from being put in the limelight through the efforts of Rowlands. Harold Tollefson was also an educated man. And as a lawyer, Tollefson knew that differences could be worked out in private. But A. L. Rasmussen was something else again. He was a high school dropout, a railroad machinist and he was noted for his willingness not to compromise. This chapter will discuss the relationship of Rowlands and Rasmussen during the two years of Rasmussen's term as mayor. It will focus on the issues of conflict between the mayor and the city manager and the important roles played by other members of the council.

By the early months of 1968, Rasmussen had succeeded in once again getting the issue of council-manager government on the ballot. On February 6, 1968 Tacoma voters voted narrowly to uphold the charter. This chapter will discuss that election and why Rasmussen's proposition failed.
It was the original intent of this study to cover the time period leading up to the 1968 election on retaining the council-manager form of government. However, since the research was originally begun, new and important political events have taken place. Mayor Rasmussen ran for re-election with a slate of four committed anti-manager candidates for the City Council. Ironically, while Rasmussen lost his bid for a second term to political newcomer Gordan Johnston, three members of his slate scored political victories. These three councilmen joined with Councilman Tony Zatkovich and Councilwoman Becky Banfield to give the anti-manager clique a working majority on the City Council for the first time. Dave Rowlands was forced to resign as city manager and joined with Mayor Rasmussen to leave the local political scene. This chapter will review these political happenings and will look at the aftermath of the 1969 council elections.

Dave Rowlands and the City Council of 1967

Although A. L. "Slim" Rasmussen was an unorthodox and controversial political personality, his election to office did follow a trend that had begun in Tacoma municipal politics in 1956. Rasmussen was the fourth mayor to serve under the council-manager charter and he was the fourth mayor who at the same time in his public career came out in opposition to the council-manager system. John Anderson, appointed mayor by the council in 1956, campaigned against the charter in 1952. In that year, he was to say that the proposed council-manager system was a "radical departure from a true democratic form of government."¹ Ben Hanson, appointed mayor in 1958 and elected to the post in 1960, campaigned for the strong-mayor proposal in 1956 as the past

secretary of the freeholders' commission of 1955. In 1956, Hanson was to say that the chief weakness of the council-manager system was that the "part-time council does not have time to be adequately informed on complex issues."\(^1\) Harold Tollefson had also turned sour on the city manager concept and had finally come to the conclusion that a strong-mayor-governmental administrator system was the most workable form of government. Tollefson began to suggest a more active role for the mayor as early as 1956.

On the surface, at least, the political nature of the 1967 City Council was not particularly different from past councils. There were two and perhaps four councilmen who appeared to be opposed to City Manager Rowlands. Tacoma's first city manager, Frank Backstrom, had been opposed by three members of the council, then four and finally he was forced to resign when it appeared that five councilmen would vote for his dismissal. Later, Rowlands was faced with four opposition councilmen. First, in 1958, Rowlands had to contend with a mayor and three councilmen who were seemingly leaning towards his ouster. By 1960, Rowlands found himself confronted with four committed opponents. The Porter faction went so far as to prepare an official resolution for the purpose of firing Rowlands. Their attempt failed when it became apparent that the needed fifth vote was not available.

However, Rowlands was able to survive his first hectic eleven years by successfully working with the mayor and doing everything possible to solidify his support on the council. John Anderson was no problem; Rowlands and "Big John" had similar philosophies and by 1956 Anderson had moved around to being a committed supporter of council-manager government. Hanson ended up being a convert to Rowlands' side. As Rowlands was to say privately:

"I can make the mayor a hero if he will let me."¹ In the case of Hanson, Rowlands made sure the mayor was in the limelight as much as possible. This led to a great deal of bitterness on the part of the council-manager ideologues still on the council. Mrs. Clara Goering and Dr. Homer Humiston simply could not reconcile the behavior of Rowlands with their concept of council-manager government. But the balance of power politically had shifted and Rowlands had shifted the role of manager with it.

The relationship between Rowlands and Tollefson was, in a sense, an armed truce. On the surface, everything appeared normal; but in private the relationship seethed with mistrust. Tollefson wanted the authority of the mayor expanded. He continually referred to himself as the "executive head of government." But Tollefson couldn't directly confront the council-manager system. He had been elected as a reform candidate committed to the charter. However, late during his last term of office, Tollefson engineered moves on the council which would have changed the nature of the system without directly changing the charter. By increasing the mayor's salary to $24,000, Tollefson could safely claim that the position demanded full-time attention. At the same time, he could argue that the position of city manager should assume a lesser role because the mayor's was the only legitimate office available to meet the challenge of a changing urban scene. Tollefson frequently suggested that an administrative officer appointed by the mayor was, in essence, the same thing as a city manager.

Rowlands did not make a public issue of Tollefson's indirect attempts to discredit the system. However, privately he did discuss his feelings with supporters of the charter in the community. When Councilman Dick Haley agreed

¹David Rowlands, discussions with the writer, Tacoma, Wash., Summer, 1967.
to reduce the mayor's salary proposal to $12,000, it signaled a victory for Rowlands and the pro-manager interests in Tacoma.

Although Dave Rowlands had experienced trials and tribulations with two mayors and several councilmen before 1967, he had never been faced with the likes of the uncompromising, irascible "Slim" Rasmussen. Rasmussen's colleagues in the State Senate had been so unsettled by his antics—particularly his complaints over campaign "slush funds"—that they had agreed to gerrymander him out of his seat. Slim's unsettling nature carried over to the municipal elections. He was the first candidate for mayor publicly to call for an end to council-manager government after being elected to the mayoral position. He was also the first candidate for mayor formally to call for the resignation of the city manager. He pointedly made the form of government, the city manager and the mayor campaign issues. This had not been done before, even by the most ardent anti-manager candidates.

The first council meeting under Mayor Rasmussen set the tone for three years of vitriolic, uncompromising and at times degrading conflict between the mayor and city manager. In a move to embarrass Rowlands and put him in his place, Rasmussen succeeded in having the manager's seat on the council podium removed and placed with the city's department heads in the front row of the audience section of the council chambers. Rasmussen managed to get Councilman Gerry Bott's support in the move. In return, Bott became Rasmussen's nominee for deputy mayor. Next Rasmussen publicly demanded Rowlands resign as city manager. The new mayor said:

I believe that his continuance in office, in view of the plain intent of the voters . . . would lead to confusion, dissension and non-cooperation in the carrying on of the business of the city.¹

Rasmussen continued by noting that he had information that "Mr. Rowlands is slated to become the King County manager if and when they amend their charter."¹

Rowlands responded by "categorically" denying the statement and accusing Rasmussen of spreading "misinformation."² Rowlands also refused to resign as requested.

At this point, Rasmussen did not have the five votes necessary to oust the manager. Bott, Mrs. Becky Banfield, Tony Zatkovich and George Cvitanich had joined with him to remove Rowlands from his seat up front with the council; and the new council majority had voted as a bloc for Gerry Bott as deputy mayor. However, in a surprise move, Cvitanich announced publicly that he would not vote to fire Rowlands. After noting that he and the manager had not always agreed on issues, he said: "I feel if we eliminate the council-manager form, this may solve the problem. If we eliminate the individual, certainly not."³

The minority members of the council also came quickly to the manager's defense. C. Morrison Johnson said:

I feel this would be a poor way of starting off. If and when we do change the system, that's another matter. In the meantime, I don't know where you would find a better manager in the world than Dave Rowlands.⁴

Rasmussen also promised that charter amendments leading to a strong-mayor-council charter would be placed on the ballot in the near future. At the conclusion of the council session, Rasmussen ordered Rowlands to prepare a bevy of reports covering everything from "who prepared a report designating the

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., p. 2.
⁴Ibid.
city's blighted areas" to a full audit review of the city's financial operation in the areas of urban renewal, the city airport and the downtown escalades.  

The independent audit issue

Rasmussen's next move came one week later when he appointed a special council committee of Bott, Zatkovich, and Cvitanich to review the possibility of the city hiring an independent firm of certified public accountants to audit the city's books. "I won't set a time limit, but we would like your recommendations in the next couple of weeks," Rasmussen quipped.  

The issue concerning an independent audit had plagued the council-manager system from its inception. During the 1952 freeholders' meetings, Miss Elizabeth Shackelford had suggested that the charter include a provision which would give the City Council the authority to appoint a full-time auditor. This suggestion was rejected by the council-manager purists on the freeholders' commission. In its place, the freeholders included a charter proviso which called for the council to hire an independent accounting firm to perform a "running audit" of the city's books.

During the charter campaign of 1952, the Citizens' Committee for Better Government charged that the public's funds would not be protected because of the absence of an elected independent controller. The idea that a total stranger, an outsider and potential dictator, would control the taxpayers' dollars was a theme played over and over again by the anti-manager interests. Later, in 1956, the strong-mayor freeholders had carefully included an elected controller in the charter they offered the voters that year.

1 Ibid.
It wasn't until 1961 that the issue of an independent audit once again became a bone of controversy. This time it was the James Porter led faction on the council that brought the issue to a head. The question concerned the meaning of the term "running audit." The City Councils leading up to the early 1960's had decided that the state of Washington's yearly audit of the city's books plus a yearly management audit of a selected city department was sufficient to meet the requirements of the charter. Porter claimed that the term "running audit" meant that the city was obliged to contract a management audit and full financial audit of the books each fiscal year.1 Porter also argued that the council had not assumed its responsibility in selecting the appropriate city departments to be included in the management audit. "You have left the selection to the manager and that is wrong," he said.2

Mayor Hanson answered Porter by pointing out that a complete independent audit was "superfluous" and "foolish" in light of the state's audit. "All you are trying to do is cast aspersions on an operation which is properly performed," he said.3

One year after Porter first brought up the independent audit as an issue, the anti-manager faction on the council managed to place a charter amendment concerning the audit on the ballot. The amendment was defeated along with the referendum proposals concerning the salary increases for the mayor and councilmen. From 1962 until 1967, the independent audit had not been an issue.

Rasmussen's purpose in re-introducing the independent audit as an issue was clear. The new mayor had run on a platform which called for more efficiency

2Ibid.
3Ibid.
in government and a reduction in wasteful spending. On a number of occasions during the heat of the campaign, he called for a complete audit of the city's financial records. By suggesting that the city's books had not been reviewed, Rasmussen could cast some doubts on the chief value of the council-manager form of government—that value being that the city manager system meant more efficiency in government. During the initial council discussion on the audit, Rasmussen was to note that he had instructed the city attorney to prepare a new "model charter" for submission to the voters. That model charter called for a strong-mayor, an end to the office of city manager, and a "clarification" of the city's responsibilities to conduct an independent yearly audit.

Rasmussen's message was obvious. By changing the form of government, Tacoma's voters would have a more democratic system and they would know for the first time how their tax dollars were being spent.

The audit issue put the pro-manager adherents on the council at a serious disadvantage. They knew that the city's funds were being carefully reviewed by the state. They also believed that the yearly management audit was an efficient and relatively inexpensive method of checking on the administration of the city's departments. In 1961 City Attorney Marshall McCormick had stated that after a study of the intent of the 1952 freeholders, he felt that the running audit requirement had been substantially complied with by the management audit. However, in 1967, McCormick was to further note that the final legal answer might have to be determined by a ruling of the State Supreme Court or an amendment to the city charter. In the meantime, a yearly financial and management audit of the city would cost a prohibitive $50,000 to $150,000 a

\[1\text{Ibid.}\]
\[2\text{"Mayor Asks Decision on Audit for City," Tacoma News Tribune.}\]
Councilman Cvitanich viewed such an expenditure as a means to "clear the air." The pro-manager adherents viewed it as wasteful, unnecessary and an admission that past council policies had violated the intent of the charter. Also, the calling for a complete and independent audit of the city's records at this point in time would suggest that the administration of the city might in some way be suspect. Finally, a commitment to spend such a yearly sum would necessitate a review of budget expenditures. Fully 80 per cent of the budget was committed to salary expense for the city's personnel in the traditional police, fire, public works and transit departments. Another large segment was tied into major contracted developments in the city such as urban renewal, street construction and main arterials. The only expenditures not locked in or committed were for the Human Relations Commission and the city's new trainee corps. These programs represented an attempt by the manager and the pro-manager forces to deal with social issues. Although the programs did not require a large commitment of funds, they represented a symbolic first step by the city. If the council were to reopen discussions concerning the programs, Rasmussen could use the social issue to his advantage, again, at a time when the charter would be under attack.

Thus, during his first week in office Rasmussen managed to damage more effectively the credibility of the council-manager system than any other anti-manager councilman in the fifteen year history of the reform charter. First, he put the pro-manager adherents on the council on the defensive. By lining up support from Councilman Bott, Rasmussen managed to have Rowlands removed from his seat on the council podium. This symbolic gesture was reinforced one week later when Bott joined with Rasmussen and the others to have Rowlands removed from his large office complex and reassigned to the smaller quarters provided for the "part-time mayor" and City Council. The pro-manager councilmen tried to overturn these moves by the mayor but they were publicly embarrassed
when Bott once again joined with the mayor to defeat their motions. Rasmussen was following a basic rule of politics—don't make a move without having your votes counted first. Next, Rasmussen brought up the question of an independent audit. This issue not only cast a cloud on the efficient operation of the city, but it was one in which the pro-manager group could not hope to gain a political advantage over the mayor. By admitting that an audit was needed even to "clear the air," the pro-manager councilmen would also be admitting that past council policies might have been in violation of the charter. By opposing an independent audit, the pro-manager councilmen would appear to be hiding some indiscretion on their part or the part of the manager. In either case, Rasmussen could argue that the issue of an independent audit represented one additional weakness in the council-manager charter. The mayor could then note that such a weakness would not be found in a model charter calling for a mayor-council system for the city of Tacoma.

Rasmussen's attempts to change the charter

Rasmussen's strategy to change the council-manager charter became apparent from the first week of his term of office. During that period he instructed City Attorney Marshall McCormick to prepare a charter amendment which, in effect, would change the form of government to a strong-mayor council system. The amendment would appear on the ballot to coincide with the school bond election set for February.

The Rasmussen amendment was essentially a new charter for the city. It called for the retention of the Utilities Board, an issue of intense debate in 1956, but included the following basic changes in the 1952 charter: (1) The City Council was empowered to provide for ward or district representation and to set the salary of its members by ordinance. (2) The mayor would become the chief administrative official of the city and as such would have authority to appoint all department heads, with the exception of the utilities department,
and the city attorney. The council, in turn, would have the authority to confirm the appointments. (3) The mayor would have the authority to veto legislation passed by the council. In the case of the budget, the mayor's veto authority would be limited to items and not the whole budget. The council would be given the authority to override the veto by a two-thirds vote of its membership. (4) The mayor, in case of an emergency, would have the authority to assume command of the whole or part of the police force of the city.\(^1\)

In essence, all administrative authority of the city manager would be transferred to the mayor. However, under the Rasmussen proposal the mayor would have the veto authority while the council would have the authority of confirmation of major administrative appointments.

Rasmussen termed the proposed amendment a "viable, flexible document."\(^2\) "Checks and balances have been provided all the way through and it's a charter the city can live with and not be straghtjacketed," he argued.\(^3\) City Attorney McCormick prepared a number of companion amendments including one which further clarified the audit procedures of the city. The audit proviso simply substantiated past council policies concerning the management audit. Seven other amendments were also prepared with each intended to bring the charter up to date and in conformance with state law.

Rasmussen wanted to get the strong-mayor proposal before the voters as quickly as possible. In the past, long, drawn out freeholders' sessions combined with unfavorable publicity from the *News Tribune* had worked to the

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\(^1\)League of Women Voters, "Refresher About Tacoma's Form of Government," Tacoma, 1967. (Mimeographed.)


\(^3\)Ibid.
benefit of the council-manager interests. Rasmussen was riding on a wave of popularity that he hoped would lead to swift approval of the strong-mayor system. However, he felt that any delay would only hurt the chances of the proposed changes. Thus, he severely criticized a freeholders' election as being undemocratic and stacked in favor of those interests with the most financial backing.\(^1\) The new mayor was strongly supported by Councilman Cvitanich who noted that the "first and only issue, I think, is, 'Do the people want a strong mayor or don't they?'"\(^2\) Councilman Tony Zatkovich also supported the direct election approach and pointed out that past freeholders' elections had "torn the city apart."\(^3\) Rasmussen had the additional backing of Councilwoman Becky Banfield.

The new mayor had four sure votes on the council. However, he needed five votes to get his charter revision on the ballot. The key swing vote once again became Councilman Gerry Bott—a enigma to both sides.

The role of Councilman Bott. —Gerry Bott first appeared as a candidate for municipal office in 1950 in an unsuccessful campaign for public safety commissioner. Earlier, Bott ran an unsuccessful campaign as a Republican candidate for the state legislature from the strongly Democratic 29th district in South Tacoma. In 1955 Bott was endorsed by the Committee of 100 as a candidate for freeholder. Once again, he came home a loser. In this case, he ran last in the field of fifteen strong-mayor freeholders supported by the Committee of 100 and organized labor. However, Bott's never-say-die attitude

\(^{1}\)Ibid.

\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 2.

\(^{3}\)Ibid.
finally paid off. Although Bott was continually losing elections, he was gaining name familiarity. At the same time, his south end fuel business was gaining customers and boosting his reputation as a successful Tacoma businessman. Finally, in 1960 he succeeded in being elected to the City Council over a relatively unknown pro-manager opponent. The 1960 election was a disaster to the north end, pro-charter candidates and Bott rode to victory with Ben Hanson, Pat Steele and George Cvitanich.

During the council conflicts of the early 1960's, Bott heightened the hostility by continuously riding the fence over the issue of the downtown parking garages. It was Bott's hesitation which resulted in several major delays in the downtown urban renewal projects. Later, he became instrumental in Dave Rowlands' suggestion to rotate the members of the vice squad. And it was Gerry Bott who suggested that the salary of city councilmen be raised to $4,800. In every case, Bott managed to escape the council frays unscathed politically. Almost unbelievably, he was endorsed by the United Citizens in 1964 and emerged with another political victory, in this instance over a committed anti-manager candidate. In 1967 Bott once again surprised political observers by filing for mayor against his old running-mate Harold Tollefson.

During the primary campaign for mayor, Bott was severely critical of Rasmussen's repeated attacks on the form of government. On one occasion he reminded Rasmussen that the mayor must swear to uphold the charter of the city. At the same meeting Bott argued that the form of government was not an issue in the campaign. He said: "I want to remind Senator Rasmussen that the form of government is not at stake in this election because the mayor can't do a darn thing unless he has a cooperative council?"
Thus, Bott appeared to be a supporter of the system. He also seemed to hold no brief against the administration of City Manager Rowlands. As far as Harold Tollefson was concerned, Bott was quick to point out that he respected the incumbent mayor's integrity but felt the people were looking for new leadership for the city.

However, Bott's tune began to change after the sweeping election of Rasmussen in the final election. Slim had carried over 70 per cent of the vote in Bott's part of town and the impact of the political landslide began to tell. The change in attitude became apparent on November 9, the day after the election, when Bott moved to delay four appointments to city boards suggested by the lame duck Tollefson. He argued that "the people have spoken" and formally moved that the new appointments be held over until the new council, and mayor, had been sworn into office. Bott added:

I think in light of what happened last night, ... the appointments should be withheld until the new council takes a look ... I think the citizenry has asked for new representation.

As has been previously noted, Bott joined with Rasmussen, Mrs. Banfield, Zatkovich and Cvitanich to remove Rowlands from his seat on the council podium and his executive offices. When the question of Rowlands' resignation was first brought up by Rasmussen, Bott remained enigmatically silent. It was George Cvitanich who proved to be the deciding factor in Rowlands' retention. After Bott had sided with the new mayor on the Rowlands issue, he appeared to be rewarded with being selected deputy mayor.

Bott had become the crucial fifth vote that Mayor Rasmussen needed to put the charter amendments on the ballot. By the end of November, the political

2 Ibid.
odds makers could figure that Bott would assure the vote on the strong-mayor proposal. But once again, he surprised practically everyone. In initial debates on the Rasmussen strong-mayor amendment, he seemed to side with the pro-manager bloc on the council. Councilman C. Morrison Johnson had proposed that a freeholders' election be held so that "the total charter could be gone into" over a six month period. He expressed the belief that the people were not in favor of a speedier process and added: "I just think the issue of the form of government was dragged into it [the election campaign] to get rid of Dave." Bott supported Johnson on the freeholders suggestion but for different reasons. He said:

I don't think there's been a strong statement that they want a strong mayor. I think they voted against the manager and the mayor, but not necessarily to change the form.  

Rasmussen's resolution to place the strong-mayor amendment on the ballot in early spring came on the evening of December 5 during one of the most heated council meetings in the history of council-manager government in Tacoma. Rasmussen began initial discussions on the matter after the defeat of a motion by Dr. Herrmann to delay arguments for one week pending the return of pro-manager councilmen Maurice Finnigan and Hal Murtland. Finnigan and Murtland, who both viewed their role as councilmen in the traditional "board of directors" sense, had decided to take their vacations during the month of December. In his opening remarks, Rasmussen noted that he had made a pledge during his campaign to change the form of government. He maintained that the council-manager form--"which I voted for some years ago"--was presented as the most

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.
efficient and least expensive system, "but has not proved itself." Rasmussen said that his concern had been aroused as a state senator "when the present city manager was able to pass" changes protecting and increasing his powers.  

(In this instance, Rasmussen was referring to changes made in the state optional municipal code during the legislative session. During the campaign it was charged that Rowlands was part of a conspiracy engineered by the International City Managers' Association to change the code with the aim of broadening the manager's authority.) Rowlands immediately objected to the mayor's contention that he was involved in legislative changes in the code. He also said: "I resent implications that I am any part of an international conspiracy." Rasmussen, who, it appeared, had succeeded in getting Rowlands involved in the council debate, replied: "I'm sorry, Mr. Rowlands, if I implied it originated from you."  

Herrmann and Johnson followed Rasmussen by suggesting that a more "orderly, clear and calm" method be followed in introducing changes in the charter. The two pro-manager councilmen suggested that freeholders be elected to review the governmental system. Cvitanich, who introduced the Rasmussen resolution, countered by pointing out that his two colleagues had voiced no concern for freeholders when the Civic Improvement Alliance had presented their petitions.  

The opening arguments were followed by a parade of citizen statements both for and against the resolution. Howard Carothers, chairman of the Committee of 100 in 1955-56, suggested that City Attorney Marshall McCormick

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. A-12.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
be given additional time to prepare a more "workable" mayor-council charter. He said: "I want to make it clear that I support a strong mayor. The pro-manager people, who suddenly want freeholders don't want change, they want a stall."¹ Some of the more noteworthy Rasmussen supporters included Louis Muscek, former freeholder and Rasmussen's attorney during the 1967 campaign; Mrs. Virginia Shackelford, an organizer of the Civic Improvement Alliance; John O'Leary, a defeated council candidate in 1967 and an outspoken opponent of urban renewal; Mrs. John R. Wiborg, active in Pro-America and a supporter of Mrs. Banfield; and Swan Johnson, a Tollefson appointee to the Human Relations Commission.

The groups which sent statements supporting the council-manager charter included the Tacoma Municipal League, the Tacoma Board of Realtors, the League of Women Voters, the Ministerial Alliance, the Industrial Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce, the Tacoma Chapter of the Washington State Engineers and the Downtown Merchants' Association. The Central Labor Council sent a letter asking for a one-week delay so that more time would be allowed to study the content of the proposed amendment.²

Once again, however, the most important individual during the evening's debates and discussion became Councilman Gerry Bott. Even with the pro-manager councilmen absent from the meeting, Rasmussen had no hope of getting his amendment on the ballot without the support of Bott. Under the charter, five votes were needed. Before a hushed audience packed into the council chambers for six hours, Bott read a prepared statement outlining his position. He declared that he was not convinced that the present form of government should

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
be "scuttled" and questioned whether the mayor truly had a mandate for change. "Let me remind you," he said, "that Dr. Herrmann, a strong supporter of council-manager government was re-elected at the same time."\(^1\) He continued by praising the work of the mayor and McCormick but ended his presentation by offering his support for the freeholders approach. The Rasmussen resolution was defeated on a four-to-three vote, one vote short of the necessary council majority.

**Rasmussen's strategy.** The new mayor was far from through on the question of the charter. One week after his council defeat, he was saying:

> Tacoma is going to grow . . . . You need a new charter with a full-time mayor and council to do the job . . . . We have outgrown the city manager system. It's for small towns. The name of the job used to be town clerk, but the function is the same.\(^2\)

However, Rasmussen could not move immediately to force the issue. The political timing had to be right and just enough pressure had to be applied to get the wavering Bott off the fence and on the mayor's side. Rasmussen's opportunity soon came when Richard D. Turner, a young attorney and vice president of Action Committee for Tacoma, appeared before the council to charge that a member of the council was stalling the circulation of petitions calling for a freeholders' election.\(^3\) Turner put ACT on record as favoring a freeholders' election so that charter could be changed as was "mandated" by the previous election. In a prepared statement, Turner charged:

> ACT . . . understands that some person of influence, perhaps a member of the council, has constructive possession of the signatures.

> At this time, ACT herewith makes a public inquiry of council members and the citizens of Tacoma to bring them forth so that Tacoma may begin its movement of progress as quickly as possible.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Ibid.


\(^4\)Ibid.
Rasmussen quickly turned the issue to his advantage by suggesting that Turner was making a criminal charge and added that ACT could perform a public service by starting a new petition drive for a direct election on his charter amendments. Hal Hurtland, sensing that ACT had given the mayor the political advantage once again, urged an end to "reckless charges" at council meetings. Hurtland said: "We are not only reported by the newspapers, but we also are being carried by radio and being picked up by Seattle."

After the meeting, Turner admitted that he had been referring to petitions gathered by a group known as Representative Government for the People headed by right-wing activist Mrs. Virginia Shackelford. It was ACT's belief that Mrs. Shackelford's group had collected sufficient signatures for an election but that she had been persuaded to hold them back by the mayor and his supporters. However, the charges served only to bring the entire question up for review once again. The following week, Mrs. Shackelford appeared before the council to deny the charges and to call for a ballot proposition which would call for the following questions: (1) a freeholders' review of the charter, (2) keeping the council-manager system or (3) dumping it for the strong-mayor form. She was supported from the audience by Marshall Riconosciuto, former chairman of the Planning Commission and a severe critic of Dave Rowlands. Riconosciuto, who said he was appearing at the request of Karl Beaty, chastised the council incumbents for not calling for a freeholders' election the previous year when the "demand by the people" for such an election was evident.

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
By the end of the meeting, Rasmussen's new strategy became apparent. He asked the council to remove a resolution from the agenda that he had prepared which would have placed the eight amendments on the ballot the following spring. The mayor then indicated that City Attorney McCormick was working on a "complete model charter" for the city.¹ The mayor intended to support Mrs. Shackelford's proposed vote of confidence on the form of government.

Interestingly enough, Mrs. Shackelford did admit that she had discussed the question of submitting the freeholders' petitions with Rasmussen. She said: "We discussed this with the mayor during the campaign. He made his campaign promise and so we filed our petitions away in the vault."² She went on to note that a freeholders' election was going to be held but suggested that a vote of confidence on the council-manager system be included on the ballot. She also pledged that if a majority of the people voted to retain the present system, her committee would halt its opposition to the charter.³

The following week Mayor Rasmussen proposed a ballot proposition which would include the three questions discussed during the previous council session. A council resolution would place the three-part proposition on the February 6 ballot with the school bond issues. After Rasmussen introduced the resolution, County Auditor Jack Sonntag appeared to warn that little time would be available to inform the voters about the implications of the multiple questions.⁴ "I urge you to submit a single question proposition if possible," he argued.⁵

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
Councilman Zatkovich moved to amend the resolution to include only a yes or no proposition on whether to retain the council-manager form of government.

Thus, once again Councilman Gerry Bott became the key man. This time Bott supported Rasmussen with the comment that the decision "came from my heart." He said: "I am interested in knowing how the people feel."¹

The impact of Rasmussen's victory was immediate. The next day Corey Richmond, the city's urban renewal director since 1965, resigned from office. Richmond said that he was resigning because a "group of people are controlling the thoughts of the mayor."² He also expressed disappointment that "more responsible members of the community were being pretty placid about the whole thing."³

However, the "more responsible" people that Richmond was referring to--undoubtedly the supporters of the council-manager system--were far from placid at this point. From the moment of Rasmussen's success on the proposition calling for a vote of confidence on Tacoma's form of government, the pro-manager interests began to organize their campaign to defeat the mayor's proposition.

The 1968 Campaign Over the Question of Retaining Council-Manager Government in Tacoma

The pro-manager interests quickly grouped their forces to form the Citizens' Committee to Support Council-Manager Government in Tacoma. On January 19 the citizens' committee ran the first of a series of hard-hitting one quarter-page advertisements in the News Tribune. The initial advertisement, drafted as were the others by Ensley Llewellyn, a former editor of the Army's Stars and Stripes, appeared in the form of an open letter to Tacoma citizens

¹Ibid.
³Ibid.
urging support of the council-manager system and defeat of "boss mayor" government. The ad made the following three points:

Tacoma has enjoyed, in the past several years, a period of growth and civic harmony unequaled under any former type of city government. The entire community is more free of vice, prostitution and gambling than any other large Washington city. Elected councilmen, answerable to all the people, directing and controlling professionally trained and experienced city administrators, have proven they can give citizens the most efficient and effective government at the lowest cost.¹

The ad called for financial and volunteer support from Tacoma citizens and was signed by Gerrit Vander Ende, banker and former freeholder; V. A. Bud Schwarz, president of the Tacoma Municipal League; Victor Lyon, a leader of the Tacoma Board of Realtors; Mrs. Robert Strobel, officer of the Municipal League; and the Rev. E. S. Brazill, a spokesman and leader of Tacoma's Negro community. Six more large advertisements followed and each stressed the same theme—"Let's not go back to boss-mayor government—repudiated by Tacoma people over 40 years ago." These ads were signed by the co-chairmen of the Citizens' Committee—Paul Perdue, former city councilman, and John Heinrick, a prominent Democrat, patriarch of one of Tacoma's best known Catholic families and athletic director at the University of Puget Sound. The ads were aimed directly at the mayor and his proposed model charter. One proclaimed:

Do you realize that city department heads and councilmen must now undergo hours of public harassment at the hands of the mayor and those he permits to use the public address system? . . . One councilman receives threats to his business. Another councilman was told by phone to resign or be killed . . . .²

Another ad claimed that the "boss mayor" under the Rasmussen charter proposal would have the following powers:

1. A transfer of power from the city council into his hands by giving him a veto power which takes five votes to three to override; which in effect is worth two votes in any legislative contest.

2. A transfer of all police power into his hands by giving him the sole and exclusive right to declare an emergency without confirmation by the City Council with the sole right to fire the chief of police and replace him as he sees fit without any check by the council.

3. A transfer of power which gives the mayor the right to fire all department heads with four exceptions and all others in city government not covered by civil service without check by the City Council.

4. A transfer of all city administration into the mayor's hands from professionally trained employees.¹

The citizens' committee also organized a city-wide program of coffee hours and speaking engagements. Each speaker was provided with a "speaker's memo" which listed the organizations supporting the city manager charter (these included the Municipal League, League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, the United Citizens' for Good Government, and the Senior Citizens' Committee), a list of points which clarified the meaning of Rasmussen's alternative charter and a number of facts with which to refute charges made by the mayor and his supporters. A brochure, entitled "Facts," was printed and distributed at the public meetings. The brochure gave reasons why council-manager government was "best for Tacoma," noted that council-manager government had "virtually wiped out vice" and listed the municipal achievements during the time of the council-manager charter.

The League of Women Voters was also active in the campaign. On February 1 the league formally endorsed the council-manager charter and gave the reasons for its endorsement. Mrs. Gilbert Price, the league president, noted that "a good political leader is not necessarily a good administrator" and, thus, the election of a strong mayor does not mean that "professional competence will

be assured in administering a city of Tacoma's size." On the other hand, Mrs. Price argued that the council-manager system promotes "quality, continuity, and impartiality in administration." However, the league did note that "communication between citizens and their elected officials and the manager" must improve. The league printed a pamphlet, to be used by the membership, outlining the history of Tacoma government, the differences between the old commission system and council-manager government, and an analysis of the Rasmussen proposal.

The Tacoma Municipal League played an active role in the campaign by sponsoring a number of public meetings and publishing one full-page advertisement and two three-quarter page advertisements in the News Tribune. The full-page ad exclaimed: "They used to call us Seattle's Dirty Backyard." The ad ran a photograph of copies of the News Tribune front-page coverage of the Rosellini crime hearings of 1952. The ad carried the following message:

With council control of city administration, it would take a majority of the council--five members--and the city manager to permit vice. They'd have to support a shady chief of police. That would mean seven public officials actively supporting vice, and would mean the other four council members would at least have to tolerate it.

Under a strong mayor, only two would have to be involved: the mayor and the chief of police.4

The Tacoma Ministerial Alliance, a group of protestant ministers, actively endorsed the council-manager system. During the last week of the campaign, the alliance published an "open letter" to the people of Tacoma in the News Tribune. The letter called for maintaining "effective, efficient

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2Ibid.
3Ibid.
4"They Used to Call Us: Seattle's Dirty Backyard," (an advertisement), Tacoma News Tribune, Jan. 30, 1968, p. 3.
and honest city government" in Tacoma.  

The editors of the *News Tribune* swung the influence of the city's only major newspaper behind the charter. In January, *News Tribune* editors assigned former city hall reporter Denny MacGougan to write a series of articles reviewing Tacoma's past, before council-manager government, and extolling the virtues of the present charter. The *News Tribune* editors ran the fifteen-part series on the front page of the newspaper. On February 2, the *News Tribune* endorsed the council-manager system while commenting on the woes of the Seattle Police Department under the strong-mayor form of government. The editors noted: "...while commiserating with Seattle on pinball troubles there which bid to become more or less a scandal, we noted that Tacoma had put an end to such ills."  

In somewhat of a surprise, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* also endorsed the council-manager system. An editorial in support of City Manager Rowlands and Tacoma's form of government appeared in the *P.-I.* the day before the election. The editorial stated:  

We believe City Manager Rowlands is an irreplaceable asset to the city of Tacoma and that voters there would best serve the city's interest by signifying their support of him Tuesday.  

The anti-manager forces formed a group of their own, the Tacoma Voters' League (TVL). The chairman of the TVL was R. Look, a business associate of Nello Grassi, a used car salesman and brother of Julio Grassi, candidate for mayor in 1962. The TVL ran a series of advertisements in the *News Tribune* which  


quoted the critical remarks concerning the administration of Dave Rowlands
made by former Councilmen Dr. Humiston and Mrs. Goering upon their retirement
from office in 1960. The ads also referred to a crime report prepared by
Police Chief Charles Zittel which showed an increase in the city's crime rate
for 1967. Marshall Riconosciuto, former Planning Commission chairman and
campaign organizer for the 1962 Grassi candidacy, was the chief public
spokesman for the Rasmussen plan. In a speech made before the Downtown Kiwanis,
Riconosciuto charged that the council-manager system had been "extremely
damaging to the community." Riconosciuto argued that the council-manager
system was touted as an answer to the city's vice problems. "But crime has
increased," he said. "There's no doubt about it. On statistics alone, this
form is losing." 1

Riconosciuto also charged that "the right to dissent has been trampled
on." "Many unhappy people have been unable to get up and express their views," he added. Riconosciuto claimed that the cost of basic service had climbed as
a result of manager government--a system of government where the people cannot
"get to the man responsible by direct vote." 2

The most effective campaigner on behalf of the Rasmussen plan was
Rasmussen himself. His experience in government and his controversial nature
enabled the mayor to continually grab a major share of the News Tribune's
headlines. In late January he charged Rowlands with holding back the city's
annual crime report. The city manager was forced to admit that he was, indeed,

1 Carl Lizberg, "Ad Executive Says Manager Rule Costly," Tacoma News
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
holding back the report for "further analysis." In questioning Police Chief Charles Zittel, Rasmussen asked: "You couldn't recall ever being asked to delay a report before by Mr. Rowlands?" When Zittel admitted that he couldn't, Rasmussen had made his point clear—the city manager was holding back unfavorable statistics until after the advisory election on the form of government. The timing of Rasmussen's inquisition was particularly appropriate since local television station KTNT had decided to televise the council proceedings. However, Rasmussen received his greatest media advantage from the passionate support of right-wing radio station KAYE in neighboring Puyallup.

The role of KAYE

Soon after taking office in 1967, Rasmussen approached Jim Nicholls, owner and operator of radio station KAYE, to ask if the station might broadcast the City Council meetings held, at Rasmussen's wish, on Tuesday evenings. Nicholls, a self-styled "Bible believing preacher" and right-wing follower of the fundamentalist Carl McIntire, happily agreed. Nicholls had become concerned with "the racial problem" as early as 1965, the year he first began at KAYE. That year he attacked an interfaith gathering organized by Lynn Hodges, then the pastor of First Baptist Church in Tacoma. Later, Nicholls had made the following remarks over the air concerning a human relations program sponsored by Hodges and held at Fife High School just outside of Tacoma:


2Ibid., p. 2.


... that they should inter-marry if they fell in love with a colored person, then marry them--now this has disturbed a number of girls themself, yet these people under the guise of human relations have come into Fife High School and this is the kind of bunkum and tripe they are teaching. The youth there was exposed to psychological warfare. A professor from PLU and the director of Human Relations took unfair advantage of a group of high school kids who did not know the score--the same psychological weapon that was used in North Korea. It's nothing but treasonous talk ... 1

Nicholls agreed to broadcast the lengthy council meetings from beginning to end. The meetings were sponsored by "bucks for broadcast" or funds solicited over the air during the council breaks. Other money came from donations to the "truth and justice fund" headed by Marshall Riconosciuto. Rasmussen, in turn, appeared on KAYE each morning to voice concern over the operation of the Human Relations Commission and the virtues of strong-mayor government.

Nicholls was aided in the campaign against the council-manager system by Fred L. Crisman, a self-styled propagandist, former president of a used car lot owned by Julio Grassi and Bishop of the Universal Life Church.2 Crisman, who used the name Dr. Jon Gold over the air, claimed to hold a Ph.D. from Brantridge College in England, a non-existent institution.3 He was to later gain some notoriety by being subpoenaed by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison in the Clay Shaw trial.

However, it was Crisman's views concerning council-manager government which set the tone of a nightly talk show he arranged with Nicholls. In a book he published in 1970, Crisman wrote:

I have stated on radio, television, and in print that city manager government is the most wasteful, inefficient, bumbling, and dishonest form of


3Ibid.
government ever devised by men for the grabbing of a dishonest dollar. It is pure dictatorship, and it is based on corruption.1

Crisman was to also explain the goal of his program:

There is a general feeling that one must have a great deal of wide knowledge to make a good talk show. That is not true and it is especially not true of the type of show that I designed Round Table Forum into being. Round Table Forum was designed and brought forth with the single purpose of defeating the aims and measures of city management government.2

Crisman's attacks on Dave Rowlands, his supporters on the council and the council-manager system were, at times, almost unbelievably vicious.3 One Crisman commentary, aired after the advisory election, went as follows:

The City Council is . . . doing exactly what Hitler did . . . . The only things that are missing are the jack boots . . . . I think there were even some pictures taken . . . down at Rowlands' house that day they were have the demonstration and some of the demonstrators got to demonstrating a little too far and there were some of those clenched fist salutes out there and they never used the pictures. What more do you want? There stands the dictator with his family out in the front yard surrounded by a picket fence to keep the peasants out. And there stand the peasants out there all in adoration, some of them with their hands up in salute. How about that? What more do you want?4

Thus, the two sides were lined up for one of the most important elections in the history of council-manager government in Tacoma. On one side, that in favor of council-manager government, stood Tacoma's establishment. Against this formidable coalition stood one of the most popular and at the same time most despised mayors since the days of Angelo Fawcett. Slim Rasmussen had ridden to power in a convincing political landslide. He had managed to turn nearly every argument against him to his favor. He also had the passionate support of an active right-wing element and a radio station which beamed into

1 Fred L. Crisman, Murder of a City . . . Tacoma. (Tacoma, Wash.: By the author, 1970), vi.

2 Ibid., p. 73.

3 At his writing the license renewal of radio station KAYE is being reviewed by the Federal Communications Commission in connection with a possible violation of the fairness doctrine.

4 "Hearing Accepts PSC Exhibits . . .," Tacoma News Tribune.
South Tacoma at all hours extolling the benefits of strong mayor government and the evils of city management.

The one interest group most conspicuous by its absence was the leadership of organized labor. The Central Labor Council and the city employee unions had been directly involved in every campaign aimed at doing away with council-manager government. This time, however, the labor group was engaged in a bitter internal power struggle between the moderates, led by L. H. Pedersen, and the Rasmussen faction. Pedersen and the other members of the executive committee had not been excluded from the important decisions which had been a part of the local political scene during the Tollefson administration. Indeed, Pedersen had been appointed chairman of the mayor's community development advisory committee. Pedersen's name and support had gone along with the recommendation of the Human Relations Commission. Labor had endorsed the city's urban renewal programs and the application for Model Cities funds. And Pedersen, and the other labor leaders, held no brief against Dave Rowlands. The Teamsters Union was also split over the question. Louis Hatfield, a leader of the Teamsters and a bitter critic of the downtown parking garages during the late 1950's and early 1960's, had been appointed to the Planning Commission by Tollefson. Later, he was elected to the Civil Service Board and found that he could work easily with Rowlands and Stan Bixel, the city personnel director. Rasmussen had campaigned against Hatfield, had been severely critical of the Human Relations Commission, and had lambasted the urban renewal programs and Model Cities during the campaign in 1967 and after being elected to office. Pedersen and Hatfield were no friends of the new mayor and, although they were not committed advocates of council-manager government, they did not want to see Rasmussen thrust into the position of being Tacoma's first strong-mayor since 1909.
The election results

Slightly more than 42 per cent of the electorate voted in the council-manager advisory election. This meant that the voter turnout was 5,000 votes less than the turnout at the final municipal election the previous year. However, the low turnout at the polls was not particularly surprising considering that the election was held in February of an off election year. In fact, the vote was relatively high—84 per cent of the electorate that had voted in the 1967 election did return to the polls to vote on the charter issue. In past school bond elections held in February, school officials had, on occasion, failed to achieve the necessary 40 per cent voter turnout of the previous city election to validate their bond issue.

Council-manager government was upheld by a margin of a little more than 1,500 votes. Thus, the 1968 election represented the narrowest margin in favor of the charter since its original passage in 1952. Even so, the shift away from Rasmussen was evident throughout the city. In 1967 the mayor had carried 68 per cent of the vote in South Tacoma. The south end once again rejected the system by a 58 per cent margin, a 10 per cent fall off. The mayor also lost part of his support in the north end. Those precincts gave the mayor 45 per cent of the vote in 1967 while they gave his anti-charter proposal 35 per cent.

A majority of voters in thirty-seven precincts switched from their earlier position of supporting Rasmussen to voting against his proposition. Several of these precincts were located in Tacoma's "Hilltop Area," thus indicating a change in attitude in the city's Negro neighborhoods. However, most of the swing precincts were located in the central area of the city or that part of town located between the heavily Democratic area in South Tacoma and the north end's 26th legislative district. The voters in this area had helped to determine the outcome in the charter elections of 1952,
1955, 1956 also. The following table indicates how these precincts have swung back and forth over time:

**TABLE 18**

**VOTER SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT AND PRO-MANAGER CANDIDATES 1952-1968 IN TACOMA'S CENTRAL AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Per Cent Vote In Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aCouncil-manager system upheld city-wide*

A close examination of the results showed that the voters in the fifty-eight precincts that Tollefson carried in 1967 voted strongly in favor of council-manager government in 1968. These precincts had the highest percentage turnout in the city. There was a 4 per cent voter drop-off in these precincts from the turnout in the final municipal election the year before. This compared to a 13 per cent drop-off city-wide and a 16 per cent drop-off in these precincts which voted for Rasmussen in 1967 and against council-manager government in 1968. These pro-Tollefson precincts, located for the most part in Republican areas of the 26th district, gave council-manager government a 70 per cent favorable vote and a 4,206 vote plurality—enough of a margin to insure the defeat of the Rasmussen proposal.

The advisory election was probably more of a personal defeat for Mayor Rasmussen than a victory for the council-manager system. Indeed, in 60 per cent of the city's precincts, a majority of voters cast their ballots against the charter and for some form of change. The pro-manager forces, on the other
hand, waged a vigorous campaign aimed, for the most part, at Slim Rasmussen. When the pro-manager forces referred to "boss-mayor" they were referring to Rasmussen. Also, the pro-manager forces put together the most organized and well-financed campaign since the United Citizens efforts in 1962. This campaign paid off at the polls with the high turnouts from the pro-manager precincts in North Tacoma. The News Tribune had aided the pro-manager efforts through their front-page series of articles and their editorial support of the charter.

After the votes were counted, Mayor Rasmussen indicated that the election had not settled the issue as far as he was concerned. He said:

'It was an exciting campaign, and it got a lot of people interested in government; but if we had half the money the opposition spent we would have won. This only goes to prove what money can do in a smear campaign.'

Councilman Cvitanich also indicated that he had not given up. He said:

'If we could have gotten out the vote we would have won. But in defeat there is always victory. If nothing else, we focused the attention of the community on the shortage of policemen and conditions in Tacoma.'

Gerry Bott, the swing man on the council, indicated that he was happy with the outcome. He said: "It is an advisory vote, and we would be foolish if we didn't observe the will of the majority." "We can now spend our time on our civic responsibilities," he added.

The election aftermath

The original intent of this paper was to discuss and analyze the important political events and decisions which led up to the council-manager advisory vote of 1968. The purpose of the analysis was to identify the basic

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
reasons for the conflict over council-manager government in Tacoma and to examine in some depth the impact of this conflict on the processes of government. However, much has happened in Tacoma since the writer first conceived of this study. Thus, the purpose of this section is to briefly review the events from February of 1968 to the present.

After the advisory election the council held a private meeting for the purpose of revolving differences among the group. Gerry Bott once again expressed the feeling that the "people had spoken" and that issue over the form of government was a dead letter as far as he was concerned.1 Although Bott would not go along with a move to return Rowlands to his offices and his seat with the council, he would no longer join with Rasmussen and the others to vote for the manager's dismissal. In July, Bott joined with the four pro-manager councilmen to vote in favor of the "Martland rules" which were an attempt to restrict the behavior of the mayor. The Martland rules, introduced by Councilman Hal Martland, were aimed at banning the mayor's "cross-examination" of city staff members.2 Specifically Martland proposed that:

No personal complaints, and particularly those of a derogatory nature, against any city official or employee should be discussed at a public city council meeting.3

The new rules also provided for the following:

Any council member would have the right to challenge a ruling of the mayor with the result that the council would vote immediately to accept or reject the ruling.

The mayor would be prohibited from appointing a committee having official status without securing approval by resolution or ordinance from the council.


The council agenda would be required to include all resolutions and ordinances proposed by the mayor, councilmen or city manager. No item would be deleted without council approval.

A motion to cut-off debate would require a simple council majority rather than a two-thirds vote.

The city manager would have the right to enter the discussion of any matter before the council.

A matter before the council could be removed from the table during initial discussions. A motion to reconsider a defeated measure could be made the following week by a member of the prevailing side.1

The Martland rules followed a series of lengthy, conflict-ridden council sessions presided over by Rasmussen. During this period, Rasmussen's relationship with Bott had become particularly testy. At one meeting the mayor threatened to wrap his gavel around Bott's neck. At another session Bott offered to take over the gavel while the mayor stepped out of the council chambers. Rasmussen said: "Mr. Bott, you don't take the gavel except over my dead body."2 Bott replied: "Don't encourage me."3 At another meeting, Rasmussen demanded that Bott "lay his cards on the table" after the deputy mayor failed to support a Rasmussen proposal.4

However, the Martland rules failed to deter the mayor. The council meetings continued to stretch on for hours, many times past midnight. On a number of occasions, the pro-manager bloc of Martland, Johnson, Finnigan and Herrmann attempted to walk out on Rasmussen for the purpose of denying the mayor a quorum. Bott would remain, however, and the council sessions would continue. KAYE continued to broadcast the meetings and to offer Rasmussen additional time on the air the following morning. At one morning session, Rasmussen used his time to suggest that banker Gerrit Vander Ende

1 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
might be using bank deposited funds to help defeat his strong-mayor proposal. Rasmussen said:

... now my question is Mr. Vander Ende. I'm wondering if they are using some of the savings and loan funds to put these ads in the paper. I'm sure their depositors would not be happy with that. I'm not saying they are, but it makes you wonder because of such big ads ... .

There were a number of key issues which brought the conflict between the mayor and the manager to the surface. The two disagreed over the city's participation in the Puget Sound Governmental Conference. Rasmussen expressed fear of regional government. The two disagreed over Model Cities and urban renewal. However, the greatest area of disagreement was over the continuation of the city's Human Relations Commission and its director Lynn Hodges.

The issue of the Human Relations Commission

One month after the advisory vote on the form of government, Rasmussen began what was to be a steady stream of attacks on the commission and Hodges. During a meeting of the commission on the evening of March 21, Rasmussen accused Hodges of trying to split the community. Rasmussen, who was observing the meeting from a seat in the audience, said: "We've gotten to the point where Hodges is trying to divide the people we have lived with in this community for a long time. I don't like it."

Rasmussen's charge came as the result of a discussion between Hodges and a member of the audience over using the term "black" in reference to Negroes. Hodges had tried to explain that times "were changing" and that the term black is the preferred term followed by Afro-American and Negro.  

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1 "Hearing Accepts PSC Exhibits . . . , Tacoma News Tribune.  
3 Ibid.
When Hodges indicated that the term "colored" was demeaning, Rasmussen said:

Black is black and white is white. I happened to be talking to two good friends of mine today--colored people. It might have been the wrong term, but I wasn't using it, they were using it. They hadn't been advised the term had been changed.

I've been white a long time, but I've never called white beautiful. I don't go out and insult people by saying 'you're using the wrong term.' This is a term that would tend to divide us more. We don't call Indians or our Mexican-American friends by any other term. We just call them mister or missus.¹

The following month Rasmussen recommended that the council approve an ordinance creating an open housing review board with members appointed by the mayor. The Rasmussen ordinance was aimed at removing the authority of reviewing complaints of housing discrimination from the jurisdiction of the Human Relations Commission and its director. The mayor declared: "I think there's a feeling among the white community that the Human Relations Commission is biased."²

When pressed on the point by pro-manager councilmen, Rasmussen indicated that he believed that Hodges was on the side of Negroes only. The mayor also charged Hodges with directing the HRC rather than staying in the background and taking orders from the commissioners. Rasmussen said: "What have Mr. Hodges' activities been? He's been speaking around . . . leaving the impression in people's minds that they can't get a fair hearing."³

During the hectic summer of 1968, Hodges was also severely criticized by Councilwoman Banfield for his involvement with a downtown coffee house and his interest in sensitivity training. Rowlands came to Hodges' defense on a number of occasions when Mrs. Banfield requested that he attend council sessions at midnight to answer her questions. Rowlands said: "There is nothing evil about these sensitivity sessions; they simply represent an exchange of

¹Ibid., p. 2.
³Ibid.
Rasmussen continually pressed the issue of Hodges' relationship with a coffee house established for young people in downtown Tacoma. After Hodges had mentioned a schedule of programs to be held at the coffee house on a morning radio program he hosted, Rasmussen asked if he had said anything about homosexuals. At his point, Hodges became publicly angry for the first time. He replied: "Does this have anything to do with city business?" This led the pro-manager councilmen to charge that Rasmussen was holding an inquisition. Councilman Cvitanich, who had begun to move closer to the mayor's position on the council since Bott's defection, charged that Hodges was "arrogantly overstepping his bounds" in answering the mayor's questions.

Rowlands and the council

During the winter months of 1968 Dave Rowlands was contacted by the city of Sacramento for consideration for the position of city manager. Rasmussen expressed delight at the prospect of Rowlands' leaving. The mayor commented:

We wouldn't want to hold him back from a greater challenge in life . . . . This is a normal course of procedure with city managers. They just move to greener pastures. It's different for us who are residents and want to stay here . . . . We just don't move like some of the transients do . . . .

Rowlands had become increasingly discouraged by the support given Rasmussen on the question of the manager's office space. Although Gerry Bott had left Rasmussen's camp over the question of Rowlands' dismissal, he had not relented on the question of office space. Bott explained: "I believe the

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1"Hodges to be Summoned to City Session," Tacoma News Tribune, June 12, 1968, p. 1.
3Ibid.
4Ibid.
position of mayor--not the man--deserves a choice of office space."¹

In general, the anti-manager councilmen were enthusiastic over the possibility of Rowlands' leaving. Mrs. Banfield was so enthused she was led to say that Rowlands was "probably the best city manager in the United States of America."² Cvitanich noted: "I don't believe any of us would stand in the way of a man trying to improve his position."³ Zatkovich exclaimed: "I can't blame him if it is a better position and I wish him luck."⁴

The pro-manager councilmen were concerned over the manager's apparent decision to leave. Maurice Finnigan summed up the views of the pro-manager group by saying:

I'd do everything I could to try to stop him from leaving . . . I'd hate like the dickens to see him leave under these conditions . . . I think he is well recognized throughout the country if not the world and would be a plum in anybody's city.⁵

During the weeks that Rowlands was being considered for the Sacramento position, he publicly criticized Rasmussen for the first time. In a meeting before a downtown businessmen's group, Rowlands referred to Rasmussen as an "evil man."⁶ He said:

He has been content to belittle and destroy. If he doesn't want our present type of city managerial government, then why did he take his oath of office. He's running under false colors.

When they cut this cloth they sure threw the pattern away. We can at least be thankful for that.⁷
By November 27, however, the Sacramento City Council had decided to appoint Richard Rathfon as manager. The previous week a number of citizen rallies had been held in Rowlands' behalf including one on the front lawn of Rowlands' north end home. The rallies were derided by Rasmussen and KAYE. Fred Crisman, commentator for KAYE, compared them to a fascist gathering.

Rowlands was far from defensive over not receiving the job offer from Sacramento. He said:

I believe the fact they came to me—I want to stress that the Sacramento mayor asked me to be interviewed—reflects the accomplishments that have been made in Tacoma in the past twelve and one-half years.¹

Rasmussen commented that the Sacramento City Council took one look at Tacoma and "didn't want Sacramento to look that way."² The mayor added that he was glad that the manager wanted to stay in Tacoma to help improve the city. He then said: "There's certainly a lot of work to be done around here. The city is in a shambles."³

The following spring Tacoma experienced a minor riot in the Hilltop area. Damage to property was light; however, a police officer was wounded by sniper fire. During the tense situation, Rasmussen moved to take control of the police department. Again, this action led to a direct confrontation between the mayor and manager. In the meantime, KAYE was inflaming the situation with inferences that vigilantes should move in to clear up the situation. This led a number of liberals in the community to call in officials of the U. S. Justice Department to investigate conditions in the city.

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
The Council Elections of 1969

The municipal election campaign of 1969 saw the pro-manager faction in the community split into two groups. Many downtown business interests and the more traditional manager ideologues gathered their forces behind "Big John" Anderson for mayor. Anderson's campaign was planned and organized by Ensley Llewellyn and included a treasury of $10,000 to get the former mayor through the primary. The traditional manager interests also backed John Jarstad, a well-known radio and television personality, for Hal Murtland's open seat on the council. [Murtland had decided to retire from politics.]

In the meantime, the leadership of Action Committee for Tacoma and the Municipal League had been taken over by a group of liberal, issue-oriented Democrats. The new president of ACT was Larry Stenberg, the director of admissions at the University of Puget Sound. The president of the Municipal League became Dr. Norman Anderson, a professor of geology at UPS and a liberal member of the Pierce County Democratic Central Committee.

The ACT group swung its support behind Gordon Johnston for mayor. Johnston, a liberal Democrat and chairman of the City Planning Commission, was running for elective office for the first time. ACT and the Municipal League also endorsed Harold Moss and Dennis Flannigan for council positions. Moss, a leader of Tacoma's Negro community, had filed for Murtland's open seat along with Jarstad. Flannigan, a former civil rights worker, had originally planned to file against Cviitanich but switched at the last moment to file against Bott.¹

The anti-manager group, on the other hand, was uniting its forces behind a slate of candidates for mayor and the four council seats. Rasmussen filed

¹ The writer sat in on the strategy sessions where these decisions were made.
once again for mayor. Cvitanich, who by this time had clearly lined-up with the Rasmussen interests, filed for re-election to his council seat. John O'Leary, a candidate in 1967 and a strong supporter of Rassmusen, filed against Bott and Flannigan. Jack Gamble, defeated twice in past council campaigns and a Rasmussen appointee to the Human Relations Commission, signed up to face Moss and Jarstad. And Fred Dean, a right-wing Republican from a prominent Tacoma family, entered the campaign against C. Morrison Johnson.

C. Morrison Johnson, a reluctant campaigner at seventy, received the endorsement of ACT, the Municipal League and the United Citizens group. He was faced with Dean and Al Brisbois, a liberal Democrat, school teacher and union official, in the primary. Brisbois was unable to line up the liberals behind his campaign when ACT's leaders decided that Flannigan, Moss and Johnston needed support from the downtown interests supporting Johnson. ¹

Cvitanich found himself faced with six relatively unknown candidates including Tim O'Grady, the twenty-one year old student body president of Tacoma Community College, and Willard Jones, a Pierce County organizer for the March of Dimes. The United Citizens contributed money to O'Grady and Jones when the two candidates indicated their support for council-manager government. ²

Early in the campaign it appeared that Anderson and Rasmussen would be meeting in the finals. Pat Steele had also entered the race but he had not secured the backing from any of the key interest groups. By the end of August, L. H. Pedersen had lined up support for Anderson's campaign within the ranks of labor. During this period ACT commissioned a public opinion

¹Ibid.

²The writer was privilege to this information as a result of his involvement as a consultant for ACT.
poll which showed the following voter preference: Rasmussen--37 per cent; Anderson--24 per cent; Steele--12 per cent; Johnston--5 per cent; and undecided--22 per cent.  

However, Anderson's campaign seemed to lack fire. In the early going, he refused to engage in public debates with his opponents. Later, during a series of television encounters, Anderson tried to argue with Rasmussen and seemed to be unsettled by the experience. While Anderson's campaign appeared to hit an early peak and then taper off, Gordon Johnston's support began to build. He appeared to do well in the television debates and many of the volunteers organized by Flannigan and Moss began to distribute Johnston literature. Johnston received some financial backing from downtown interests when he endorsed the charter. This financial support led to a number of effective advertisements late in the campaign which stressed the fact that Rasmussen, Anderson and Steele were political re-treads.

In what to many was a surprising upset, Johnston edged Anderson in the primary. The vote was relatively close: Johnston received 8,740 votes to Anderson's 8,139. However, the big winner was Slim Rasmussen who polled 14,491 votes or 43 per cent of the total. Another big winner was Cvitanich who polled more votes than the combined total of his six opponents. Cvitanich's opponent for the finals turned out to be Tim O'Grady. Harold Moss finished first in a field of ten candidates for Martland's open seat. John Jarstad edged Jack Gamble for the other position on the ballot. Gerry Bott finished 1,200 votes ahead of Dennis Flannigan and went into the finals challenged by John O'Leary. C. Morrison Johnson would face Fred Dean for the other council seat.

1 The writer conducted this poll for ACT. About 350 registered voters were interviewed during the week of August 8, 1968. The interviews were conducted by trained volunteers.
The anti-manager slate moved quickly to line-up support in the coming showdown. The anti-Rasmussen faction on the Central Labor Council was caught off guard by Anderson's defeat in the primary and Rasmussen supporters secured endorsements for the incumbent mayor, Cvitanich, Dean and O'Leary. KAYE continued blasting Rowlands and the pro-manager members of the council. However, the most curious aspect of the campaign was the behavior of the editorial staff of the News Tribune. In the months preceding the election, the News Tribune began editorially to criticize decisions by Rowlands. The newspaper also praised the mayor, particularly his tough law-and-order stand. Most surprising of all, the editors refused to endorse any candidates for the City Council.

The reason for the News Tribune's mystifying position must be left to conjecture. However, the Tribune Publishing Company had purchased a large tract of land in Tacoma's south end residential area. Later, the company requested the Planning Commission, chaired by Gordon Johnston, to grant a re-zone for the purpose of constructing a new plant for printing the newspaper. Johnston had led a majority of planning commissioners in denying the request. Rasmussen helped to overturn the commission's denial when it reached the council. The publishing company was also in the midst of preparing an application for a cable television franchise. The franchise, a lucrative award for any of the numerous bidders, would be granted after the election.

The election found Johnston defeating Rasmussen by a close margin of 350 votes out of nearly 44,000 votes cast for mayor. However, Cvitanich, Dean and O'Leary also won, giving the anti-manager bloc a majority on the City Council for the first time. John Jarstad defeated Harold Moss for the fourth position. The evening before the new council was to be sworn into office Dave Rowlands resigned as city manager.
The aftermath

Although Rasmussen was defeated in his attempt to be re-elected, state law allowed him to hold a lame duck position until January, 1970. Thus, the mayor had a working majority on the council for the first time. During this period, the News Tribune was granted a cable television franchise as was Tacoma Cable Company, a company organized, in part, by Marshall Riconosciuto. The granting of the two franchises led to an ill-fated referendum attempt on the part of the reform interests in the community. Rasmussen also appointed a group of supporters and friends to serve on a citizens' committee for the purpose of drawing up a new mayor-council charter proposal.

When Rasmussen left the council, long-time manager foe George Cvitanich assumed the leadership of the anti-manager bloc. Cvitanich, the newly appointed deputy mayor and heady with power for the first time, led the council majority through a series of decisions which resulted in his and their eventual downfall. The council majority's first major move was to appoint Floyd Oles city manager. City Attorney Marshall McCormick had been serving in the interim. Oles, a seventy-three year old conservative radio commentator on KAYE, indicated that he was opposed to city managers in theory and said that he thought he would be "working against himself" in his new position.¹ Within months, Oles had fired Police Chief Charles Zittel and Urban Renewal Director James Wright.

Oles' appointment, which came on a suspension of the rules and was a surprise to Mayor Johnston and the council minority, led to the formation of the Tacoma Recall Committee. The recall committee, made up of leaders from ACT and the Municipal League, filed recall charges against Cvitanich, Tony

Zatkovich, Mrs. Becky Banfield, Fred Dean and John O'Leary on January 30.

The charges read as follows:

That on January 6, the five council members approved an ordinance awarding a cable television franchise without regard to evidence or expert advice which was not in the best interests of the city . . . .

That on January 20, the five councilmen appointed Floyd Oles as city manager by resolution not on the agenda . . . without prior knowledge of certain other members of the council; without notice of hearing; without benefit of comprehensive study, search, promotion or advertising to fill the vacancy of city manager; and not in the best interests of the city of Tacoma . . . .

That the five-to-four vote to appoint Oles was taken when the five council members knew or in the exercise of good judgement should have known, that the said Floyd Oles was not qualified or able to discharge the duties of that said office . . . .1

The recall campaign led to a number of court cases ranging to the State Supreme Court. In the meantime, Mrs. Virginia Shackelford attempted to file charges against the mayor and the council minority. The charges were thrown out-of-court after lawyers for the recall committee had scored repeated court victories.

The council majority continued to make questionable decisions during this period. For example, they granted police and fire department personnel large scale increases in salary. This led to a strike by transit employees and workers in the public works department. Later, the council majority fired Oles as city manager, again under a suspension of the rules and without notice to the other members of the council. Oles' firing came the day after he had appointed popular Lyle Smith as chief of police. Smith had been the choice of the rank-in-file police officers but was not favored by Zatkovich and Cvitanich.

When the recall committee had finally collected enough signatures to force the council to call a recall election, the majority refused to set an

election date. Again, the question was brought to the courts. Finally, the recall date was set for September 15 along with the mayor-council charter proposal completed by Rasmussen's committee.

On September 15 Tacoma's electorate voted overwhelmingly in favor of the recall. Nearly 80 per cent of the voters in the north end voted to oust the five anti-manager councilmen while the south end precincts gave the recall a 55 per cent favorable vote. The margin of victory for the recall forces ranged from 12,000 votes, in the case of Mrs. Banfield, to 10,000 votes, in the case of Cvitanich. Thus, history repeated itself. For the second time, Tacoma voters recalled a majority of its City Council. However, under the modern recall provisions, there would be no special election to determine the new councilmen. This authority was given to the remaining members of the council. Within weeks the council had appointed Harold Moss, Mrs. Catherine Egan, a south end school teacher active in the League of Women Voters, Ronald Corsi, a south end furniture dealer, Phil Schroeder, a north end businessman and Jerry Maule, a north end businessman, to the open council seats.

The mayor-council proposal was defeated by over 5,000 votes. The margin of victory was the greatest ever achieved by the council-manager charter. The north end precincts voted 70 per cent against the mayor-council measure to match the vote against the strong-mayor charter of 1956. Although the south end once again voted against the council-manager system, the margin was close—51 per cent. Interestingly enough, when the political tide began to turn late in the campaign, the News Tribune editors endorsed the recall of Cvitanich, Mrs. Banfield, O'Leary and Dean. The News Tribune also called for the defeat of the mayor-council proposal. The Central Labor Council supported the mayor-council measure but took no position on the recall.

In an election held on the same primary ballot as the recall, Rasmussen was defeated by State Senator John McCutchen in a comeback try in Tacoma's
29th district. One year later McCutchen died and after an intense political battle between Democratic party liberals and conservatives, Rasmussen was appointed by the county commissioners to fill the open senate seat.

A summary and conclusion of some of the more important events and decisions discussed in this chapter will be included in the final chapter which will also review and further analyze the findings of the previous chapters.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this, the final chapter, is to summarize the main points that have been covered in the preceding chapters and to reach some basic generalizations from the questions and issues posed in the introduction. One of the essential queries in this regard concerns the reaction of political interests to a decision-making process which excludes them from active participation. Specifically, the query is as follows: Is political conflict over the establishment of a council-manager system more likely to occur when major socio-political groups in a community are excluded from the decisions which, one, bring about the form of government; and, two, originate the initial policies of that government?

In the city of Tacoma several important political interest groups have opposed the form of government. As a result of this opposition, major conflict has emerged in the community. These groups have included organized labor, the municipal employee organizations, leaders of the Democratic party organization, open town interests and conservative, right-wing activists. The essential question, then, is as follows: Have these groups opposed the council-manager plan because they were excluded from the decision-making process? The first section of this chapter will attempt to find an answer to this basic question.
The Basis for Group Opposition

One could argue with a good deal of justification that Tacoma's labor unions would have opposed the 1952 charter regardless of the extent of their involvement in the initial decision-making process. Indeed, organized labor had a long history of opposition to council-manager government before the bitterly fought campaign of 1952. Opposition to the general concepts of executive authority and part-time policy-makers can be traced to 1890. Specific opposition to the manager plan first emerged on the editorial pages of the Labor Advocate in 1927. Later, during the 1930's, labor unions actively campaigned against a referendum which would have placed a council-manager charter on the ballot. The reason for labor's position can be seen from the following editorial in the Labor Advocate printed in 1934:

... the proposal to induce the people to submit to this sort of non-representative control of city affairs is based primarily on the notion that certain sections of the citizens will thereby obtain complete domination and control of them.

It would turn over the administration of affairs in our city to the hands of certain classes which have shown in the past complete indifference to its welfare and the only eagerness in civic affairs that they hitherto manifested was to eliminate as much as possible the public service duties which should be a part of the function of civilized government.¹

Labor's position concerning the manager plan seems clear from the above statement. Labor leaders regarded the council-manager concept as a class-oriented system of governance aimed at giving the business and professional interests in the city control of the governmental decision-making process. The council-manager idea, seemingly conceived and advocated by the Chamber of Commerce, the Engineers' Club and other such groups, was viewed as being a political threat to the interests of labor. These fears were heightened

¹"Editorial--The City Manager Plan," Tacoma Labor Advocate, March 9, 1934, p. 3.
by community conflict over the question of private versus public power as was shown in chapter three.

The relationship of the city employees with organized labor has been strong and close. The employees are unionized and therefore have had friendly relations with the leadership of the Central Labor Council. The employees also have had a long history of active political involvement in city affairs. In the 1890's, Tacoma became the first city in the Western United States to embrace a civil service system. The effort to bring a civil service system to the city was helped by many municipal workers. Also, when Tacoma purchased its own utilities operation, it expanded greatly its services and the number of civil servants it employed. The utilities' personnel were, as might be expected, in the thick of the fight over private versus public power.

During the 1930's much of the municipal work force was active in the campaign against the council-manager reform effort of that era. When the reformers appeared before the City Council in 1933 to call for a freeholders' election, Fred Dabroe, president of the Municipal Civil Service League, protested. He argued that the Chamber of Commerce had been meeting in secret to frame a manager charter.¹ He was to say later: "We want more information on the plan before we can make a decision."² In 1934 the Civil Service League was involved in the battle against the council-manager referendum.

During the 1960's and 1950's municipal employee groups had reason to be satisfied with the commission system. The charter revisions of 1927 provided for an elected Civil Service Board. On the board were a number of

former city employees and union members. Also, the economic boom after the
Second World War resulted in substantial increases in tax revenues and boosts
in the salaries of the city workers.

The Democratic party organization in the city and the leaders of organized
labor have been, for the most part, close political allies. This relationship
has been reflected in the tremendous Democratic vote in the blue collar
sections of South Tacoma. Although Tacoma municipal politics had been officially
non-partisan for over forty years, a number of well known Democrats had been
elected to the City Council. In 1952 the Democrats held three seats on the
council. Commissioners C. A. Erdahl, L. W. Craig and Jack Roberts were
active in the party. Jack Elich, Tacoma's last police chief under the
commission system, was to become chairman of the Democratic party Central
Committee while his predecessor, Tony Zatkovich, was to eventually seek the
Democratic party nomination for Pierce County sheriff. Craig later was elected
Pierce County assessor on the Democratic ticket. In essence, the commission
system had not excluded the Democrats from political influence.

The push for council-manager government came from essentially Republican
interests in the north end. The Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women
Voters and the Municipal League were led by individuals generally on the
other side of the political fence from the Democratic party regulars. When
organized labor and the city employees lined up against the charter in 1952,
their allies in the Democratic party lined up with them. Indeed, many of the
leaders were one in the same.

The open town interests obviously stood to lose the most from changes
of policy which might occur as the result of an alteration in the form of
government. Much of the thrust of the reform movement was aimed at cleaning
up the police department and ending once and for all the graft and corruption
which became such an embarrassing issue during the Rosellini crime investigation.
The open town advocates had good reason to oppose the 1952 charter. The extent of their influence and the amount of money contributed to the campaign must be left to conjecture, however.

Conservative reaction to the manager plan was not greatly evident during the early 1950's. The ideological fury of those aligned with the John Birch Society and Pro-America didn't really begin until the city applied for its first urban renewal grant. Later, when the council and manager attempted to deal politically with the social issue, the reaction came out in full force.

However, some conservatives were involved to a degree during the charter campaign of 1952. Walter Pray, a key strategist for the anti-reform forces, referred to himself as a "practical reactionary."¹ Elliot Metcalf, a news commentator and member of the steering committee directing the anti-charter campaign, used many of the same arguments against the city manager that were used later by the right-wing groups. Metcalf referred to "syndicates," conspiracies and "one-man dictatorial rule" all coming from headquarters at 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago in a series of advertisements run in the News Tribune shortly before the election.²

Efforts to Influence the Decision Process

By 1952 the union leadership, seeming to sense the city's mood for change, appeared to be more accommodating in its attitude concerning council-manager government. During the freeholder campaign of that year the major labor interests—the Central Labor Council, the Building Trades Council and

the Teamsters Union—joined with the important business, professional and reform groups to help organize the "City Wide Freeholders Information Committee." Included on the list of endorsed candidates were a number of individuals who were opposed to the manager plan. But, the labor leadership had to realize that the possibilities of a council-manager charter emerging from the freeholders' deliberations were good. Indeed, incumbent Mayor John Anderson had called for a council-manager charter before a meeting of the Municipal League in 1950. At that time, Anderson was to joke: "If I work toward a city manager form and do myself out of a job I'll still be able to buy groceries." Many of the organizations in support of the information committee were also committed to the manager plan. And, of course, by joining with the professional, business and reform groups, labor was lending its endorsement to a number of council-manager proponents who were running for freeholder.

One can speculate as to what motivated the unions; however, the evidence seems to suggest that the reason for the involvement boiled down to the fact that the people were in a mood for change, many of the reform groups were in the forefront of the battle to bring about change and the unions simply did not want to be left out of the picture. As one former freeholder put it: "Labor wanted to be in a position where they could still exert some influence."²

If the labor leaders had any doubts about the council-manager charter, those doubts certainly must have been cleared up when the freeholders selected Fred Shoemaker as their chairman. However, as was shown in chapter four,


during the first week in May of 1952, Shoemaker sent a letter to the Central Labor Council in which he indicated that the freeholders would not decide on the form of government until labor had the opportunity to present its views. Two weeks later, H. S. McIlvain, secretary of the council, wrote back to say that the labor organization had set-up a committee to review possible changes in the charter. He continued by writing: "Just as soon as our committee has finished its task we will advise you and if it is possible to meet with the commission it will be greatly appreciated."¹ Labor was never to appear before the commission. The reason for this was because Shoemaker pushed through a charter commitment the first week in June, before the union leaders had the opportunity to arrange a meeting time with the freeholders.

Chapter four included a discussion of Shoemaker's reasoning for the early decision. One former freeholder goes so far as to suggest that Shoemaker really didn't want labor to appear for fear that political controversy and delay might result in a defeat for the council-manager charter.² In any case, it has been shown that he could probably have pushed through the endorsement of the manager plan and, at the same time, ameliorated labor's concerns. The key was the willingness of a majority of the commission to compromise on the question of a separate utilities board. Labor would have probably suggested its inclusion in the charter and Shoemaker and the others could have said: "Yes, we agree, regardless of what the Public Administration Service recommends." That opportunity never came, however.

²Hugh J. Tudor, private discussions.
The city employees attempted to influence the freeholders through the leadership of the Municipal Civil Service League. The league first became involved in the commission deliberations when the question of an elected civil service board was discussed. The debate over this issue surfaced in February of 1952 when the Public Administration Service, at the City Council's request, reviewed the city's personnel operation. In a survey report, the service suggested that the elected board had resulted in mutual distrust between it and the council, that it operated against positive personnel programs and that it was intimidated by political interests.¹ Mayor Anderson and Public Works Commissioner Jack Roberts appeared before the freeholders to suggest that the board be appointive. However, the civil service league strongly objected to this idea and on May 21 wrote the freeholders to urge that no action be taken to change the nature of the board.² As was shown in chapter four, the civil service interests also strongly urged the freeholders to write-in a rule-of-one provision in the charter.

The Democratic party made no formal presentation before the freeholders for an obvious reason—by law, Tacoma's municipal government had to be nonpartisan. However, organized labor and the city employees made up a vital part of the party's political coalition in the community. The open town interests had no desire to participate at this stage and worked to defeat the charter during the later campaign. The conservative interests became involved in the 1960's.

¹Letter from L. D. Wire, president of the Municipal Civil Service League, to the freeholders' commission, May 21, 1952.
²Ibid.
The anti-manager groups were active in the campaign to defeat the charter as was outlined in chapter four. Afterward, the newly elected council made a number of decisions which turned out to be crucial to continued opposition to the system. The appointment of Frank Backstrom as city manager added fuel to the concerns of the city employee groups, labor and the Democrats. Backstrom came to Tacoma with the reputation of being anti-labor in attitude. An outsider, with a questionable background as far as labor was concerned, he was immediately given the responsibility for reorganizing the city's administrative code. His first move was to bring in more outsiders to head up the most sensitive areas in the city administration. The appointment of Gavin Lawson as personnel director crystallized all of the fears of the city employees. Lawson was not only an outsider, he was a former employee of the Public Administration Service. The service had called for an end to the elected Civil Service Board and had suggested that the rule-of-three concept was good administrative practice. Concerned about the possible changes which might take place in the civil service operation, the municipal employee groups turned to the City Council for help in arbitrating differences which might arise between them and the city manager. D. H. Ketler, secretary of the Joint Labor Committee, pleaded with the council to sit in on the discussions with the manager so that they could see both sides of any arguments. As was discussed in chapter five, the council majority viewed such meetings as "touchy business" and refused to become involved. Later, when Backstrom presented his changes in personnel procedures, the council majority passed them without debate.

The appearance of aloofness on the part of the council majority was reinforced by its unwritten policy that no former opponents of the charter were to be seriously considered for appointment to important city boards and commissions. This policy meant that almost all of the city's labor leaders, most of the important Democrats and much of the political leadership from the
south end were excluded from holding positions in Tacoma's government. In point of fact, not one prominent Democrat or South Tacoman had served on the freeholders' commission. And from 1953 to 1956, when Tacoma's first elected officials under the new charter held office, not one prominent Democrat, labor leader or resident of South Tacoma was appointed to a city board or commission.

The Exclusion of Important Groups
Summary Findings

The information presented in this study strongly confirms the following points:

First, several important socio-political groups were excluded from influencing the decisions which led to the establishment of council-manager government in the city of Tacoma. These groups [i.e., organized labor, municipal employee organizations, the leadership of the Democratic party, etc.] were excluded from the decision process in two ways: (1) decisions were made before group representatives had the opportunity to influence those decisions; (2) when representatives of some of the groups did suggest revisions or modifications in the system, those suggestions were disregarded.

Second, the groups excluded from the decision process had gained certain benefits from the commission system and had been able to influence the decision-makers of that system. On the other hand, the council-manager plan had been viewed with a great deal of suspicion in the past and earlier efforts to bring such a plan to Tacoma had been opposed by many of the groups.

Third, the groups that were excluded from the decision process opposed the council-manager charter which appeared on the ballot in 1952. That opposition took the form of an active political effort directed at the defeat of the charter. A great deal of money, time and energy went into the campaign. The impact of the campaign showed up in the vote totals of the election. Those
sections of the city with the highest percentage of union workers and Democrats tended to vote against the charter proposal.

Fourth, the initial City Council election under the provisions of the council-manager charter was controlled by individuals from groups which had been traditionally hostile to the interests of organized labor and the Democratic party. The majority of the council proceeded to make the following decisions: (1) they selected a city manager who had been formally opposed by organized labor; (2) they established an informal policy which excluded all of the opponents of the charter from positions on the city's major boards and commissions; (3) they dismissed out-of-hand the top vote-getter on the council [popular South Tacoman Frank Stojack] as a mayorality candidate because his occupation and manner were inappropriate as far as the majority was concerned.

Fifth, the activities of the city's first city manager were viewed with a great deal of suspicion by leaders of the groups that had been excluded from the decision process. That city manager was given responsibility for implementing a number of far-reaching changes in the city's municipal system of governance. When the council majority was asked to mediate difficulties which might arise between the manager and the suspicious groups, it refused.

The points listed so far confirm only part of the initial query, however. That is, the evidence supports the conclusion that major socio-political groups were excluded from the decisions which brought about the form of government and were also excluded from influencing the initial policies of that government. The second part of that question is as follows: Did this exclusion make political conflict over the system more likely?

One can only speculate as to what organized labor, for example, might have done if its representatives had been allowed to present their case to the freeholders. However, the evidence presented in chapters two, three and ten gives some possible answers. The conclusions of chapters two and three
show that there were as many differences as there were similarities in the conditions leading up to the reforms of 1910 and 1952. However, there are two basic facts which deserve repeating here. Those facts are as follows:

1. The business and professional groups responsible for the 1909-10 reform movement made a determined and conscious effort to include not only key leaders of organized labor, but also leaders from the Democratic party and South Tacoma in their deliberations. (2) When the political tests came (i.e., the vote on the charter and support for the recall campaign of 1911) the reform groups were not faced with the opposition of labor or the important Democrats.

The findings of chapter ten show the following: The position of the labor chiefs in the late 1960's and early 1970's demonstrated that general opposition to an issue and an outright political campaign with financial and personal commitment can mean two entirely different things. For example, in 1968 the labor council refused to support Mayor A. L. Rasmussen's bid to put his strong-mayor amendments on the ballot without a freeholders'election being held first. Two years later the labor council endorsed the mayor-council amendments presented by the Cvitanich faction on the City Council. But labor's commitment did not go beyond simple endorsement on the editorial pages of the Labor Advocate.

As has been shown, the position of the labor unions in 1934, 1952, 1955 and 1956 was very much different. The important distinction, of course, was that by the 1960's the leaders of labor and the other alienated groups were being consciously courted by those in power on the council. The appointment of L. H. Pedersen as chairman of Mayor Harold Tollefson's blue ribbon committee to explore future community goals was an example of this effort.

The Formation and Strategy of an Anti-manager Faction

A second query of this study is as follows: What is the likelihood of socio-political groups which have been excluded from important decisions related
to the formation of council-manager government in a community, coalescing to become a political faction and presenting an united front as an anti-manager interest group?

The evidence presented in this study suggests that, given the right circumstances [as in Tacoma], the likelihood is great. As was shown in chapter four, almost from the beginning a coalition of leaders from organized labor, the city employees and the Democratic party formed to oppose the council-manager system. This initial opposition coalesced behind an interest group committed to the defeat of the proposed charter. Although the charter did pass and a new council was elected, nothing happened between November 1952 and November 1955 to change or dissipate the feelings of hostility in the community. Thus, in 1955 the Citizens' Committee for Better Government became the Committee of 100 and a new campaign to defeat the council-manager government began. Some of the names of those in the forefront of the Committee of 100 were different from those identified as the leaders of the citizens committee, but the major group alignments remained the same.

The bitter defeat of the strong-mayor charter of 1956 led to a new strategy by the anti-manager interests in 1958. That strategy, engineered by political operative Walter Pray, was based on the fact that by electing their own candidates to the council, the anti-manager coalition could tip the balance of power in the community in their favor. In 1958 the Ben Hanson led slate of anti-reformers was swept into office by a political landslide. However, the municipal elections of that year really had the effect of ending, for all intents and purposes, the original anti-manager coalition which evolved in 1952. As the findings in chapter six, seven and eight indicate, many of the traditional opponents of council-manager government were accommodated by the decisions made by the new council. This accommodation came about as the result of basic changes in the structure of government and
a fundamental change in the policy attitude of the council.

The emergence of the anti-manager coalition headed by A. L. Rasmussen was based, for the most part, on a different set of political circumstances. Rasmussen managed to combine the lingering discontent of those people still opposed philosophically to the manager plan, the backlash sentiments directed at the social programs of the Tollefson—Rowlands administration and the partisanship of thousands of south end Democrats who had voted for him in the past, to achieve a new and viable anti-manager faction in the city. The political humiliation of his protégés on the council during the recall campaign of 1970 demonstrated that Rasmussen's coalition was almost solely dependent on his personality and political leadership.

Summary and Findings to the Second Query

From the preceding analysis, the following generalizations can be made:

First, the political interests that were denied input into the decisions leading to council-manager government for Tacoma did coalesce to form an anti-manager political faction. This faction was a powerful one because of the following: (1) the interests involved in its formation were natural political allies; (2) those interests had been successful in achieving a majority vote in most of the partisan elections in the area.

Second, the anti-manager coalition of organized labor, the Democrats, city employees and open town interests lasted for six years, from 1952 to 1958. During the period of its existence, the anti-manager coalition employed a number of strategies aimed at changing or altering the distribution of authority in the city's governmental system.

Third, an intense degree of political conflict was the direct result of the strategies used by the anti-manager interests and the responses employed
The conflict resulted in a number of tests of power in the form of hard fought, bitter elections.

Fourth, the anti-manager coalition achieved political success in those elections in which a slate of well-known candidates ran for office. The reformers were victorious in those elections where the council-manager form of government came under direct attack.

Fifth, the anti-manager coalition which evolved in 1952 began to break up after the candidates supported by the coalition gained political power on the council and after the council-manager system had been altered to allow for more participation by the groups that had been excluded from the decision process of 1952.

The Use of Issues with High Emotional Content During Periods of Major Political Conflict

A third query posed in this study is as follows: Will pro and anti-reform interests in a community resort to the use of highly emotional community goals not necessarily related to the form of government during periods when political control of a city is uncertain?

Once, again, the evidence presented in the preceding chapters tends to confirm the query stated above. Although numerous emotional issues were used by both sides during the election campaigns of the period, four issues tend to stand out. Those four issues are as follows: (1) the status of the Utilities Board; (2) criminal control and an open city; (3) dictatorship government; and (4) the necessity of an independent audit.

The status of the Utilities Board.—An early emotional issue concerned the integrity of Tacoma's public power utility system. As was shown in chapter four, the freeholders of 1952 decided, for political reasons, that the light, water and belt-line utilities should be separated from the authority of the city manager through the creation of an independent utilities board and
utilities director. The separation issue became a major bone of contention during the campaign for strong-mayor government in 1956. The argument in support of this concept was that the utilities were businesslike in orientation and required more long range planning considerations than the other city departments. Thus, they must be clearly separated from political interference.

The fact of the matter, of course, was that separate boards had not preserved a large amount of administrative integrity in municipal governments in the past. Indeed, the purpose of council-manager government was to fix responsibility in one chief administrative official so that action could be taken by elected officials should difficulties arise. But in this case political expedience prevailed and the decision to separate the board undoubtedly helped the cause of the reformers in 1952. The emotionalism over this issue probably helped to defeat the strong-mayor proposal of 1956.

Criminal control and an open city.--The emotional community issue here involved the control of vice. The fact was that the council-manager reform and the newcomers it brought to city government did do much to effectively end the influence of graft and vice interests in the city. However, the charter's proponents were quick to suggest that anyone who opposed the city manager concept was either controlled by the vice interests or was being duped by them. The thrust of the argument was that the manager system itself was the chief cause for ending the open town policies and not the members of the council or the attitude of the electorate.

In this case, the council-manager advocates running for open council seats in 1958 unwittingly exposed this issue for what it really was—an emotional appeal. When Charles Battin charged that the election of the Ben Hanson slate would result in a return to open town policies, he was refuting the notion that the manager plan would, by itself, effectively end vice and graft in the community. The manager interests continually pointed to the
political and administrative checks in the 1952 charter. Yet, there were checks under the old commission system as well. Indeed, a majority of the council under the former plan could fire a police chief and refuse to confirm a replacement. In the strong-mayor proposals, the mayor's appointments had to receive a majority approval by the council; and, of course, the council held the power of the purse.

The dictator charge.--The emotional community issue in this instance was that a mayor form of government would allow the citizens to elect their chief executive and that when the council is permitted to do so, the chief executive tends to become a dictator. The pro-manager interests also used this argument to their advantage. The issue as they interpreted it was as follows: A strong-mayor system creates a boss or dictator because the mayor cannot be effectively checked by the council. Thus, strong-mayor government should be rejected in favor of the manager plan.

The experience of the Frank Backstrom administration showed that the city manager was simply an extension of the attitude of the council majority. The council was careful to restrict the duties of Backstrom to that of the traditional role of the manager. Backstrom was far from ever achieving a position where he could truly be classified as a dictator. One might argue, however, that the council majority during the period did exercise its will over those groups that were inclined to oppose them politically. But the weakness of Backstrom's position became glaringly apparent by the cavalier way in which he was treated after the 1956 charter election.

Dave Rowlands was another matter. He was a pragmatist and an activist; but, again, the attitude of the council and, indeed, the political climate had much to do with it. In 1956 the council-manager advocates were looking for someone who could bring a refreshing new look to the city administration and, at the same time, "sell" the manager concept to the community. Rowlands
was therefore given a freer reign than his predecessor. During the troubled Hanson era, Rowlands shifted with the situation. He aligned himself with Hanson and rode out the storm by convincing Councilwoman Ellen Price to support him on the council. Had he been elected a strong-mayor, he undoubtedly could have done more.

Just as strong an argument could be raised against the contention of the pro-manager interests concerning the dangers of a mayor-council system. The check of the council over the mayor was self-evident. Besides that, the laws of the state provide for non-partisan municipal elections and civil service protection for city employees. Other checks come from the provisions for the initiative, referendum and recall. Thus, the opportunity of an old-line boss mayor emerging from a mayor-council system is unlikely.

The necessity of an independent audit.--This highly emotional issue was generally stated as follows: The financial condition of the city will always be in doubt because there is no independently conducted audit of the city's financial record; thus, the governmental system must be changed to include either a separately elected controller or a provision requiring the council to hire an independent auditing firm to review all of the city's transactions.

The audit issue was used by the strong-mayor advocates who provided for an elected controller in the mayor-council proposals of 1956, 1968 and 1970. The anti-manager councilmen also raised questions over the issue by referring to the vague terminology concerning the audit in the 1952 charter.

This issue was a very difficult one for the pro-manager councilmen to deal with. An independent audit of all of the city transactions was prohibitive in terms of cost and so they reasoned that a management audit of selected departments would suffice. Enough of the city's administrative machinery was covered each year to provide the council with a complete overview every five years. This was difficult to explain politically and even more difficult
to justify by the vagueness of the running audit provisions of the charter. However, even more than that, the whole question of an independent audit was misleading and based on a purely emotional appeal. Indeed, all of the city's financial records were audited by full-time government auditors who worked every day out of the Washington State auditor's office. The audit was complete and independent, but the point seemed to get lost in the emotional cross-fire of the political campaigns during the period.

The Relationship of the Manager, Council and Mayor

The first sections of this final chapter have dealt with Tacoma's political environment. The focus has been on the position of important interest groups, the evolution of political coalitions and the use of emotional community issues. This section will deal briefly with the relationship of the city manager to the council and mayor. In this regard, the following query has been posed: Will an elected mayor who opposes a particular city manager who is supported by the majority of the council, contend for power in administrative as well as policy-making areas?

Dave Rowlands had to deal with three elected mayors during lengthy tenure as city manager. In each case, the mayor opposed Rowlands at some time while in office. However, in only one instance did the mayor actively challenge Rowlands in policy and administrative issue areas.

A. L. Rasmussen was a very special case, of course. He came upon the scene during a period when social issues had a profound effect on local politics. His unbending will combined with his own backlash attitude created a period of harsh emotional feelings in the city. The Rasmussen years were unique in that nearly every question of dispute between the mayor and manager became a major confrontation of power. The key difference from the past mayor-manager relationships was that Rowlands was totally unable to gain by
accommodation. For example, the loss of his seat on the council podium and the loss of the large office complex could have been accepted during the Hanson and Tollefson years. In the case of Hanson, the loss would probably have meant that the mayor would be willing to back Rowlands at a later time. With Tollefson, the decision could be made in private, without dramas and without humiliation before the public. As far as Rasmussen was concerned, the move was simply another way of forcing Rowlands to resign.

In general, both Backstrom and Rowlands were successful in terms of the roles they defined for themselves. They were in a real sense extensions of their respective City Councils. The first council wanted Backstrom to organize the city's administration in the proper way, lend advice in some policy areas and maintain a low public profile. The fact that he became controversial was more the fault of the council majority than the manager. Backstrom did everything asked of him. When the nature of the political environment changed in 1956, he became expendable.

Rowlands was hired for the purpose of getting the city moving again and for selling the concept of the manager plan to the public. In this regard, Rowlands truly believed that he could function effectively in any political situation and, indeed, he proved it by surviving for thirteen years. But as the system became controlled by more pragmatic policymakers, Rowlands had to respond in kind. This required a considerable effort to build political alliances, to bargain and, in the end, to take calculated risks. The risk taking really began before 1958 when Rowlands questioned the desirability of a separately appointed utilities director. He was supported in his stand by Mayor Anderson; but accommodations were made before the 1958 election. The second major risk was Rowlands' decision to strike a political alliance with the young and inexperienced Ben Hanson. This meant, of course, that if Hanson failed politically Rowlands' position would be in jeopardy. That risk led to the
possibility of incurring the wrath of the ideologues on the council, as it
did, and becoming involved in a showdown with Police Chief Roy Kerr.

The third major risk involved the decision by Rowlands to commit himself
to policy positions on the social issue. In his 1967 state of the city address,
Rowlands set the tone for the coming council elections by calling for the
creation of a human rights commission. Earlier, he pressed the council for
approval of an application for a $500,000 planning grant for a Model Cities
program. By playing the role of the advocate, Rowlands was once again aligning
himself politically—this time with Mayor Harold Tollefson. When Tollefson
lost to Rasmussen in 1967, Rowlands became the new political focal point.
And when Rowlands and Rasmussen continually confronted one another on the
issues, it became a question of the prerogatives of an elected mayor versus
the authority of an appointed city manager.

Some Concluding Comments

During its twenty years of existence, Tacoma's council-manager system
of governance has gone through a number of political, social and economic
transformations. These changes have been mentioned during the course of the
study. However, in conclusion a few of the more noteworthy should be listed.

First, the nature of Tacoma's City Council has changed significantly
over the years. The north end council-manager ideologues first elected to
the council were soon replaced with pragmatic policy-makers more in tune with
the city's electorate. When the north end reformers returned to power in
1962, the policy precedents established in 1958 were maintained. An interesting
exception to this trend occurred in 1967 and 1969 when the more reactionary
element of the community assumed control of city government. The political
response to this seemingly inconsistent political behavior was the successful
recall campaign of 1970.
Second, the role of the city manager was redefined during the period. The first manager, Frank Backstrom, fitted the traditional mold. He attempted to restrict his behavior to the administrative realm. The fact that he became politically controversial was more the result of council action and the political implications of drastic changes in administrative decision-making than anything else. Dave Rowlands defined his role as a community advocate and proceeded to become a spokesman for project oriented policies. Rowlands was also successful in making deals and striking alliances with political leaders in the community. Indeed, the office of city manager became publicity conscious and politically aggressive for the first time during the Rowlands era.

Third, the influence and political activity of the important group interests changed markedly during the twenty years. The leadership of organized labor became directly involved in the decision processes. Other former opponents of the charter became active participants and supporters of the system. In the meantime, as new policies became apparent, other groups emerged from latency to become politically active. The conservative right-wing element challenged policies directed at encouraging federal aid programs such as urban renewal. The minority groups exerted influence with the enactment of Model Cities. Later, environmentalists began to challenge land use decisions.

Fourth, the influence of the federal government became more and more of a factor locally. After the bitter campaign of 1956, the political leadership of the city sought to prove to the citizens that the council-manager system could result in positive, tangible changes for the city. The role played by Dave Rowlands and the city's first massive six-year plan were steps in that direction. A major goal of this effort was the revitalization of downtown Tacoma. It soon became apparent to the council and the manager that the only
means of accomplishing such a goal was through the financial benefits of federal urban renewal. Thus, the city's leaders committed themselves to active solicitation of federal funds. The success of this posture was reflected in the national recognition accorded Rowlands and Tollefson in 1966.

Finally, the emergence of the social issue as a factor politically had to be one of the more significant events during the two decades. For the first time since the days of machine politics, the city's government became directly involved in social welfare programming. The implications of the involvement were seen in the formation of new political institutions and programs--the Human Relations Commission, the Model Cities program, the local poverty agency, the trainee corps, the Tacoma Urban Coalition, and the community relations detail of the police department. The social issue also led to political reaction in the community and the election of A. L. Rasmussen as mayor.
CHAPTER XII

AN EPILOGUE: COMMENTS ON CURRENT THEORY
AND FUTURE ASSUMPTIONS

This additional chapter is, in essence, an epilogue. The purpose is to offer comment on some of the theoretical assumptions which have been posed in the past chapters and to suggest a number of future areas for exploration. Perhaps the first step in the process is to attempt to classify Tacoma on the basis of past studies of conflict-ridden council-manager cities. From this basis further analysis can be made concerning the character of Tacoma's City Council, the relationship of the mayor and city manager and the impact of the expanding role of the federal government on municipal administration.

The Nature of Tacoma's Political Environment

Tacoma can be readily classified as a competitive council-manager city as defined by Kammerer, et al. in their study of cities in Florida. Competitive communities feature deep-seated conflict between political factions or cliques which contend for control of the local government. The Florida study also indicated that the competitive community is characterized by the following:

... the level of interest conflict is high enough and interests perhaps are divisive enough so that accommodation cannot occur within a single leadership clique.¹

¹Kammerer, et al., p. 198
Other characteristics include population size and the kind of city manager hired by the council. The competitive community is generally larger in population than the non-competitive type. Thus, the population of the competitive communities in Florida is more nearly like Tacoma's than the more politically stable communities. Also, the competitive community is more likely to have an "outsider-professional" city manager.\(^1\) Again, this is similar to the situation in Tacoma.

Agger, Goodrich and Swanson in their study of community power structure break down the competitive communities into two sub-classifications. The variable they use is the numerical distribution of those contributing to the outcome of political decisions in a city.\(^2\) Under this scheme, communities can be either competitive mass \(\text{i.e., conflict-ridden cities with many people voting or otherwise participating in decision areas}\) or competitive elite \(\text{i.e., cities where voting is low and a relatively few number of political actors engage in conflict}\). Tacoma is somewhat difficult to fit neatly into either of these categories. For the most part, voting in local elections has been at a low level—generally around 45 per cent. Also, the leaders of the contending elites remained relatively stable and small in number. However, the 1955 campaign to change the charter involved a larger number of participants. Later, during the Rasmussen era, more groups and individuals became involved. In general, however, Tacoma could be classified as a competitive elite community.

Adrian and Williams have used role perceptions of city councilmen to classify council-manager cities. They identify the following four basic

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Bollens and Ries., p. 22.
roles: (1) promoting economic growth, (2) providing or securing life's amenities, (3) maintaining (only) traditional service, and (4) arbitrating among conflicting interests.\textsuperscript{1} The first and fourth roles seem to apply most readily to the Tacoma scene during the period of the 1950's. From 1953 to 1958 the majority of Tacoma's City Council sought to promote economic growth. Adrian and Williams note that this role focuses on the following:

The image of stability and regularity in city finances must be assured. Friendliness toward business in general should be the traditional attitude of city officials.\textsuperscript{2}

The efforts of Tacoma's first city manager to make the city's administrative machinery as efficient as possible indicated the desire of the first council to bring stability to government. The six-year plan of 1956-57 with its aim to expand utility services and redevelop downtown coincided with the council's friendliness with the city's business element.

After the reformers lost control of the council in 1958, the arbitration role emerged to be predominant. Adrian and Williams note that under these conditions, one can find the following:

The formal structure of government must not be subordinated to a specific substantive purpose; rather the structure must be such that most interests may be at least considered by the decision-maker.\textsuperscript{3}

The arbitration role was exemplified by efforts to change in a direct way the form and structure of government. The goal of these efforts was to make it possible for alienated groups to influence the decisions of government. Other policy changes resulted in appointments to boards of those political leaders who had formally opposed the form of government.

\textsuperscript{1} Adrian and Williams, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 29.
When the reformers captured control of the council once again in 1962, the arbitration role was not abandoned. However, as the social issue emerged from latency, the council began to assume to some degree the role of providing life's amenities. A "fuller range of services" were considered and a commitment to provide these services was represented by the Human Relations Commission, the trainee corps and the Model Cities program. But the expansion of these services to minority groups in a city with a large blue collar population meant that the council was willing to risk backlash and possible polarization. The tremendous vote against the open housing ordinance demonstrated that political backlash was near the surface. The election of Slim Rasmussen and his followers to the council brought out the true extent of polarization in the community. Rasmussen and his supporters felt that the city should only maintain traditional services. Thus, his role perception is described by Adrian and Williams as follows:

Freedom and self-reliance of the individual are the values stressed by this view. Tax increases are never justified except to maintain the traditional nature of the community. The caretaker image is associated with a policy of opposition to zoning, planning and other regulations of the use of real property. . . . individuals attracted to this view are retired middle-class persons, who are homeowners living on a very modest fixed income.

Rasmussen's opposition to Model Cities, urban renewal and his continuing crusade against property taxes indicate his role perception. When increases in governmental expenditures were called for, Rasmussen stressed increased pay raises for civil servants in the traditional service areas--police, fire and public works.

In summary then, it can be argued with some justification that Tacoma can be classified as a competitive elite community with a council that has

1 Ibid., p. 33.
2 Ibid., p. 27.
assumed, with varying degrees, the four roles defined by Adrian and Williams. Thus, any theoretical assumptions which might be derived by the Tacoma study can add to the findings of studies of like cities.

**The Nature of the Tacoma City Council--1953-69**

The history of council-manager government in Tacoma has been one of continuous transition. Periods of intense and bitter conflict have been followed by periods of political accommodation. Indeed, the city has gone through three cycles in this regard. The periods of conflict have been during the following years: 1953-56, 1958-62, and 1967-70. The periods of accommodation have been as follows: 1953-56, 1962-67, and from the election of 1971 to the present.

During the sixteen-year period, four identifiable types of councilmen have emerged to sit on Tacoma's chief policy-making body. Those four council types have been as follows: council-manager ideologues, council-manager pragmatists, strong-mayor ideologues and strong-mayor pragmatists.

**Council-manager ideologues.**--This group has been distinguished by their ideological commitment to the basic tenets of the council-manager system. The council is viewed as a policy-making board in the same sense as a board of directors in a business corporation. Thus, the people are perceived as "stockholders in a growing concern" and the most qualified candidate for council is that candidate with good business sense or a sound professional background. The manager, in turn, is to be left with the administration of government and is not to be interfered with by the council. Any deviation from the basic model of council-manager government is to be resisted at all costs. The ideologue type, with his business or professionally oriented training, is generally a moderate to conservative Republican in political persuasion, comes from the city's "silk stocking district" and has at least a college-level education.
**Council-manager pragmatists.**--This council type does not oppose the council-manager concept in general. However, the pragmatist feels that political compromise or accommodation is best served by modifying the system to better suit the political environment. Thus, the pragmatist may support ideas such as a separately elected mayor even though the idea runs counter to the traditional notion of a board of directors. The pragmatists also recognize the fact that administration and policy-making cannot, in every instance, be clearly separated. Because of this, the pragmatists are not adverse to advising the city manager in matters of administration when those matters have potential political consequences. This group includes businessmen and professionals with political persuasions ranging from moderate or liberal Republican to moderate or liberal Democrat. Most come from silk stocking areas but some may reside in the "across the tracks section" of town.

**Strong-mayor ideologue.**--This group continually resists the council-manager system and publicly calls for its end even after being elected to the council. The strong-mayor ideologues use every means to attack the values of the system. This includes attacks on the policies advocated by the supporters of the system and severe personal criticisms of the city manager. The strong-mayor ideologues are committed to changing the system at all costs and use any means to accomplish that goal. The manager may be termed a dictator while the city's administration is constantly challenged in terms of efficiency and waste. This type cannot be classified in terms of occupational background. It may include any of the following: blue collar workers, former civil servants, small businessmen or professionals. The place of residence may be from across the tracks or the silk stocking area. The common political denominator is association with the conservative wing of the Democratic party or the right-wing of the Republican party.
Strong-mayor pragmatists.--This group is not noted for direct attacks on the council-manager system while serving on the council. However, they do continually work at weakening the system and authority of the manager. If given the opportunity, the strong-mayor pragmatist would vote to alter the form of government. But the predominant political strategy is to strengthen the authority of the mayor or council by advocating a full-time salaried position for both and at the same time weakening the authority of the manager by suggesting that the council or mayor assume many of his functions. Another strategy is to place a political ally in the position of city manager for the purpose of strengthening the power position of the pragmatists on the council. The strong-mayor pragmatists generally seek to politicize the system by making the council and mayoral races as partisan as possible. Their occupational background follow a wide range from a law background to position with organized labor. They generally associate themselves with the Democratic party and follow a moderate or conservative political posture.

The following table lists the number of council types serving on the Tacoma City Council from 1953 to 1970.

TABLE 19

COUNCIL TYPES ON THE TACOMA CITY COUNCIL--1953-70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Type</th>
<th>Election Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53 56 58 60 62 64 67 69 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/M Ideologues</td>
<td>5 4 3 1 3 3 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/M Pragmatists</td>
<td>3 4 2 3 5 5 2 2 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/M Ideologues</td>
<td>0 0 0 1 1 1 3 4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/M Pragmatists</td>
<td>1 1 4 4 0 0 1 1 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Council types determined by researcher's observation. Some councilmen have changed position during their term.*
The table suggests that conflict was greatest on the City Council when the ideologues and the strong-mayor pragmatists held positions of influence on the legislative body. The uncompromising positions of the council-manager and strong-mayor ideologues led to bitterness on the council and extreme reaction on the part of significant interest groups in the community. From 1953 to 1956, the council-manager ideologues controlled the decision-process on the council and consciously excluded the pragmatists from important decisions. The ideologues also appointed a city manager who was totally unacceptable to organized labor, the city employees and their allies. The reaction was direct and extreme. By 1955 the alienated groups had succeeded in having a strong-mayor charter placed on the ballot. Although the effort failed, the election of the strong-mayor pragmatists to the council in 1958 and the three amendments added to the charter the same year signaled a political victory for the pragmatists. By 1960, the manager ideologues no longer held a significant position on the council.

The strong-mayor ideologues assumed a position of influence on the council in 1967 and by 1969 they had gained total control of the government. The strong-mayor ideologues behaved in a very similar way to the manager ideologues of the 1950's. They consciously excluded the pragmatists and council-manager supporters from the decision-process. Shortly after achieving power, they appointed as city manager a man totally unacceptable to the issue-oriented liberals, traditional reform interests, downtown establishment and the minority groups in the community. The response of these interest groups was the same as the response of the labor interests in 1953. The alienated groups took direct and extreme action—in this case a recall campaign against the mayor ideologues. Once again, the ideologues suffered eventual defeat at the polls.
The periods of conflict on the council have been followed by periods of accommodation. In each instance, council-manager pragmatists have assumed the deciding voice on the council. The appointment of a pragmatic mayor in 1956 led to attempted fence mending with labor. The city manager was able to put together a major redevelopment program for the city without much apparent opposition. In 1957, the city succeeded in achieving an All-American rating and gained national recognition. However, dissension and unhappiness was seething beneath the surface. During the late 1950's, the manager found himself embroiled in a conflict with important power interests. Also, the manager ideologues succeeded in delaying a number of proposed amendments offered by the politically popular pragmatists on the council. The dissension led to the reformers' defeat at the polls and the election of strong-mayor pragmatists in 1958.

In 1962, the council-manager pragmatists once again assumed control on the council. The new mayor followed the pattern established earlier and offered positions of influence to the leaders of organized labor. Labor leaders were appointed to important commissions and boards. A labor leader was picked by the mayor to sit as the chairman of a special citizens' committee organized to define the goals of the city. Although calm appeared to return to the city, dissension continued to seethe beneath the surface. The city was caught up in an urban revolution and the social issue became pervasive in the community. And with the national focus on the mayor, who became president of the National League of Cities, and the manager, who was selected president of the International City Managers' Association, jealousy and a private struggle for power emerged between the two men. The dissension led once again to defeat at the polls. However, with the former leaders of the anti-reform faction now accommodated, a new and more extreme form of leadership surfaced to lead the anti-manager groups in the community. The strong-mayor ideologues became a political force in the community.
This discussion and the findings of this study should, it seems, lead to future research efforts. For example, are the council types which became evident in Tacoma unique; or are they common to communities with such divergency? Does the political maturation of such communities result in the council constantly perceiving their roles in a different way? Is the cyclical pattern of conflict followed by accommodation and conflict a common feature of such communities? Are efforts to "politicize" nonpartisan political systems by changing the structure of government to be expected in conflict-ridden cities? Are city managers in such cities forced, by necessity, to play a more active political role? These are just a few of the questions which might be explored. Another area which needs some review and analysis concerns the influence of the federal government on council-manager government and particularly the role of the city manager and mayor.

The Influence of Federal Programs

Writing in 1962, Duane Lockard noted that the council-manager system presents somewhat of a dilemma in terms of the role of the chief executive. On one hand, the executive must achieve the stature of "neutral competence" based on a dedication to competence and objectivity in management.¹ This commitment, so much a part of the philosophy of council-manager government, came in reaction to early emphasis on "representativeness" as it was reflected in board government and long ballots. The idea of neutral competence, in turn, led to a demand for civil service careers and training for administrators.

But the executive is faced with another responsibility. Lockard explains as follows:

Governmental fragmentation and irresponsibility later produced a new theme: the demand for concentration of power in the hands of the chief executive (for example, the plea for integration of administration under a strong executive).

In terms of the role of the city manager, the question becomes:
"Under what circumstances can the manager contribute enough leadership to cope with the existing problems and yet not get into difficulty by alienating elements in the community so as to spoil his effectiveness as an expert in management?" In effect, since the city manager is a chief executive, just how much executive leadership can he exert politically? The ICMA has grappled with this dilemma for some time and in its 1952 Code of Ethics recognized the fact that the manager is a "community leader" who "submits policy proposals to the council and provides the council with facts and advice on matters of policy to give the council a basis for making decisions on community goals . . . ." Some members of the profession have stretched this point to argue that the manager should have the ability to "set goals, that is, to determine the final objectives which underlie any successful program." One manager has written:

With the manager playing a larger role in developing policy, decisions must be sound because the council in the end will be judged by the public on its over-all policy decisions. Indeed, in a sense, the success or failure of a city council is a definite responsibility of the manager. It is difficult for a city council to stand up and defend a city policy when it is not 'saleable' . . . .

Lockard and the others were considering the role of the manager during a period when the influence of federal programs on local decision-making was expanding rapidly. Although the social issue was just beyond the horizon as a polarizing factor, Lockard predicted its emergence with the following comment:

1Ibid., p. 233.
2Ibid., p. 229
4Ibid.
... communities will be caught on the rack of social tensions in the next generation as they have not been since the years when an earlier wave of migrants primarily from eastern and southern Europe produced social conflict and long lasting resentments with deep political consequences.¹

Lockard makes no specific prediction as to how the manager system will evolve within the context of the "rack of social tensions." But he does say the following: "In any given community the dynamics of its political system ... will define the limits of leadership effectiveness, and yet these local factors will operate within the context of changing conceptions of the manager system and the currents of popular belief about government and politics."²

The findings of this study suggest that the influence of federal programs in Tacoma did have an impact on the behavior of the manager and the mayor. The findings also suggest that the separate election of the mayor further complicated the question. As has been shown in earlier chapters, City Manager David Rowlands assumed an aggressive role shortly after arriving in Tacoma in 1956. The council, controlled by manager-ideologues, felt that the system needed "selling" in a political sense after the near success of the anti-reform faction in 1955. Thus, Rowlands was delegated a great deal of executive leadership responsibility. He became what Robert Boynton and Deil Wright have termed a "dominant manager."³ Such a manager is "not only king of the bureaucratic pyramid and the prime source of significant policy proposals, but also is at the forefront ... in selling policies to the public."⁴ Rowlands established a number of new leadership functions

¹Lockard., p. 234.
²Ibid., p. 236.
⁴Ibid., p. 33.
under this role. He made yearly "state of the city addresses" in which he listed the city's goals, he developed a massive six-year plan which he, in turn, sold to the public and he physically sat with the council and engaged in council debates with the mayor and other councilmen. In many ways Rowlands became a pseudo strong-mayor.

In 1958, after the strong-mayor pragmatists took over the council leadership, Rowlands changed his role to become a part of a "governing team" with Mayor Ben Hanson. Boynton and Wright note that such a team pattern is "frankly political and . . . the tenure of the manager is clearly linked to that of the mayor . . . ."\(^1\) This pattern lasted until Harold Tollefson was elected mayor in 1962.

The election of Tollefson led to bitter conflict between the mayor and manager for the first time. Tollefson frankly sought a "strong-mayor-administrator" relationship with the manager. In this sense, the manager would serve as a "coordinator" and an "implementor."\(^2\) The key to the mayor's new perception of his role was, in part, the strong personality of Tollefson. However, the strength of Tollefson's argument, and his influence over the other reform types on the council, lay with the expanded influence of federal programs in Tacoma and the need for the mayor to exert elected leadership for the city. Times had, indeed, changed. The social issue was becoming a factor in the city and, more importantly, Tacoma was competing with other cities for a part of the federal resources available to begin to solve social problems. All of this led to an inevitable clash between mayor and

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 32.
manager over who was to serve the executive leadership role. By competing
with the mayor on this question, the manager linked himself with a politically
controversial program. When Tollefson failed in his re-election bid in
1967, the manager and the system itself became more vulnerable.

There is a great deal of potential research in this area. Tacoma's
experience may be unique in terms of the impact of federal programming
on the role perceptions of the mayor and manager. A review of similar cities
would shed light on this question. However, there is a broader issue which
will require some thought and analysis for the future. That question is this:
What influence will revenue sharing and its attendant decentralization of the
decision-making process have on the viability of the council-manager system?
Under the federal grant approach, the national government defined the broad
goals for local government. With this approach city councilmen simply decided
whether they wanted a particular federal program for their city. In the case
of Tacoma, the commitment was made. The conflict arose over which city
official should pursue and sell the grant program—the mayor or the manager.
Revenue sharing shifts the policy-making process locally. Now the council
and mayor are involved in defining the goals that will be sought with federal
help. There are a number of serious questions in this regard. First, can
a city council and mayor remain "part-time" under these circumstances? Does
the mayor have to take even a more direct leadership role? Where does the
manager fit in?

Many of the original tenets of the council-manager concept have proven
to be fallacious. One of the most noteworthy has been the principle of clear
separation of policy and administration. The changing nature of the federal
system itself has done much to disprove the rationality of that, the most
basic of all reform principles. Future research will show whether other
principles are as outdated.
APPENDIX

Methodology

Selection of the topic.--The researcher first became seriously interested in this study shortly after the outcome of the Tacoma municipal elections during the fall of 1967. Although born and raised in Tacoma, the researcher was living in Washington, D.C. during the political campaign of that year and the results, which showed A. L. "Slim" Rasmussen the winner for mayor, were a surprise to him. Indeed, from his East Coast perspective, he found the reason for Slim's landslide win over incumbent Harold Tollefson an intriguing enigma. The mystery was heightened by the researcher's experiences in 1966 and the summer of 1967.

During 1966 the researcher was working on the staff of U. S. Senator Henry M. Jackson and in that capacity had the opportunity to meet and work with City Manager David Rowlands. That year Rowlands had been selected President of the International City Managers' Association and was a frequent visitor to the Nation's Capital. Uniquely for the city of Tacoma, Mayor Harold Tollefson had been elevated to the position of President of the National League of Cities. These two city officials became most influential in national urban policy. Rowlands sat on several administrative organization boards for the then new Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Tollefson helped to draft several major pieces of legislation including the Model Cities Act.

In the summer of 1967 the researcher secured an intern position with HUD and had the opportunity to watch the progress of Tacoma's first application
for a Model Cities planning grant. Late in July the application reached
an inter-agency review committee. This committee, established for the
purpose of evaluating an applicant city's administrative capability, considered
Tacoma along with twenty other cities from the Western United States. The
researcher was able to sit-in on the review session and the outcome was
most enlightening. Tacoma was the only city to receive an unanimous superior
rating. Almost all of the comments focused on Rowlands' outstanding competence
as an administrator and Tollefson's political leadership. Tacoma soon
became known as the "New Haven of the West" among the HUD work force. Indeed,
administrators at the highest levels considered the city as a show place for
federal programs.¹

In August the researcher returned to Tacoma at the request of Rowlands
to work as an administrative intern with the city. During his one month
stay he soon found that many Tacoma citizens perceived Tacoma's political
leadership differently from those viewing it from Washington, D. C. While
attending a meeting of Action Committee for Tacoma he noted serious disenchant-
ment with Tollefson. By the end of the month, the "working man's friend,"
A. L. "Slim" Rasmussen, had filed against Tollefson for mayor.

Rasmussen's campaign indicated some of the first true political backlash
in the country. Tollefson and Rowlands were both severely attacked before
the election. The federal programs, considered as outstanding by federal
administrators, were described as wasteful boondoggles by Rasmussen.
Rowlands' competence and the whole concept of council-manager government were
questioned during the election debates. When Rasmussen won by one of the

¹Tacoma had received a major multi-million dollar urban renewal
grant shortly before this period. The city was the first in the state to
receive urban renewal assistance in the early 1950's and was one of the
first in the nation to receive mass transit assistance.
largest margins in the city's history, the researcher decided to explore
the reasons for such massive community dissent—thus the study.

Research strategy and approach.—The initial step was to review many
of the landmark studies of community power and decision-making. Floyd
Hunter's study of Atlanta, Robert Dahl's study of New Haven, Edward Banfield's
study of Chicago, and Gladys Kammerer's study of council-manager cities in
Florida were among those research efforts reviewed. One clear message
seemed to emerge from the studies and that message was as follows: more
research is needed. Even the most extensive research efforts called for
more investigation. For example, after completion of a monumental three
year study of New York City, Sayre and Kaufman wrote: "We plead for more
research . . . . There is yet no broad base of primary research on which
comprehensive studies can confidently reply." Nelson Polsby has written:
"Perhaps the most important long-range task of a theory of community power
is to distinguish among communities on the basis of their patterns of
decision-making." Kammerer, Farris, DeGrove and Clubok write:

... concepts we have developed and the modest developmental sequence
we have proposed are only the first step in the construction of such
a framework.

Our ideas are subject to considerable refinement.

And in concluding their study of four council-manager governments,
Adrian and Williams comment: "The communities examined were fitted into a
typological framework for analytical purposes . . . . Other cities could be
as well, thus providing the basis for a comparative analysis of local

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1Nelson W. Polsby in his Community Power and Political Theory (New
Haven: Yale University, 1964) reviews and critiques the methodology and
and findings of many of the major studies.

2Herbert Kaufman and Wallace Sayre, Governing New York City: Politics
in the Metropolis (New York: W. N. Norton and Co., 1960), V. XVII.

3Polsby, p. 138.

4Kammerer and others, p. 204.
public policy making and execution.\textsuperscript{1}

After this phase of "tuning in" to what had been done in the past, the researcher began the process of trying to decide what to study, and how. The decision on what to study soon led to the conclusion that community dissent in Tacoma began long before the Rasmussen era. Indeed, the value conflict over the form of government had a history which began in the 1930's. The bitter election campaign effort which changed the form of government came to a climax in the early 1950's. It became evident from a review of the clipping files in the Tacoma Public Library that the study would have to be historical, demonstrating the unfolding of events, the interactions of groups and forces, and their underlying motivations. It also became clear that the research effort would have to be a case study because of the potential broad range of the source material and its manageability.

The case study format was altered from other studies to better fit the historical pattern of community conflict. Rather than select issue areas, identify political actors and groups and measure the influence of each, the researcher chose to develop the cases around certain time periods. Within each time frame, important issues were identified, the positions of group interests were noted and a summary and analysis was presented at the end. The cases became the key chapters in the study.

It soon became evident that the analysis would have to focus on two broad but related areas. The first was the political environment itself. This area of exploration included the position of key interest groups concerning the form of government and the city manager, the strategies employed in the important elections, the make-up and characteristics of the citizenry and

\textsuperscript{1}Adrian and Williams, p. 313.
the attitudes and opinions of the electorate. The second area was the relationship of the manager and council and the impact of that relationship on decision-making within the city government. This area required a review of the voting patterns on the council, the tenure of the city manager, and the attitude of the members of the council.

Research techniques.---There were five principal methods of gathering data: documents and other written materials generated; newspaper accounts and written histories of the city; questionnaires; personal interviews and participant observation.  

The process employed was described adequately in the first chapter of this study. However, the researcher would like to note that in the summer and fall of 1969 he had the opportunity to conduct two community-wide public opinion surveys in Tacoma. The purpose of the surveys, contracted by Action Committee for Tacoma and the United Citizens, was to measure political opinions in the city as they related to the incumbent Mayor Slim Rasmussen and City Manager Rowlands. The questionnaire schedule was prepared with the cooperation of sociologist Earl McNeil. McNeil also helped to train the interviewers. James Weed, a mathematician, aided in the preparation of the sample.

The findings of the survey were most enlightening even though the sample size was small and control was difficult to attain. However, the survey results were used minimally in the study. This judgement was made simply because the study had grown greatly in its breadth and a narrowing of scope was needed.

Another research technique used but later discarded was a roll call analysis of voting blocs on the City Council. This study was aided by

Thomas Brewer, a senior political science student. Again, the findings were interesting but the implications broadened the study to too great an extent.

The researcher mentions these two additional techniques because they were employed during the course of the study and contributed by offering a greater understanding of the political processes and attitudes within the city.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations.--The disadvantages and limitations of studying one city seem to be self evident. Obviously, the researcher can make no sweeping assumptions. One of the weaknesses of Floyd Hunter's study of Atlanta was his implication that the existence of economic power elites was evident in most cities. Polsby shows in a later study that Hunter's own evidence tends to disprove this notion. Even Robert Dahl's examination of New Haven and his theory of democratic elitism has come under serious questioning because he supports his assumptions on the findings in one community.

Although the researcher feels that there are disadvantages in studying one community, he also feels and hopes that the compensating advantage is that the study is reduced to manageable and realistic proportions. And he agrees with Polsby who states that the long range task in developing a viable theory of community power and decision-making will involve an examination of many communities and then to distinguish among those communities on the basis of their pattern of decision-making.

The researcher would like to note another and more specific limitation. In August of 1967 and again in July through August of 1968 the researcher

1 Polsby also seriously questions many of the assumptions of the other elitists including the conclusions of the Lynds and their study of Middletown.
worked as an administrative assistant in the office of Tacoma's city manager. Because of this association, he is readily recognized by many of the key political actors and perhaps has been classified as being prejudicial by members of the two competing leadership cliques. However, he does have contacts in both factions and managed to work out much of the problem of implied bias through the interviewing process and the stated public position of many of the councilmen and mayors of the period. Indeed, the most uncompromising critics of the manager were also the most vocal on the public issues.
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