

CHAPTER III

What the Council of State Governments Is

The Council of State Governments is an agency established to solve, by co-operative action of the states, those problems of an interstate character over which the federal government has no jurisdiction.

Composition of the Council

THE Council of State Governments is a joint agency created by the state governments. The states establish Commissions on Interstate Coöperation, in order "to perfect the participation of the state as a member of the Council of State Governments." Each Commission is composed of fifteen members (with variations to suit local conditions)—five members from the state senate, five members from the state lower house, and five administrative members appointed by the governor—and serves as the state's official agency for contact among the several states and with the federal government.

The Central Secretariat

The Central Secretariat in Chicago serves as clearing house and service agency for the various organizations affiliated with the Council of State Governments, as well as officials concerned with state government.

Publications

The Council, through its Central Secretariat, publishes a biennial handbook, *The Book of the States*; a monthly magazine, *State Government*; and conducts a research service which issues bulletins on governmental problems.

District Secretariats

Each District Secretariat serves the states within a district corresponding to one of the eleven planning districts of the National Resources Committee as a clearing house, handles details of meetings called on regional problems, and facilitates closer coöperation on all district matters. A secretariat has been established in New York City, with a branch office in Phila-

delphia, and a second secretariat in Denver will be established in the near future. Further secretariats are planned for each of the remaining ten districts.

Interstate Commissions

Through the establishment of interstate commissions, composed of members appointed by the chairmen of the state Commissions on Interstate Coöperation or by the governor and the presiding officers of the legislature, the states have been enabled to tackle five of the problems confronting them: Three commissions of a nation-wide character, made up of delegates from all forty-eight states, and two commissions to deal with regional problems, composed of delegates from the states within the regions affected, have been established.

The General Assembly

The states have established the General Assembly of the Council to serve as a forum for the interchange of their opinions, to strengthen their *esprit de corps*, to assist them through a method similar to the process which is employed by law-making assemblies to agree upon their common purposes—all to the end that through co-operative endeavor the states may give effect to the principles which are crystallized by the Assembly.

It is a biennial meeting of three voting delegates from each of the forty-eight states, at which the Commissions on Interstate Coöperation, associations of governmental officials, and nation-wide and regional commissions report on work done during the biennium and submit their recommendations. After discussion of the material the delegates formulate recommendations to take back to their respective legislatures.

Detailed information on each section will be found in later chapters in the book.