



How Not to Govern Large Cities

THE wonder to me is that big cities enjoy as good civic government as they get. There is room in every large city for a successful Tammany Hall; and the only reason why they are not saddled with them is because the sinister elements have not got together and organized one. All the conditions invite it, however; and the invitation will sooner or later—more or less fully—be accepted. What are the conditions? Simply this—a comparatively small section of the people are conscious tax-payers; the great majority are only recipients of municipal favours. The man who owns his own house knows that he pays taxes. The man who lives in a rented house is not conscious of it. You may say that he pays a water tax; but he regards the water tax merely as a payment for a definite service—no more truly a municipal tax than his gas bill or his street car fare. In other words, he does not expect good government to materially reduce his water tax or to give him better water.

THIS puts him, as a rule, in a position of relative indifference to tax rates. Of course, if he is a "high brow," and reasons these things all out with the aid of differential calculus and a few "works" on "the incidence of taxation," he knows better. But I am talking of the average busy tenant, up to the ears in the gigantic task of making a living. The only features of good government which touch him nearly are the things which the civic administration do. He wants clean and well-paved streets, a faithful police service, a good fire department, and all that sort of thing. By these tests, the well-to-do tenant judges his civic government. But there is a great army of people in every large industrial city, growing larger every day as we more nearly approach the industrial conditions of the Old World, to whom even these outward civic benefits appeal but slightly, so deeply are they engrossed in the more intimate personal questions of food and shelter. What do they care about the condition of the pavement when the pantry is empty and the stove cold? "Jobs" for the wage-earners of the family are the big facts of life with them.

NOW, set up an organization in the city which will make a business of getting a job for every last man who finds himself out of work—which does not enquire how he lost it, but just looks him up another—which does not lecture him on his deficiencies of which he is fully and painfully conscious, but helps him escape their sad consequences—which will send him a load of coal at a pinch and help him finance a wedding or a funeral, those occasions when his poverty humiliates him most cruelly—and what can cold, civic, good government offer that man which at all approaches in importance the value of the friendship of this philanthropic organization? There you have the secret of Tammany's power in a sentence. And there you have a sure recipe for the establishment of a local Tammany in every large city. Fill your cities with people pressed brutally down against the margin of existence, and leave them to the logical operation of the chilled-steel laws of supply and demand, and you create an indestructible foundation for a political organization which shall play Robin Hood—rob the wealthy tax-payer and divide with the families who do not know that they ever pay any taxes at all.

FOR the small municipality in which there is not much concentrated wealth and no real poverty—where every citizen is consciously a tax-payer to a greater or less extent—where most families live in their own homes—our present form of municipal government is ideal. No alderman can hope to bribe enough people with the tax-payers' money to establish any hold upon their affections. Good administration of civic finances and civic affairs generally is the only method by which a member of the Town Council can commend himself to the voters. The consequence is that the positions are not much sought, that the rewards are rewards of honour, and that there is precious little "graft." We have merely a committee of citizens managing the affairs of the town. This is democracy reduced

to its simplest terms, and applied to a community for which it is admirably fitted.

BUT surely it must be apparent to all that we have a far different problem in our large cities, where the great majority of the voters are tenants, many of them transitory, comparatively few with any sense of civic responsibility, even fewer who pay taxes directly, not a few of foreign extraction who are not accustomed to our representative institutions, and a very great many stung by a sense of economic and social injustice. It is not fair to democracy to apply a simple system of representative institutions to such a loose medley as this. It would be, in a measure, as if, when a nation went to the polls to decide a great question of public policy, it permitted all the passing tourists in the country to vote. If the result of this freak

Professional Reformers

By JAMES B. BELFORD

A PRODUCT peculiar to this hermaphrodite age is the Professional Reformer. Other times have produced nuisances engendered by their particular social conditions, but it has remained for the twentieth century to subsidize its affliction. The pitiable thing is, that the more blatant, vulgar and ignorant the Professional Reformer is, the surer he is of finding some society, or group of individuals, to pay for his mouthings. There is an overwhelming desire in the most of us to investigate our neighbour's life, correct his morals, and superintend his pleasures. The exigencies of business and professional life compel us to hold these amiable qualities in check, but they find a vicarious vent through the Professional Reformer.

As a consequence a fairly brisk demand has sprung up for persons, whose cuticle possesses the necessary thickness. As a rule, they are individuals who in private life are undistinguished by ideality of character, or soundness of judgment; but what Nature has denied them in intellect she has granted with a lavish hand in assurance. In dealing with the goody-goody element that supplies their meal-ticket, assurance is their best weapon. Their employers are seldom good judges of men, being too much wrapped up in their own little pet fad, to examine the credentials of the loud-voiced exponent of their particular panacea for the shortcomings of other people.

So Mr. P. Reformer has his job. But he realizes, none better, the transitory nature of all things human. He has the job, but he must hold it. His employers want quick action. They are not fussy as to what the line of action may be; their views are broadly catholic, ranging from raids on Sunday ice-cream to the white slave traffic. But they do insist on action. Action of the good old sensational kind, with, if possible, a scrap between the Professional Reformer and the police, for this means a newspaper story, which is good advertising, and incidentally may loosen the purse-strings of other goody-goodies. And this suits the P. R. Sensationalism is his native air. He appreciates seeing his name in print—even in the police news—almost as much as his monthly cheque. And if in the course of his fad-imposed duties some one will only bat him on the head with a beer-bottle, his bliss is assured. For then he is not only a P. R., but a Martyr! At once he places an order for the latest thing in haloes, and ever after wears it on the side of his head.

It is the misfortune of all good causes, that they attract to themselves people of the calibre of the P. R. and his supporters. And as these people are self-assertive, and devoid of natural modesty, they elbow themselves into prominence, and oust from control the men who are really doing sound educational work. As a consequence, the intelligent man of decent aspirations hesitates to support a cause in which he believes, because of its associations.

As an instance in point, the people of a Quebec town, a mixed population, French and English, determined to do away with hotel licenses. They wished to try the experiment of a dry town for

notion were unsatisfactory, would we have a right to blame democracy for it? Certainly not. Democracy is to be governed by common sense as well as anything else.

IT seems to me that on this continent we should recognize the peculiar conditions which prevail in our large cities. If I were doing it, I never would permit the pensioners of Tammany to govern New York. I would say that the American democracy has a right to take over the government of its largest city and to administer its affairs in keeping with the conscience of the settled and interested American people. When we find what we regard as a right system of government bearing conspicuously bad fruits—and bearing them steadily—we should take a very careful look at the system once more, and make sure that we are applying its proper principles in a proper manner. "By their fruits ye shall know them" was not a mistaken statement. Democracy remains the only wise and just form of human government; but democracy implies a sense of personal responsibility. You have no more right to judge it by a mad or irresponsible electorate than you have to judge monarchy by a mad or irresponsible monarch.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

two years, and on the result of the experiment would depend their permanent policy. To this end, at the January municipal elections, they returned to office a council pledged to the abolition of license. Licenses in Quebec county municipalities are granted by the local authority. But in an evil moment a local meddler imported a notorious Montreal P. R. This individual at once leaped to the limelight. He impugned the *bona-fides* of the council. He stirred up a following of the credulous. Leading his local followers by the nose, he induced them to repudiate the council altogether and introduce a local option by-law, removing the license granting power from the municipal authority. His by-law was defeated and his party discredited. The council to their everlasting credit, in spite of the provocation, held true to their promises. No licenses were granted. But the P. R. and his gullible flock had stirred up animosities that it will take years to reconcile. For the sake of the advertising the P. R. had deliberately disrupted the good feeling of a community.

But, after all, the P. R. acts only according to his nature. Some fakirs follow circuses, others make the round of country fairs. There are fakirs in politics, in every walk of life. How could such a promising field as Moral and Social Reform escape? The great body of the people treat the P. R.'s with a contemptuous tolerance as they do other parasites. But it certainly behooves such men of standing as are left in the many reform associations to begin their house-cleaning at home. When a man lends his name to a society, even in a purely honorary capacity, he becomes responsible for its propaganda. If we must have salaried inspectors of the nation's morals and pleasures, at least let us have men of average intelligence, and some superficial acquaintance with the rudiments of culture.

A Fine Old Irishman

IT'S a bad thing for a man to lose his character. Sometimes it's almost as sad for the world to lose a character. The death of Eugene O'Keefe a few days ago removed a very unique and altogether sincere character from Canadian life. The aged head of the well-known firm established by himself had for nearly half of his eighty-six years never missed a morning service at St. Michael's Cathedral. He was a delightful Irishman. His life was full of good-humour, hard work, business enterprise, and latterly, official distinction. The office of Papal Chamberlain in Canada was never very onerous; but it carried considerable honour to such a man as Eugene O'Keefe who knew well how to conform to its dignities.

O'Keefe was a good deal like good wine: the older he got the better he got and the more he sparkled. And he never lost his remarkable interest in the present generation. While his huge brewery in the heart of Toronto was being remodelled and enlarged, he was giving many thousands to charity, religion and education. Motorists down the Kingston Road miles out of Toronto have wondered what the great new stone building is on Scarboro' Bluffs. It is the St. Augustine Seminary to which Eugene O'Keefe gave \$10,000. And he was by and large the most generous, practical supporter of Catholic religion and education in this part of Canada.