

On motion of Mr. H. A. Mackie, a vote of thanks was tendered to the President for his hospitality, following which, on motion of Mr. Ludwig, Council adjourned.

E. H. COLEMAN,  
*Acting Secretary-Treasurer.*

## Flotsam and Jetsam.

### THE "SOVIET" PRINCIPLE IN GOVERNMENT.

From Russia has been imported the word "soviet," which has an historical meaning quite apart from its popular meaning in America. The soviet is as important to Russia as the old "town meeting" in New England. It is one of the most ancient forms of social organization in Russia, and much of the success of the Bolsheviki is due to their adoption and adaptation of this term to their present political purposes.

But the term "soviet" is used in common parlance, not in an historical sense, but with a practical signification to describe the character of Bolshevik control of industry in Russia to-day. Under the "soviet" plan the workers control the industry in which they work, and for that purpose meet together and decide all questions by *viva voce* vote. Committees are appointed to handle various departments, who, however, must report to the central body. The so-called "Plumb" plan for the quasi-political and industrial control of railroads practically embodies the soviet principle.

The soviet idea is fascinating to "parlour sociologists, and we understand that this class of dilettantists are having a delightful time discussing and enlarging upon this principle. It has caught the imagination of some workers who believe that the soviet principle will avoid strikes and other interference with business; for, they argue, if the workers themselves fix the wages and hours of labour, there could be no ground for complaint. We understand that in a large eastern manufacturing plant this argument was actually presented to the management by a committee of the workers.

The "soviet" principle totally ignores the personal equation in business. All workers are not equally intelligent or equally honest or equally industrious, yet under the soviet scheme are each to receive the same compensation. But the dead level of mediocrity is not the most serious danger. That element in the scheme that is defeating it in Russia and has already defeated it in Hungary is its disorganizing factor. The workers, being their own bosses, work or not as they see fit or as many hours as they wish. There is no head, no system, no responsibility.—  
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