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The Cleansing of Chicago.

The Canadian Club of Ottawa closed a very successful session by a Banquet at the Russell House on the 5th May, at which the chief speakers were Messrs. Charles R. Crane, President, and Walter L. Fisher, Secretary, of the Municipal Voters' League of Chicago. These gentlemen were invited (we understand at the happy suggestion of His Excellency, the Governor General, who was also présent) to tell of the conquest of Chicago by the decent citizens. President Harper, of Chicago University, was also a guest but did not speak.

As the subject was of such deep importance from a municipal point of view, invitations were courteously sent by the Club to His Worship Mayor Laporte, President, and Mr. W. D. Lighthall, Hon. Secretary-Treasurer of the U. C. M. and the Editor of the JOURNAL.

Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King, President of the Club, made an admirable chairman.

Mr. Crane spoke briefly, beginning by saying that 10 or 12 years ago Chicago was the most corrupt city in the United States; now it had the best City Council, thanks to the Municipal Voters' League, which was "among those present" at the elections. When 6 franchises were rushed through on the last night of Mayor Hopkin's term, the people thought it was time to sit up and take notice. A body was formed, called the Council of One Hundred, and systematic watch was kept at the Council meetings, followed by full reports of the action of the Councillors. The number of bad men was steadily reduced.

Mr. Fisher said that it had been stated that the Government of Municipalities was an unsolved question. In Chicago corruption was taken as a matter of course and there was a condition of organized plunder. The principal of competition for natural monopolies gave a golden opportunity for graft. The League was managed by a Committee of 9, who appointed Ward Committees, as well as advisory, Finance, etc. They secured the concerted action of the press in favor of reform with one or

two exceptions, and had a very simple platform. The speaker gave a most interesting account of how Yerkes manipulated the car companies and the franchises, and finally swindled Pierpont Morgan by selling parts of his ownings at fabulous prices. The first street car lines were built in 1858, and the city had power to buy in 25 years; an extension of the franchise to 99 years was passed over the veto of the Governor. In 1883, the Company asked for an extension, promising to give better service. In 1886, Yerkes arrived and formed a new company which secured a charter for 999 years. He next formed the U. S. Construction Co. with a capital of five millions. But things got so unbearable that all the old members of the Legislature were turned out. Yerkes purchased a paper, the Chicago Inter-Ocean, to further his schemes, but finally left Chicago, after selling piece meal to the Morgan syndicate.

One effective work of the League was to issue a report of the records of each alderman for the past year, showing how he had voted, and giving a suggestion as to whether he should be allowed to go back or not, in "picturesque language." These reports had resulted in seven libel suits, but not one of them had been taken in court.

One great improvement secured was the elimination of party politics in the city elections.

The speaker was listened to with marked interest followed by prolonged applause.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Hon. A. G. Blair seconded by Mr. R. L. Borden, and carried unanimously.

His Excellency the Governor-General spoke briefly, referring humourously to his fear of giving offence and awakening international complications, and then pointing out how the speakers had shown the power of a single earnest man to make improvements in public life, just as Savonarola did in Florence. He believed with Aristotle that the highest happiness is to be found in the conscious pursuit of a noble purpose.