

**Philadelphia has a new Charter. (Continued.)**

feated. They renewed their work last autumn, got the new Governor, William G. Sproul, interested, and kept him interested to the end. The new movement was inaugurated at a great charter dinner last December. 900 men and women were present—among them Governor-elect Sproul and his Attorney-General, William I. Shaffer. From that dinner until the signing of the bill, he took a leading part and it was due to his interest, activity and forcefulness that Philadelphia has a charter that may properly and conservatively be regarded as a most substantial contribution to the better government of the third American city.

The Charter Committee carried out its idea of a single measure which would be a codification of the Bullitt Bill and its amendments with such changes as have been noted and many other of a less conspicuous character necessary for the easy running of the city's machinery. The Committee not only drafted the measure, but actively advocated it throughout the city and state, on the stump, in the press, by pamphlet, in the legislative halls, everywhere that an audience could be gathered and although the Charter revisionists only had 10 votes out of 41 in the Philadelphia delegation to the House of Representatives and one out of the eight senators from the city, they broke legislative precedent and secured the passage of the bill by an overwhelming vote and finally by a practically unanimous vote. When the Vares saw the handwriting on the wall during a series of best votes, they made virtue of a necessity and "turned in."

There is no doubt among those most closely in touch with the situation that United States Senator Boies Penrose was the greatest single factor in securing the passage of the bill. He brought the weight of his personal influence and of the state organization to bear at critical times. It is only fair to say that without his personal help the measure would have foundered on the rocks. There are those who feel that his interest was primarily a political one—but as I have said on another occasion such overlook the fact that he is a long time student of city government and that he has long cherished a desire to give to his native city a charter worthy of the city's need and opportunities. So active has he been in recent years in federal affairs and state politics that his fellow townsmen forget that his first contribution as a publicist was an account of the government of the city of Philadelphia, which he prepared in conjunction with his then partner (the late Edward P. Allison) for the John Hopkins University series. This book, a model of concise and accurate statement, remains to this day as the most satisfactory statement of Philadelphia's government from the early days of the enactment of the Bullitt Bill. It is to be hoped that this interesting and important publication will be brought up to date so as to include this new charter, which bears the name of Senator Woodward who introduced it into the Senate and was its sponsor through the Legislature.

Those who are in the confidence of Senator Pensore feel, I am told, that he is not through with his efforts to improve Philadelphia's governmental machinery and that he is studying other ways and means of giving Philadelphia the most modern and up-to-date form of government which can be devised. He feels, I believe, like many others who have given the situation their serious consideration, that the present charter, while it represents a long step forward, is only a step forward and by no means the last word. The Mayor is still too powerful as an appointing officer and it is out of keeping with modern efficiency methods to make the chief executive of a great corporation subject to the winds and whimsies of politics. When public sentiment is ready for the next step (and we must not overlook the fact that sound public sentiment is leisurely in its development), it will be in the direction of a chief administrator chosen by the Council. On several occasions the senior senator has spoken along these lines and it is to be hoped that he will be sufficiently free of other obligations in the near future to give the weight of his personal influence to the active advocacy of these views.

Accompanying the Charter bills were a series of electoral reform measures designed to curtail the power of organization control in Philadelphia. Among them was one giving effect to the marking of the ballot so that the voter who marked a straight ticket and a candidate in some other column will have his vote for that candidate counted. Certainly a fair and proper thing to do. Another re-

vised the registration law and opened the door to the reorganization of the Philadelphia board which had become a mere appendix of the Vares organization.

By and large Philadelphia has a chance to accomplish a large measure of improvement through these newly devised instruments, which in themselves while carefully and efficiently drawn, will accomplish but little without citizen activity and cooperation.—Clinton Rogers Woodruff.

**IDLE PITY GIVING WAY TO PRACTICAL EFFORT ON BEHALF OF CANADA'S SIX THOUSAND BLIND.**

You have doubtless been interested in what you have read or heard regarding the progress of a national effort on behalf of the blind of Canada.

Do you realize just what this effort means?

Here are some of the things that are being done:

Industrial training and employment is being provided for the blind in centres established in Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

Useful handicrafts and the reading and writing of embossed characters are taught in the homes of those blind people who for various reasons are unable to take training at one of the regular centres.

The product of the home-workers is bought and sold.

Personal contact is established with recently-blinded persons, and with cases which are sometimes so old that they become new in a very real sense. This work is done by an experienced Field Agent.

Books, magazines, and music in embossed types are circulated free to the blind of Canada. The monthly average circulation of books, etc., is close to eight hundred. The Institute also arranges for the transcription of music for any of its members at cost-price.

An active publicity propaganda dealing with various dangers to which the eye is subject is carried on, and this is followed up with personal work, looking to the larger co-operation of medical men and nurses, employers of labor Boards of Education, etc., in the vital matter of preventing blindness.

A residence and training-centre, "Pearson Hall," has been provided where blind soldiers may find congenial conditions while taking vocational instruction. In this connection it may be interesting to know that the Institute has entered into an agreement with the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment, under which the Institute has established an after care department for Canadian Soldiers blinded in the war.

There are other things, but they may all be summed up by saying that the Institute endeavors in every practical way to advance the interests of the blind and to ameliorate the conditions under which they live.

Will you aid in supplying the most vital need of this work?

Then mail your cheque to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, 36 King St. East, Toronto, Ont.

**PUBLIC FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS**

The extent of any fire in a protected community depends upon the promptness with which the fire-extinguishing appliances are brought into operation. The fire alarm system of a city or town ought, therefore, to be as nearly perfect as money and skill can make it. A deficient fire alarm system constitutes a general hazard. It may be tolerated when re-construction would involve a heavy outlay, but a community is dealing with the whole question of fire protection from the wrong end when extinguishing apparatus is purchased at the expense of the alarm system. Three minutes after a fire has broken out a pail of water would usually be sufficient to subdue it. With ten minutes uninterrupted start, a fire may need a quarter of a million dollars worth of apparatus and an army of men before it can be controlled. An obsolete fire alarm system is the crudest form of economy.—J. Grove Smith.

The International Garden Cities and Town Planning Conference will take place at the Daily Mail Ideal Homes Exhibition, Olympia, London, S.W., on February 16th, 17th and 18th, the programme including:

"The new Problems in Town Planning;

"The Governmental Problems, national and local, in the development of Garden Cities."

"Housing Organization and Finance."

"The Reconstruction of the War-Devastated Areas."