

MUNICIPAL<sup>1</sup>

1. MUNICIPAL POLITICS. During the year which precedes the issue of the first number of *THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW*, there have been many successes in the movement for the improvement of political conditions in American cities. The local elections of November, 1905, resulted in notable victories for reform in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, with less striking results in other cities. And these have been followed in more cities at the spring elections of 1906.

Most attention is usually attracted to the municipal campaign in New York City. And the last election there, while of less significance than several others in the preceding decade, was not without points of interest. Mayor McClellan's first administration (1904-05) had been so much better than previous Tammany governments, and the fusion of forces that had elected Mayor Low in 1903 had become so disorganized, the early prospects were for a very inactive campaign. But the nomination of William R. Hearst for mayor on a municipal ownership ticket, and a regular republican ticket, in addition to the renomination of McClellan led to an exciting contest. The three-cornered contest resulted in the re-election of Mayor McClellan by a narrow plurality, and the election of a board of aldermen controlled by the republicans and municipal ownership parties. At the same time the growth of independent sentiment was strikingly shown by the re-election as district attorney for New York county of W. T. Jerome, who was first nominated by petition entirely independent of all the party tickets, although later endorsed by the republicans.

The Philadelphia election was the most striking success for municipal reform, although only minor positions were directly at stake. The popular uprising in the preceding May against a proposed renewal of the lease of the City Gas works, aided by the dramatic break between Mayor Weaver and the machine politicians, prepared the way for an energetic campaign by a newly organized city party for the county offices to be filled in November, and the victory of this party by a majority of 45,000 demonstrated that the people of Philadelphia have at length been aroused from the lethargy which has so long been the greatest obstacle to overturning the corrupt ring that has been in control of the municipal government. While the officers elected in November were not of the greatest importance the result

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of the election has been greatly to advance the betterment of municipal conditions. It strengthened the hands of Mayor Weaver in the conduct of the municipal administration. It led to a special session of the legislature in the spring of 1906 which repealed the "ripper bill" of the previous session reducing the Mayor's power, and passed a new civil service law and corrupt practices acts for Philadelphia, besides enacting other reform measures of more general application, such as personal registration and uniform primary laws. And in February the election for some members of the city councils resulted in another victory for the city party, in spite of superficial changes in the personnel of the old organization.

Almost as significant was the election in Cincinnati. Here a fusion of the reform forces with the minority democratic party was successful over the notorious Cox machine, electing Judge Edward J. Dempsey as mayor. Early in 1906 a legislative committee began the task of investigating previous conditions, and secured many disclosures and the return of over \$200,000 to the county from former county treasurers, for gratuities received by them from banks in which county funds were deposited. The work of the committee was, however, halted by a decision of the Supreme Court of Ohio restricting its power to examine witnesses.

Among other Ohio cities, Cleveland re-elected Tom Johnson as mayor for the third time, and Toledo elected as mayor Brand Whitlock, on an independent ticket.

In Buffalo, J. N. Adam a leading merchant, with an excellent record in the smaller branch of the bicameral council, was elected mayor. A recently organized municipal league took an active part in the campaign. It also investigated a number of city and county matters that needed attention; and disclosed a good deal of laxness, extravagance and some corruption in public business.

In Indiana all of the cities elected municipal officers for a period of four years, under the provisions of the new uniform code in that State. There was much more interest taken in the local elections than formerly; and in many places a distinct improvement in the municipal officers elected.

Of the elections in the spring of 1906 the most notable was in Pittsburgh, where George W. Guthrie was elected mayor. Although nominated on the democratic ticket Mr. Guthrie has been a leader in municipal reform work for many years, and is well known as a member

of the executive committee of the National Municipal League. His administration has been marked by many changes for the better; and under the greater Pittsburgh act his jurisdiction was extended to and include Allegheny City after the first of May.

In Kansas City, Mo., the election was marked by the personal interest of Governor Folk to prevent frauds, and the success of the Civic League. All of the candidates on the general ticket endorsed by the league were elected—this including the mayor, H. M. Beardsley, the treasurer, auditor, police judge and eight members of the upper house of the city council. In at least three cases, where candidates on the minority ticket were elected, the result seems to have been due to the recommendations of the league. Seven of the eight ward candidates recommended (out of fourteen wards) were also elected, and in at least two cases the results seemed due to the league.

An exciting campaign in Milwaukee resulted in the election of the young republican candidate, Sherburn Becker, over David A. Rose, nominated for a fifth term. It was clearly a personal victory over a well entrenched political machine, as was shown by the re-election of the democratic city treasurer. For aldermen the recommendations of the Voters' League were very generally followed.

The general character of the movement for the reform of municipal politics is indicated by conferences and meetings representing many local communities. In January, 1906, a conference was held at Chicago, called by the Municipal Voters' League of that city, and including representatives from similar local organizations in other cities. This discussed a number of problems, and adopted a brief series of resolutions favoring certain definite reforms.

In March, a conference on ballot, primary and corrupt practices legislation was held in New York City under the auspices of the National Civic Federation.

At the twelfth annual meeting of the National Municipal League held at Atlantic City, in April, Hon. Charles J. Bonaparte was re-elected president and Clinton Rogers Woodruff secretary. The subject of President Bonaparte's annual address was, "Why we have unsatisfactory public servants when we can get good ones." Mr. Woodruff's annual report as secretary, reviewing the year's municipal progress was unprecedented in the excellent showing which it made.

2. MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION. No general legislation on municipal government has been enacted in 1906, comparable to the Ohio code of 1902 or the Indiana code of 1905. An effort was made in Ohio to secure the amendment of the law in that State, by increasing the powers of the mayor; but no substantial result was attained. Some important changes have, however, been made in a few large cities, and in several others plans for general charter revisions are under way.

One of the acts of the special session of the Pennsylvania legislature provided for enlarging the city of Pittsburgh to include Allegheny City, but this simply extended the existing municipal organization to the larger city.

In Massachusetts some important changes have been made in the government of Boston; and a new charter for Cambridge has been proposed. Since 1885 the police of Boston have been under the supervision and control of a commission of three members appointed each for a term of five years by the governor of the Commonwealth with the confirmation of the governor's council. Not more than two of the three commissioners could be selected from any one political party. To this commission was also entrusted the power of hearing and determining all applications for licenses to sell intoxicating liquors.

This system has not proven wholly satisfactory, partly because the members of the board have not always worked in entire harmony, and partly because the commission has been somewhat hampered by the junction in its hands of the two different functions of police and excise control. Governor Curtis Guild, Jr., in his inaugural message, therefore, recommended a change in the system and his recommendations have been carried into effect by the legislature in a measure which went into force on June 1, 1906. By the terms of this law the supervision of police in Boston is henceforth committed to the charge of a single commissioner appointed by the governor with the consent of his council for a five year term, and removable at any time for cause by the governor with the council's concurrence. This commissioner is to be paid an annual salary of six thousand dollars from the treasury of the city, and the necessary expenses of his office including the salaries of secretary and clerks are to be similarly defrayed. All the authority formerly exercised by the Boston police commission now passes, with one important exception, to the single commissioner.

This one exception is the control of liquor licenses. For the super-

vision and regulation of sales of liquor a new excise board is provided by the act, to consist of three members, appointed in the same manner as the police commissioner, but for a six year term only. Provision is made, however, for the retirement of one member every second year. One of the three members is to be designated by the governor as chairman of the board. The salary of the chairman is fixed at \$4000 and those of members at \$3500 per year. These salaries together with all the necessary expenses incident to the work of the board are to be paid by the city of Boston. The new excise commission takes over, with the beginning of June, 1906, all the "powers and duties relative to intoxicating liquors now imposed upon the board of police of the city of Boston."

The chief opposition to the measure was based upon the ground that since the work of listing voters in Boston was performed by the police the placing of police control in the hands of a single official instead of in the hands of a bi-partisan board, would be unfair to the political party which formed a minority in the State. Although Boston is strongly democratic, the work of listing voters in that city would be under the sole supervision of a single official, presumably a republican, appointed by and responsible to a republican governor. To meet this objection the measure was amended to provide that the listing and registration of voters should be under the supervision not only of the police commissioner but of one member of the bi-partisan board of election commissioners, such member to be named by the mayor of Boston. In case these two officials fail to agree the chief justice of the municipal court of Boston is to have the deciding voice.

The measure, as amended, was passed in both houses of the Massachusetts legislature by large majorities, and it is expected that the new system will have highly effective results. The only other city of Massachusetts which has State control of its municipal police—the city of Fall River—will continue for the present with its bi-partisan board.

For some years past the members of the board of aldermen in the city of Boston have been elected by the voters of the city at large under a system of "limited voting." The city is divided into eleven aldermanic districts, and the thirteen aldermen must be residents, one each of nine districts, and two each of the remaining two districts. Voters may indicate their choice of not more than seven names on the ballot, so that ordinarily the dominant party elects seven, and the minority party six of its candidates.

During the 1906 session of the State legislature a measure passed both houses providing for the election of aldermen by districts rather than by the city at large. This bill was, however, vetoed by the governor, and the legislature has failed to pass it over his veto by the necessary two-thirds vote.

An interesting and important experiment in school administration is being tried in Boston. Prior to the elections of 1905 the Boston school board was a large and cumbersome body in the election of members to which partisanship played a dominating part. The legislature, however, by law reduced the board in number to five members elected by the city at large. At the election of 1905 these were elected two for a three year term, two for a two year term, and one for a single year. The excellent set of men elected gives ground for hope that under the new system the school administration will be conducted on a very superior plane.

The proposed new charter for Cambridge, Mass., action on which has been postponed until next year, contains two important features. These are, the provision that practically every employee of the city from highest to lowest, including the heads of the city departments, shall be selected in accordance with civil service rules, and the provision that the members of a very large common council shall be elected one from each precinct of the city.

In Newport, R. I., a new charter framed by a local municipal association and granted by the State legislature was adopted by popular vote in June. The most notable feature is the establishment of what is called a modified "town meeting." In place of a small municipal council, there is to be a large body of 195 members, 39 chosen from each of the five wards of the city. There are to be no party nominations, but candidates are to be presented by petitions containing thirty signatures.

This large council is limited to deliberation and to the appropriation of money. A small board of aldermen is retained for executive work; and the powers of the mayor are largely increased. This experiment in city government will be watched with much interest.

Proposed new charters are being drafted for Chicago and Buffalo, to be presented to the coming sessions of the State legislatures. In Chicago the work is in charge of a large commission appointed by the governor, the presiding officers of the State legislatures, the mayor, the council, and the special local authorities. The object is to con-

solidate to some degree the various independent local bodies with the city government, under the provisions of a recently adopted amendment to the State Constitution. In November, 1905, some minor changes in the city government were adopted, extending the mayor's term to four years and establishing a system of municipal court justices.

3. MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP. A steady expansion in the scope of municipal functions is clearly evident. And under the *régime* of enumerated powers this requires a large volume of legislation—much of it of special application—to authorize new undertakings. The step toward the municipalization of such plants as waterworks, electric lighting, and street railways are especially interesting and significant. Here on the one hand is a strong sentiment in favor of municipalization as a principle of public policy; and on the other hand a strong opposition based partly on the private interests likely to be affected, and partly on considerations of general policy.

Chicago forms the chief point of attention on account of the agitation there for municipal street railways, and the election of Mayor Dunne in 1905 on a platform calling for immediate municipal ownership and operation. Against the wishes of the mayor, the council committee on local transportation last winter re-opened negotiations with the companies for a new franchise grant. But the council submitted to the voters at the April election the question of proceeding under the provisions of the Müller law to purchase and operate the lines. Just before the election a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States declared invalid the claims of the companies to rights in certain streets for ninety-nine years from 1865; and under this decision practically all of the franchises in Chicago streets have expired. At the election the proposition to issue certificates to secure municipal ownership of the lines was carried by a small majority, but the vote on municipal operation—while showing a majority in favor—was not equal to the three-fifths vote required under the statute. A case to test the validity of the street railway certificates proposed to be issued is now before the courts; and further action is delayed until a decision on this point is secured.

The January bulletin of the U. S. Bureau of Labor contains a valuable report on municipal ownership in Great Britain, by Frederic C. Howe, Ph.D. The report is based on a study of the leading cities

in England, Scotland and Ireland made during the summer of 1905, the investigation being conducted largely by personal inquiry and conference with officials and citizens of the cities studied.

An exhaustive investigation of the facts concerning municipal and private plants for these public utilities has been undertaken by a special commission of the National Civic Federation. Detailed examinations of a number of the most important plants in the United States and Great Britain are being made by engineers and accountants. And the report of the commission—which represents prominent men of all shades of opinion on the general question—is expected to present a body of accepted facts, which will form the basis for further discussion.

In Massachusetts the alternative policy of regulating private companies has been carried a step further in the "sliding scale" gas bill passed for the city of Boston. The new law fixes the price of gas for the next ten years at ninety cents a thousand. It also fixes the dividends on the company's stock at seven per cent, with the privilege of increasing it one per cent for every five cent reduction in the price of gas. If the prices are kept up and profits accumulate, the surplus after setting aside five per cent of the capital as a reserve fund, is to go to the city. Additional stock issues are also regulated, and must first be offered for sale at public auction. After ten years the State Gas Board may alter the price.

The New York Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor has recently extended its field of activity to include the furnishing of physical relief to needy school children. A large committee, including the representatives of various charitable organizations of New York, together with specialists in the diseases common to children, has been appointed to study the physical welfare of school children, to secure the establishment of a system of school records that will reveal the existence of physical ailments among school children, and to use the information so acquired in stimulating interest and in securing adequate appropriations to meet the needs disclosed.

The Civic League of St. Louis, under the direction of Secretary Mayo Fesler, is making extensive investigations into the smoke conditions and the housing conditions in that city. The results will be embodied in published reports, which will contain recommendations looking to the solution of the problems by appropriate legislation.

The league is also drafting a comprehensive city plan similar to the



Burnham plan for San Francisco. It will include public buildings, street improvements, civic centers, an inner and outer park and boulevard system and recommendations of necessary legislation which will enable the city to carry out the projected plans.

The efforts of the league to secure the passage of an ordinance calling for the election of thirteen freeholders to draft a new charter, will be renewed when the municipal assembly meets in the fall. The committee last spring submitted an ordinance to the city council with a statement of reasons why the city needed a new charter but the council refused to act favorably on the proposition because of the agitation for an eleven million dollar bond issue for public improvements. The bond issue containing appropriations for a free municipal bridge, court building, health department building, hospitals, small parks and boulevards, passed by a large majority in June.