

reason or other—it may be a new birth of civic patriotism or it may be the pitiless publicity which the new system lets in upon the city government—city councils have not chosen former bosses as managers. As a matter of fact, it would be a great deal better to have the boss as an open and acknowledged and legally responsible manager than to have him operating as a concealed and corrupting force behind the scenes of ostensible government. There is not, however, a city council in this country which would dare to name a notorious boss as manager.

Professor McBain in an article quoted by Mabie from the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW dwells at some length upon the probability of the council dominating the manager and dictating to him the detailed administration of his office. "The truth of the matter is," says McBain, "that you cannot write into law a precise division between two authorities where the tenure of one is absolutely at the mercy of the other." Here again experience has absolutely belied prophecy. The relation between the manager and the council is a normal and well understood relation. It is that of the manager of the private corporation to his board of directors, of the superintendent of schools to the board of education, of the president of the state university to his board of regents. Its translation into the field of municipal government does not alter its character. While it would be impossible to say that there have been no examples of council dictation, councils in general have readily fallen into the habits of most boards of directors and allowed the manager a wide latitude of action. The public have proved themselves prone to look straight, over the council, to the manager and the real tendency is toward manager government rather than council government. Just as the executive head in national and state affairs has tended to gather in his hands more and more exclusive control so the manager tends to outweigh at least in popular estimation the importance of the council.

The city manager form of government cannot be said then, as Professor McBain

would have it, to be a "return to the system of councilmanic control." It is a new and vital principle of organization taken over from other fields into that of municipal government.

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SELECTED ARTICLES ON MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP. Compiled by Julia E. Johnsen. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company. Debaters' Handbook Series. Pp. 334. \$1.50. Third edition. Revised and enlarged.

The outstanding result of the war on this side of the Atlantic is the sudden acquisition by the national Government of various interstate utilities. This little anticipated move has but added to the rapidly growing interest in, and demand for, the municipal ownership and operation of local public utilities. As pointed out by Dr. Wilcox in a previous issue of the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, the state utilities commissions may have proved excellent training schools for corporation attorneys but their rulings, with certain notable exceptions, have not always redounded to the benefit of the municipalities affected.

In view of this interest, the publication of the present handbook is timely. While the compiler has retained a large part of the material which appeared in earlier editions, she has added many new articles and has enlarged the brief and bibliography so as virtually to make of it a new book. The book opens with the brief which furnishes an excellent analysis of the question, with arguments pro and con. A bibliography of more than 260 titles follows, arranged in affirmative and negative groups. We find no reference in the lists to the Census Bureau's report on central electric light and power stations and street and electric railways (1912), to Mr. J. Francisco's "Municipal Ownership," 4th edition, Rutland, Vt. (1895), to Library of Congress' select list of references on municipal ownership and operation of street railways, nor to articles which have appeared in *Municipal*

*Journal*. As in the bibliography so in the text there is a preponderance of articles dealing with the affirmative side of the question. There are occasional typographical errors, as on page ix, where "sought" is substituted for "solved" in the title of Mr. Brandeis' article, and on page xxvi, where the name of Mr. Thompson's association, the Public Ownership League of America, should be separated by punctuation from the title of his report "Municipal Electric Light and Power Plants in the United States and Canada."

The compiler's short introduction might well have been extended to greater length and it would have been well to point out the scarcity of statistics regarding municipally owned public utilities and the urgent need for the collection and collation of such data. Recent studies have shown that many of the alleged "failures" of municipal ownership were illusory—as evidenced by the enthusiastic writer who thus classified certain municipal gas plants which had exhausted the natural supply. Facts of this kind are of value to the debater.

All things considered, Miss Johnsen's handbook is a real contribution to a much-abused subject.

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A COMMUNITY CENTER—WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO ORGANIZE IT. By Henry E. Jackson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1918. Published also, in part, as a bulletin of The United States Bureau of Education.

This book proves that the community center movement has at last grown familiar to the general mind. It is a popular book and its language is wholly non-technical. It is the kind of book which an author writes about a subject whose existence, and a knowledge about which in the reader's mind, he can take for granted. The value and the shortcomings of Mr. Jackson's book grow out of this very quality of popular-ness.

For while it is true that the community

center has become a familiar thing to perhaps hundreds of thousands of people, there are millions more who know nothing about it as yet. Here, in this book, the community center talks about itself as one can imagine a city street talking about itself. There is none who debate the existence, the necessity, of the street. Most of those who traverse it worry themselves but little about the problems of engineering, about the network of buried pipes and conduits, about the city-plan of which the street is a part. The millions who do not know about community centers will, if they read Mr. Jackson's book, feel vaguely that they are in the position of a man who does not know about the existence of streets. It is good propaganda to assume that *of course* any intelligent man knows that the object of propaganda exists and that it is important. A book like Mr. Jackson's will strengthen the confidence of community center members in their movement, and wherever it circulates it will create a sentiment that community centers are now accomplished facts about whose urgency it is needless to talk any longer.

The shortcomings of Mr. Jackson's book lie precisely in this, its popular value. Community centers are yet in their experimental stage. In the main, they are like streets not built, or streets which have been built without reference to the larger social plan, or streets which need to be torn up again in order to introduce conduits or superimpose rapid-transit lines. In other words, community centers are an engineering problem and there is great need for a treatise which will space the problem with a full recognition of its difficulty, which will bring together the existing experience, and which will develop out of the problem as stated and the experience as described, one or more prescriptions for the community center of the future. Mr. Jackson's book does not meet this need.

For example, Part I of the book contains a somewhat detailed recommendation for the establishment of community banks and co-operative exchanges but has nothing to say about community health work,